Addressing Student-Perceived Barriers That Prevent Adolescent Students from Diverse Racial and Economic Backgrounds from Participating in Secondary School Ensembles

By

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A Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree
MASTER OF MUSIC
IN
MUSIC EDUCATION
College of Fine Arts
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Stevens Point, Wisconsin

March 2022
ADDRESSING STUDENT-PERCEIVED BARRIERS IN SECONDARY ENSEMBLES

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Abstract

This thesis explores the ways in which student perceptions can affect ensemble enrollment at the secondary level. The research takes a specific look into minority students and students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, while also addressing possible barriers for students of all backgrounds. Music ensembles across the country have been experiencing decreases in enrollment, even pre-pandemic. There have been several proposed solutions, but solutions have been unclear, and implementation has been irregular. Findings in this research aim to address these issues from the student perspective and give the teachers and directors of these ensembles a direction to move in as music pedagogies shift and evolve.

Keywords: secondary music education, music ensembles, music pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, racial diversity, socioeconomic status, barriers to education
# Table of Contents

Chapter I: Introduction .............................................................................................................. 5

Chapter II: Review of Related Literature .................................................................................. 8  
  * Music Pedagogies .................................................................................................................. 9  
  * Enrollment Demographics .................................................................................................. 14  
  * Accessibility ...................................................................................................................... 17

Chapter III: Design and Methodology ..................................................................................... 21  
  * Process .................................................................................................................................. 21  
  * Participants .......................................................................................................................... 22  
  * Qualitative Research ........................................................................................................... 22  
  * Data Collection ................................................................................................................... 23  
  * Approach to Analysis .......................................................................................................... 23

Chapter IV: Findings ................................................................................................................ 25

Chapter V: Discussion and Implications ................................................................................... 41  
  * Representation .................................................................................................................... 42  
  * Time Commitment ............................................................................................................. 42  
  * Value Systems ...................................................................................................................... 43  
  * Implications ........................................................................................................................ 44

Resources .................................................................................................................................. 49

Appendices ................................................................................................................................. 52
Chapter I: Introduction

Introduction

In the past decade, the world has turned its focus to equity and inclusivity. The field of music education has been no exception. As I prepared for and began my own teaching career, I started to become aware of the lack of racial and economic diversity within music ensembles. I became curious about the existing structure and culture of ensembles that made it difficult or even impossible for students of certain backgrounds to join, remain, and thrive in the music classroom. In my second year of teaching, I was walking down the hall with a sixth-grade band student. I asked if she was excited for their concert that night. “No,” she replied, “I’m not going because I don’t have the right clothes to wear.” I walked her to the guidance office, where she found out that they had many clothes available for her to take home that fit the black-and-white dress code. This experience made me realize that, although schools do so much to serve the needs of students and offer equitable experiences, some students have no idea that these resources are available. I began to wonder about student perceptions. If this student had not come to the concert simply because of a lack of clothing, would she have ever returned to the ensemble? How many other students felt compelled to quit for similar barriers? What other groups of students were feeling routinely left out, or even pushed out?

As the world begins to shift back into traditional teaching practices post-pandemic, it feels especially important that students find a place where they can fully and safely express their emotions. The ensemble classroom can be exactly that, but traditionally it has not been that place for students of all backgrounds. While the pandemic has had many detrimental effects worldwide, this is also the perfect time to inspect our teaching practices, decide what to leave behind, and incorporate new traditions that make every student feel welcomed, safe, and excited to join an ensemble.
Purpose Statement

The purpose of my research is to investigate why so many students, especially students of disadvantaged socioeconomic status and minority students, choose not to participate in elective ensembles in the Wausau school district.

The specific research question this thesis seeks to answer is: What student-perceived barriers prevent adolescent students from diverse racial and economic backgrounds from participating in secondary school ensembles, and how can we address these barriers?

In this chapter, Chapter One, I share a brief overview of my intentions and goals for this research. In Chapter Two, I will explain important existing literature to provide context for the reader. In Chapter Three, I will share my methods in order to give the reader a clear picture of the students being studied and the existing music programs they are a part of. In Chapter Four, I will share my primary data. This data will set up the discussion of secondary data in Chapter Five, where I will also share implications and possible practices for implementation.

Importance of the Study

The data shared in this research will be important for all in the field of music education, especially those in the public school setting. This thesis shares valuable insight from the students themselves, which can help inform changes being proposed by those who direct music ensembles. This data can also help students who participate or wish to participate in school ensembles as it will inspire changes in music education that will make ensemble classrooms more equitable and inclusive.
Definition of Terms

There are a number of terms used throughout this research that must be clearly defined in order for the reader to fully understand the data being explained. **Socioeconomic status (SES)** refers to the financial situation of the student/student’s family. **Disadvantaged SES** refers to families that fall below the poverty line. Although commonly referred to as ‘low SES,’ I felt that describing these families as disadvantaged SES more accurately encompassed their financial situations, which are often affected by factors outside of their control. This supports the idea of bias-free language proposed by organizations such as the American Psychological Association (2019). **Tokenizing** refers to a situation in which a person or student of a minority group feels they are being represented only in order to fulfill a diversity requirement, in this case within the classroom setting. **Eurocentric** describes a focus on Western traditions, stressing these traditions as ‘correct’ and inherently making other traditions seem incorrect, less than, or even uncivilized. An **English language learner (ELL)** is any student whose first language is not English, and who is currently learning English in order to learn in an English-speaking school.

In Chapter One I gave information on the purpose of this study, my research question, the importance of the study, and a definition of key terms. In Chapter Two I will provide my review of literature related to this study about student-perceived barriers to enrollment in secondary ensembles.
Chapter II: Review of Related Literature

In Chapter One I introduced this study about Addressing Student-Perceived Barriers That Prevent Adolescent Students from Diverse Racial and Economic Backgrounds from Participating in Secondary School Ensembles and gave some information about my motivations for this research. In this chapter, Chapter Two, I will review the literature related to my study of ensemble demographics and diversity. Many scholars agree that secondary school ensembles in America are predominantly comprised of students from more affluent economic backgrounds, and often struggle to retain students from diverse racial and economic backgrounds (Bates, 2012; Culp and Clauhs, 2020; Elpus and Abril, 2011; Elpus and Abril, 2019) I have organized my review of the literature into the following sections: Music Pedagogies, Ensemble Demographics, and Accessibility. In the first section on Music Pedagogies, I will include literature about pedagogical frameworks in the secondary music ensemble classroom (Abrahams, F., 2005; Abrahams, D. and Abrahams, F. 2016; hooks, bell, 2009; Jorgensen, E. R., 2008; Krueger, C. & Wilson, J., 2018; Mark, 2008; Miksza, P., 2013; Regelski, T. A., 2014; Shaw, J. 2012; Shehan Campbell, 2018; Small, C. 1999; Väkevä, L., 2009; Wiens, K. F., 2015). In the second section on Ensemble Demographics, I will include scholarship that addresses the membership of secondary school music ensembles in American public schools (Bates, V. C. 2012; Conkling & Conkling, 2018; Culp, M. E. & Clauhs, M., 2020; Elpus, K. & Abril, C. R., 2011; Elpus, K. & Abril, C. R., 2019; Fonder, 2014; Hess, 2017; Kodaly Envoy, 2007; Lehmann, Sloboda, and Woody, 2007; Parsad, B., and Spiegelman, M., 2012; United States Department of Education, 2009). In the third section, Accessibility, I will include publications from authors who have addressed barriers that might be preventing a significant number of adolescents from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and students of color from joining and continuing their participation in secondary

**Music Pedagogies**


*Culturally Responsive Teaching*

Frank Abrahams (2005) reviews the many ideas surrounding critical pedagogy. He cites its origin, from Paulo Friere’s “Pedagogy of the Oppressed,” reviews the psychology behind it, and considers the arguments against it. Overall, Abrahams advocates for a more meaningful classroom music experience that focuses not just on performance, but on dialogue, experiential learning, and reflection. These concepts together create a more personal and authentic experience for each student, more than what a teacher-driven approach can provide.

Writing from the perspective of the student, bell hooks reflects upon and examines her own educational experiences as a black woman from a working-class family. She often felt like an outsider in a bourgeois-normative classroom. Even in classes that were dedicated to giving the oppressed a voice, class differences were ignored, and challenging these differences was even discouraged. She has seen the same in her own classroom even now as a professor and challenges the structures within her own teaching. While this is a written perspective from her
college experience, it is valuable to keep the student’s perspective in mind as educators seek to adopt and apply culturally responsive teaching practices in authentic ways.

In her book *The Art of Teaching Music* (Jorgensen, 2008), Estelle Jorgensen addresses all aspects of teaching music. From problems to solutions, observations to opinions, she offers the wisdom of her experience. She takes a particular stance on a learner-centered pedagogy. She states, “People ought to be at the center of education and education should be about and for people rather than the other way around” (p. 18). While she does not label this as culturally responsive teaching, this mentality inherently leads educators to respond to their learners’ needs.

In her article, Julia Shaw (2012) suggests that although music teachers are of predominantly white backgrounds, they can and should be responsive to the cultural needs of their music students. She focuses on the idea of providing culturally valid experiences to make all students feel seen and celebrated without being tokenized. She expresses her appreciation for the European influences on our modern music curriculum, but also urges that teachers push beyond a Eurocentric curriculum to find new and diverse opportunities for students to make music and learn about the world.

Similarly, Kimberley Wiens (2015) urges music educators to dig deeper into their students’ cultural experiences with music. She suggests that teachers first inspect their own cultural lenses and how this lens has shaped their musical journeys. Then, she hopes teachers will use this self-reflection to help them learn about their students’ musical experiences outside of the classroom. By seeking to understand the prior knowledge and experiences of students, Wiens suggests that teachers can provide richer, more diverse, and more student-based musical activities, thus bridging the gap between music class and the real world.
While it seems that most music educators are in favor of culturally responsive teaching, Patricia Shehan Campbell recalls a recent event that makes a lack of cultural consideration evident. In 2016, the executive director of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), Michael Butera, made jarring remarks about the lack of diversity on the NAfME board. He suggested that “Blacks and Latinos lack the keyboard skills for this field,” and that music theory is too difficult for most minority students (p. 23-24). While there was an immense amount of pushback from other board members, it is important to note that a mindset such as this rose to one of the most influential positions in a widely revered music education association. Shehan Campbell suggests that this event may not have happened at all if the field of music education had embraced the ideas of diversity and inclusion much sooner.

Performance Based Pedagogies

Before delving into the topic of performance-based pedagogies, it is important to generally understand the evolution of music pedagogy in America. Michael L. Mark (2008) writes about this evolution in his book, *A Concise History of American Music Education*. In its earliest days, music education was centered around church music and was mainly singing. Ensemble classes and music appreciation courses were not formally added to music curriculum until the early 20th century. Later, the Tanglewood Symposium of 1967 resulted in the Tanglewood Declaration, a statement that made clear the importance and necessity of music in schools. In the late 20th century music pedagogies became more diversified, with performance-based frameworks like Suzuki and Orff finding popularity in modern music classrooms.

There are several ways to adopt performance-based pedagogies. Frank Abrahams and Daniel Abrahams (2016) discuss the varying dynamics of the relationships between a mentor and apprentice. They argue that the most meaningful mentor-apprentice relationship is the socio-
transformative apprenticeship. This type of apprenticeship allows the apprentice to acquire the skills of the mentor, understand the thorough processes behind these skills, and view the skills in the larger context of the world. In order to achieve this type of apprenticeship, both the mentor and apprentice must engage in the four components of socio-transformative apprenticeship: dialogic conversation, authentic activity, metacognition, and reflexivity. Abrahams and Abrahams point out the different types of learners that exist, but maintain that this type of apprenticeship remains the most valuable and can be adapted to fit each type of learner.

Carol Krueger and Jill Wilson apply Jerome Bruner’s scaffolding methods to music education. Using Bruner’s icon method, they explore ways in which choral students can learn notation, solfege, and other basic music reading methods. Their goal is to encourage and foster independent musicianship. By teaching choral students basic music-reading skills, students become “self-directed problem solvers” (p. 28) instead of waiting for a teacher or other student to lead them first.

Many music educators are calling for a reformation of music education. Peter Miksza provides his view on the state of music education and the dialogue surrounding reform. His stance is fairly neutral, calling for more respectful conversation. He keeps all aspects of music education in mind, from elementary general music to secondary ensembles. He calls for music educators to work together to find the best improvements, and not to jump into large, sweeping reforms. For example, although he acknowledges that Kenneth Elpus and Carlos R. Abril’s study found that school ensembles tend to be majority white middle-class students, he feels that it is premature to assume that the ensemble structure is the root of the problem. Rather, he argues that the current ensemble structure has many benefits and that the inequities could be addressed in other ways while keeping the traditional structure of the group.
Similarly, Thomas Regelski (2014) addresses the need for music educators to move away from a Eurocentric music curriculum. Students in elementary and secondary programs are often taught music that does not feel relevant to their real-life experiences. Similarly, students who pursue music and music education at the post-secondary level find themselves immersed in programs that focus on classical music as the “be all, end all” of musical aesthetics. This creates and continues a cycle of music education that feels separate from modern, relevant, real-world musical experiences. Regelski uses several theories of learning and pedagogy to assert why such structures and their “elephants” should be dismantled, and how we can begin to break and rebuild these structures.

Taking the idea of performance-based practice even further, Christopher Small defines music as not just a noun, but as a verb, “to music” or “musicking.” In this article, he asserts that musicking is more than just making music. It is a process central to our humanity and includes every person present. Advocating for more music making and listening, Small states, “...it seems to me self-evident that the place to start thinking about the meaning of music and its function in human life is not with musical works at all, but with performing and listening” (Small, 1999, p. 12).

Lauri Vävekä (2009) analyzes Lucy Green’s 2005 study in which groups of students were tasked with choosing a song and copying it. Vävekä elaborates on why assignments like this work to create authentic and intrinsically motivated musical experiences. Similar to Small’s idea of “musicking,” Vävekä encourages this informal, exploratory approach to music. Rather than the students learning directly from the teacher, they bring their own experiences and interests into the classroom and take the lead on their learning.
Enrollment Demographics


Ensemble-Specific Demographics

Parsad and Spiegelman (2012) inspect arts enrollment data collected by the United States Department of Education (2009). This data includes racial and economic breakdowns of enrolled students. Aside from presenting the raw numbers of enrolled students, they also analyze data about the availability and quality of art and music classes across the country. This data analysis creates a clear picture of the many ways arts education is incorporated into our schools, with varying demographics, teacher workloads, and availability.

Elpus and Abril (2019) surveyed high school seniors to find out what percentage of students chose to participate in an elective ensemble and what percentage of students chose to participate in a non-ensemble music elective during their high school years. Their study showed that 24% of students participated in at least one elective ensemble throughout high school. The data also showed choir to be the most popular (13%), then band (11%), with orchestra lagging behind (2%). They also found that, aside from being largely female, choir demographics reflected the demographic of the rest of the school. Based on this data, the authors infer that choir is the most popular and diverse because, “Musically, it may be that choirs are the most malleable of traditional school ensembles.” Choirs can more easily explore a variety of cultures
and musical styles. They are more accessible to students who may not have a band or orchestra at lower levels. They also tend to have less financial and time commitments.

Elpus and Abril conducted a different study in 2011 investigating the demographic of music ensembles in the United States. It specifically examines previous studies that found students participating in musical ensembles tend to be more academically successful than their non-musical classmates. This study shows that, because ensembles are comprised predominantly of white, middle-class students, there are more factors that music at play in their academic success. In fact, their participation in music has very little to do with their success.

*Participation Factors*

Vincent C. Bates criticizes the traditional music classroom for its inherent middle-class-favoring structure and offers suggestions for how to make the music classroom more equitable to encourage more diverse participation. He also suggests that more affluent students more readily find success in traditional music classrooms while less affluent students are pushed out. While some might insist that hard work and discipline are the only difference between success and failure, Bates states that, “…the reality of any competitive system is that those with a head start are usually the ones who win” (Bates, 2012, p. 72-73). His ideas for change include embracing musical traditions of affluent students, teaching for life-long music making, making access to music programs free, making participation the inherent reward, and using music to teach students about economic disparities.

Mara Culp and Matthew Clauhs (2020) cite several reasons for decreasing enrollment in secondary music ensembles. They suggest that economic strain discourages participation for students from lower-income families. They also mention that familial influence and scheduling issues might influence students to make other elective choices. Perhaps most importantly, they
criticize the traditional ensemble structure and suggest the addition of less traditional ensembles like rock bands and hip-hop groups. Within traditional ensembles, they suggest that teachers infuse curriculum with repertoire that represents diverse backgrounds for students to feel seen and heard.

Juliet Hess (2017) continues this train of thought, encouraging music educators to continually ask themselves who is not present in our classes and curriculum. She points out that the Eurocentric view of music leads to the dismissal of other cultures’ valued music skills, such as improvisation, movement, and aural/oral learning. Avoiding these ways of learning and making music devalues them as valuable music methods and creates a white-washed curriculum that does not allow students to learn and explore other cultures. Further, it does not allow minority students to explore their own cultures. Hess states that educators keeping this question in mind over the past twenty years have helped redirect music education (such as the addition of hip-hop pedagogy) but she hopes to see continual growth.

A 2007 publication in the journal Kodaly Envoy addresses the disproportionate number of females to males in secondary choral ensembles. The article cites a few reasons for this disproportion, including sex stereotypes and the perception of vocal talent as a non-masculine trait. It is also possible that the music presented in the class is not of interest. Finally, the article suggests that the overwhelming number of female music teachers may deter young males to join choir in the first place.

Some music educators steer away from the popular ensemble structure and prioritize more general music-making experiences. In an article about a school turnaround project in a low-income elementary school in Boston, authors Susan Wharton Conkling and Thomas Conkling (2018) followed a teacher named Sarah who wanted to focus on her students’ mental health
 ADDRESSING STUDENT-PERCEIVED BARRIERS IN SECONDARY ENSEMBLES

needs before focusing on performance. She worked to establish a more welcoming school culture and increase meaningful communication between staff and families. Even when she was asked to put together a performing ensemble to be showcased to increase community pride, she opted out, focusing more on the music being made within the classroom. Although the turnaround project eventually failed, Sarah’s work did increase family engagement within the school and positively impacted the overall success of students.

Participation factors are not only triggered by external sources. In their book “Psychology for Musicians,” Lehmann, Sloboda, and Woody (2007) cite studies showing that students’ self-efficacy plays a role in their continued participation. One study revealed a trend that young musicians believe their musical success is determined by their amount of effort. However, as musicians got older, more students believed that natural ability determined their musical success (p. 55). If this trend holds true, it is possible that students’ beliefs about their innate talent cause them to continue with or drop out of their music electives.

Contrary to the thoughts of the authors previously reviewed in this section, Mark Fonder (2014) passionately states that the current push away from ensemble music should come to an end. He agrees that more students should be involved in music education but insists that the blame should be shifted away from ensembles. He believes that, even though only about 20% of school populations choose to participate in ensembles, we should not abandon that 20% to entice the other 80%. He also speaks against the idea of creating a required participatory music experience at the expense of the existing voluntary participants.

**Accessibility**

This section discusses literature concerning the accessibility of music to different groups of students. In contrast to chapter two, which discussed factors within the music classroom that
might cause students to leave, scholarship here will focus on factors outside of the music classroom that affect students’ ability to participate in music (Bruner, 1973; Burrack, Bazan, and Hellman, 2014; Kinney, 2019; Lorah, Sanders, and Morrison, 2014; Shaw, 2014; Shaw, 2021).

Jerome Bruner (1973) reviews the effects of childhood poverty on academic achievement. While his work does not relate specifically to music, it offers valuable insight into the mindset of a student of disadvantaged SES. Bruner states that poverty “[limits] and [starves] the capabilities of the children of the poor by leading them into failure until finally they are convinced that it is not worth their while to think about school-like things” (Bruner, 1973, p. 31). This mindset is damaging to the success of students in poverty in a number of ways, including their possible success in an elective ensemble.

Burrack, Bazan, and Hellman (2014) studied three midwestern states that had experienced significant budget cuts between 2011 and 2012. Budget cuts resulted in a loss of music staff, despite the fact that a majority of schools surveyed had over 20% of the student population participating in their programs. They also point out that music programs had been historically underfunded prior to these cuts. The American School Board Journal (2003) states it boldly in their article title: “The arts are alive, but on life support.” These cuts in budgets and positions lead to music teachers taking on larger caseloads, often with courses outside of their expertise. This negatively impacts the quality of instruction and leads to a higher rate of teacher burnout.

Shaw (2021) conducted a study of Ohio public and charter schools, revealing notable disparities in access to music classes. While virtually all public schools offered music opportunities to their students, less than 50% of charter schools offered curricular music. Those that did offer music courses more often offered general music options, not ensemble options.
Shaw suggests that this is due to a lack of funds to run such programs and the smaller population of the charter schools. When looking at public schools, he discovered that high community SES was associated with more availability of music in urban high schools. He also found that schools with no music courses had significantly higher proportions of Black, Hispanic, and indigenous student populations. These minority students were disproportionately denied music opportunities as compared to white students across the state.

In a 2019 study of middle and high school students, Kinney found the SES significantly impacted enrollment in some instrumental ensembles. Students from high SES backgrounds were more likely to enroll in sixth and eighth grade, though it did not predict enrollment at the tenth-grade level. Surprisingly, SES did not predict student enrollment in string ensembles. Kinney speculates that the overall smaller size of the orchestras may have enabled the schools to afford enough instruments to provide for students of all SES backgrounds, while the bands were larger and could not afford to provide enough instruments. The studied choral ensembles showed the most equitable proportion of high and disadvantaged SES students, likely due to the lack of need for an instrument.

Elpus and Abril’s (2011) study of ensemble demographics indicated that ELL students were less likely to participate in music ensemble than their non-ELL peers. A 2014 study by Lorah, Sanders, and Morrison (2014) found that, while this was true, it had little to do with ELL status alone. The participation of ELL students had more to do with other outside influences, such as ethnicity, SES, and school accessibility. Consistent with previous data, this study showed that high-minority, disadvantaged-SES schools had fewer music opportunities to offer their students. So, it is not that ELL status alone predicts participation in music ensembles, but rather the correlating factors.
Following the theme of all aforementioned sources, Julia Shaw (2017) inspects all angles of the effects of SES on student accessibility to music. She specifically addresses the typical lack of SES diversity in choral ensembles. Since all students are equipped with a vocal instrument, it is seemingly the most accessible of the ensemble options. However, Shaw points out that expenses may include private lessons, audition fees, honor choir tuition, cost of performance attire, transportation to performances, and travel costs for groups who tour. On a broader scale, Shaw discusses the United States education system as a and its effects on music participation. Income inequality, residential segregation, and property-tax-based public school funding all contribute to the quality of arts education, and all education, provided. Additionally, the accountability-based education system means that schools with low standardized test scores are forced to emphasize raising scores and are often the first to lose valuable federal funding for arts education. Shaw’s viewpoint poignantly illustrates the downward spiral that leads to an unequal accessibility of quality music education programs.
In Chapter Two, I reviewed the existing literature regarding Music Pedagogies, Enrollment Demographics, and Accessibility. In Chapter Three, I will explain my research project design and share my methods of analysis. I have created the following subsections for the ease and understanding of the reader: Process, Participants, Qualitative Research, Data Collection, and Analysis. As I noted in Chapter One, the research question driving this study is: What student-perceived barriers prevent adolescent students from diverse racial and economic backgrounds from participation in secondary school ensembles?

**Process**

My process for conducting this research began with trying to understand why so many students, especially minority and disadvantaged-SES students, choose not to participate in elective ensembles in the Wausau school district. I knew I wanted to survey 7th and 9th grade students because those are the grades in which our district sees the largest attrition. I also wanted to better understand what we as music teachers can do to interest and engage more students in these ensembles. I obtained permission for my research via email from my district Superintendent and Director of Secondary Education, then I reached out to the building principals who supervise 7th and 9th grade students in my district. Both principals accepted my proposal, and the anonymous, voluntary survey was forwarded to students via their school email addresses (see Appendix B for a copy of the survey). Seventh grade students took the voluntary survey during a common homeroom time with the assistance of homeroom teachers. Ninth grade students were sent the link to the survey and were encouraged to take it by the building principal, but there was no common time for administration. The focus of this survey was to gather data on
students’ perceptions of the factors surrounding their musical involvement. It was important to me that I gather what students believe affects them, because at their young age, belief in something may be as persuasive as actually true factors and barriers.

**Participants**

My participants were selected using convenience sampling. Dörnyei (2007) describes convenience sampling as a type of sampling where members of the target population “meet certain practical criteria, such as geographical proximity, availability at a certain time, easy accessibility, or the willingness to volunteer” (p. 99). Dörnyei (2007) specifically mentions students within the researcher’s institution as a common example for a sample population. In the case of this study, participants were students within the school district where I teach. Because I was trying to understand the student-perceived barriers that are causing ensemble attrition in 7th and 9th grade, I used this type of sampling typical for my qualitative phenomenological research. In order to shed light on this attrition, I needed to gather data from students within our district. The pool of students surveyed needed to represent both students who do and do not participate in ensembles. This meant that my pool would be quite large, as all students would be eligible to take the survey. Therefore, I administered the voluntary, anonymous survey by sending it to the entire 7th and 9th grade student body. In total, this equaled about 600 students. Since the survey was voluntary, the total number of students surveyed equaled 445. Since the survey was anonymous, I was exempt from collecting consent forms per IRB.

**Qualitative Research**

This study utilizes qualitative research. Qualitative research uses collection methods that result in open-ended, non-numerical data (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 24). By using qualitative research, I was able to collect data regarding why secondary students choose to participate in elective
musical ensembles or not. Qualitative research allows me to further understand this phenomenon from the student point of view. My qualitative research is informed by phenomenology, which is the study of our experience of things as they occur in our everyday lives (Smith, 2013). Conducting a qualitative study allowed me to bring into focus what factors might be influencing students’ choices from their perspectives. I was able to collect data by electronic, anonymous survey which included multiple choice questions, Likert-like scales, and open-ended responses.

**Data Collection**

Data collection consisted of sending an electronic survey to four hundred and forty-five (445) 7th and 9th grade students within my district about their ensemble participation choices and perceptions. Since the middle school schedule allowed for a common administration time, all 7th grade students took the survey at the same time. 9th grade students were given access to the survey via email and announcements were made to remind students to take the survey within a two-week period. Data was collected using Microsoft Forms and collated using an Excel spreadsheet. I then cleaned the data for analysis by removing blank responses.

**Approach to Analysis**

I analyzed the data in two ways: I first created graphs for demographic data, then I created charts to assist in the visual analysis of student responses to multiple choice and Likert-like scale questions. For the short answer questions, my data analysis plan focused on coding for themes. I began by looking for patterns in the data as a whole, and once initial sub-themes emerged, I was able to group those sub-themes into overarching themes and organize the data to reflect these themes in terms of their relationship to student demographics.
In Chapter Three I recounted how this research project was designed. I explained my method of analysis and described each step of the research and analysis processes. In Chapter Four I will report my findings based on this process.
Chapter IV: Findings

In the previous three chapters I introduced this study about Music Pedagogies, Enrollment Demographics, and Accessibility, reviewed literature related to the topic, and described the methodology and my approach to analysis. Here, in Chapter Four, I will report the findings from the data. As described in Chapter Three, I identified the grades where students exhibited the most ensemble attrition, surveyed the students in these grades, and looked for patterns amongst student data that might have contributed to a lack of ensemble participation. The results of this data collection are as follows.

**Gender**

Of the 445 participants who responded to my survey, 44% or 196 students identified as male. Fifty-two percent (52%) or 236 students identified as female. Four percent (4%) or 17 students identified as non-binary.

![Figure 1: Gender](image)
Race

Respondents’ self-identification of race was closely matched to the demographics reported by the district as a whole. The school district demographics are: 64% white, 20% Asian, 7% Hispanic, 6% students of two or more races, 2% Black, and 1% Native/Alaskan Native. In order to best represent student background, students were encouraged on the study survey to select all races that applied, so the percentages below represent some students’ multiple responses. Respondents self-identified as follows: Just under sixty-four percent (63.45%) identified as ‘White.’ About twenty-eight percent (28.15%) identified as ‘Asian.’ Nearly four and a half percent (4.41%) identified as ‘Black or African American.’ Just over two percent (2.31%) identified as ‘Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.’ Almost one and a half percent (1.47%) identified as ‘American Indian or Alaska Native.’

**Figure 2**

*Race*

![Bar graph showing race distribution](image-url)
Ethnicity

About seven and a half percent (7.59%) of students self-identified as ‘Hispanic or Latino.’ Just over ninety-two percent (92.41%) of respondents self-identified as ‘Not Hispanic or Latino.’

**Figure 3**

*Ethnicity*

Grade

Just over sixty-two percent (62.16%) of respondents were seventh graders. About thirty-eight percent (37.84) of respondents were ninth graders.

**Figure 4**

*Grade*
Enrollment

About sixty percent (60.36%) of respondents were not currently enrolled in an in-school ensemble. Nearly forty percent (39.64%) were enrolled in an in-school ensemble.

Figure 5
Are you currently in any in-school ensembles (choir, band, orchestra)?

Reasons for Joining or Not Joining

Students selected from a multiple-choice list some of their reasons for choosing to join or not join an in-school ensemble. They were encouraged to check all applicable reasons, so individuals may be included in more than one response choice. While the survey platform did not allow for students to elaborate on their selection of the “other” option, I felt it important to include to account for less predictable reasoning.

The most popular reason for joining an ensemble was ‘I enjoy being in an ensemble and making music,’ with 110 students (16.18%) selecting this response. The second most popular response was ‘My family encouraged me to join,’ with 88 students (12.94%) selecting this response. Close behind was ‘I like the teacher,’ which 87 students (12.79%) selected. The next highest choice was ‘I wanted to try something new,’ which 81 students (11.91%) selected. Not far behind was ‘I feel I am musically talented,’ chosen by 77 students (11.32%). From there,
ADDRESSING STUDENT-PERCEIVED BARRIERS IN SECONDARY ENSEMBLES

responses dipped more significantly in popularity. Only 60 students (8.82%) selected ‘I feel a sense of belonging.’ Fifty-six students (8.24%) chose ‘My friends are in the ensemble.’ Forty-three students (6.32%) selected ‘Other,’ 41 students (6.03%) selected ‘I wanted an easy class,’ and only 37 students (5.44%) chose ‘My friends encouraged me to join.’

The most popular reason for not joining an ensemble was ‘I am not interested in music ensembles,’ selected by 142 students (17.21%). The next was ‘I don’t think I’m musically talented,’ which 125 students (15.15%) chose. The response ‘I don’t like to sing’ was selected by 116 students (14.06%). Another popular response was ‘I am too busy to join an ensemble,’ which was chosen by 103 students (12.48%). Eighty-seven students (10.55%) chose ‘I don’t like to play instruments’. The next most popular response was ‘I feel I don’t fit in with the people who are in music ensembles,’ which was selected by 81 students (9.82%). Seventy students (8.48%) chose ‘Other’. Sixty-two students (7.52%) chose ‘I wanted to join, but was more interested in other classes and had to choose one,’ 31 students (3.76%) selected ‘I don’t think my family could afford the cost,’ and only 8 students (.97%) chose ‘I don’t get along with the teacher’.
Figure 6

*If yes, what made you choose to join? Check all that apply.*

- 16.18% I enjoy being in an ensemble and making music.
- 12.94% My family encouraged me to join.
- 12.79% I like the teacher.
- 11.91% I wanted to try something new.
- 11.32% I feel I am musically talented.
- 8.82% I feel a sense of belonging.
- 8.24% My friends are in the ensemble.
- 6.32% I wanted an easy class.
- 6.03% Other
- 5.44% My friends encouraged me to join.

Figure 7

*If not, which of the following reasons made you decide not to join? Check all that apply.*

- 100% I am not interested in music ensembles.
- 70% I don't think that I am musically talented.
- 62% I don't like to sing.
- 31% I am too busy to join an ensemble.
- 8% I don't like to play instruments.
- 8% I don't feel I fit in with the people who are in music ensembles.
- 0% Other
Perceived Socioeconomic Factors

When asked if ensemble participation was too expensive for a student’s family, just under fifty-six percent (55.88%) said no. Nearly thirty-nine percent of students (38.91%) said they were not sure. Just over five percent (5.20%) said yes.

**Figure 8**

*Do you think your parents/guardians would think being in an ensemble is too expensive for your family?*
Perception of Family Opinion

Students were asked to gauge their family's perception of ensemble participation and were encouraged to select all that applied. One hundred and seventy-six students (32.77%) reported that their families value music ensembles but were okay with the student pursuing other interests. One hundred and thirty-five students (25.14%) said that their families value music ensembles and encouraged them to join. One hundred and thirty-one students (24.39%) felt that their families did not value ensembles but would not mind if the student joined. Seventy-six students (14.15%) chose ‘Other’. Only 19 students (3.54%) reported that their families do not feel music ensembles are important and would not like if the student joined one.

Figure 9

What do you think your family thinks of music ensembles (choir, band, or orchestra)? Check all that apply.
Perception of Peer Opinion

Similar to gauging family perception, students were asked to gauge their friends’ thoughts on ensemble participation. Students were encouraged to select all applicable answers. One hundred and eighty-three students (37.89%) selected ‘My friends are not in any ensembles but would respect me for participating.’ One hundred and sixty-two students (33.54%) selected ‘My friends are in ensembles and want me to participate with them.’ One hundred and nineteen students (24.64%) chose ‘Other.’ Only 19 students (3.93%) chose ‘My friends are not in any ensembles and might think negatively of me for joining one.’

Figure 10

*What do you think your peers think of music ensembles (choir, band, or orchestra)? Check all that apply.*

![Bar chart showing percentages of student responses to the question about peer opinion regarding music ensembles.]
Effect of Family and Peer Opinions

Participants were asked to rate how much family and peer opinions affected their ensemble enrollment choice on a scale of 1 to 5. The most popular choice was ‘3,’ which was selected by just under thirty-six percent (35.98%) of students. From there, numbers dropped drastically, with just below twenty percent (19.73%) selecting ‘4,’ just under sixteen percent (15.96%) choosing ‘1,’ just over fourteen percent (14.31%) choosing ‘2,’ and another fourteen percent (14.02%) choosing ‘5.’

Figure 11

*How much did these opinions affect whether or not you joined an ensemble (band, choir, orchestras)?*
Perceived Innate Talent

About twenty-one and a half percent of students (21.40%) said that they feel they have natural musical talent. Just over forty-one percent of students (41.22%) said they feel they have some natural musical talent. Nearly thirty-seven and a half percent of students (37.39%) said they feel they do not have natural musical talent.
Effect of Perceived Innate Talent

When asked how their perception of their innate talent affected their decision to join an ensemble, one hundred and fifteen students (44.50%) selected ‘No, it did not affect my decision. I chose not to participate for other reasons.’ One hundred and twelve students (25.69%) chose ‘No, it did not affect my decision. I chose to join an ensemble for other reasons.’ Seventy-two students (16.51%) selected ‘Yes, it affected my decision. I chose to participate in an ensemble because I think I am naturally talented.’ Fifty-eight students (13.30%) selected ‘Yes, it affected my decision. I chose not to participate in an ensemble because I don’t think I have natural talent.’

Figure 13

*Did this affect your decision to join an ensemble (band, choir, orchestras)*?
**Enjoyment of School Music**

Just over forty-three percent of participants (43.98%) reported that they enjoy in-school music. Almost forty-two and a half percent of participants reported that they sometimes enjoy in-school music. About fourteen and a half percent of participants (14.51%) reported that they do not enjoy in-school music.

**Figure 14**

*Do you enjoy music in school?*
Enjoyment of Out-of-School Music

Just under eighty percent of participants (79.14%) reported enjoying music outside of school. About seventeen and a half percent of students (17.46%) reported sometimes enjoying music outside of school. Only about three and a half percent (3.40%) reported that they do not enjoy music outside of school.

Figure 15

Do you enjoy music outside of school?
ADDRESSING STUDENT-PERCEIVED BARRIERS IN SECONDARY ENSEMBLES

Other Time Factors

Students were asked what other activities take up their time. They were encouraged to select all that apply. Two hundred and sixty-one students (30.17%) selected ‘Sports’. One hundred and seventy-three students (20.00%) selected ‘Technology’. One hundred and twenty-six students (14.57%) selected ‘After-School Clubs’ and one hundred and twenty-six students (14.57%) selected ‘Art’. Ninety-one students (10.52%) selected ‘Church’. Fifty-nine students (6.82%) chose ‘Foreign Language Courses’. Twenty-nine students (3.35%) selected ‘Community Work’.

**Figure 16**

*What other interests do you have that take up a lot of your time?*

![Bar chart showing the distribution of interests](chart.png)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After-School Clubs</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language Courses</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Work</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sub-Themes and Themes

Sub-themes which emerged from this data included racial group representation in ensembles, gender representation in ensembles, perceived SES representation in ensembles, peer and familial values as related to participation in ensembles, perceived personal talent as related
to participation in ensembles, personal taste in music as related to participation in ensembles, and non-musical time commitments as related to participation in ensembles. Students who reported being in an ensemble were mostly white, non-Hispanic students. The majority was also female. Most students in ensembles did not perceive ensemble participation to be too expensive for their family, while about half of the students who were not in an ensemble felt ensemble participation would be too expensive. Students had clear ideas of family and peer opinions on ensemble participation, but most students felt that these opinions only somewhat affected their choice to enroll or not. Most students who felt they had natural musical talent joined an ensemble, and most who felt they had no natural musical talent did not join an ensemble. Students who did not enjoy or sometimes enjoy school music were less likely to join an ensemble than those that did enjoy school music, even though an overwhelming majority of students enjoyed music in some capacity outside of school. Students reported several other time commitments, but overwhelmingly chose sports as the largest time commitment.

The three major themes that emerged from this data were: representation, time commitment, value systems. Student representation was not as diverse as the district demographic. Students struggle with making commitments to activities given the myriad of other activities available to them. Students’ value systems vary depending on their family and peer groups. These themes and their implications for music education will be discussed at length in Chapter Five.
Chapter V: Discussion and Implications

In Chapter One I introduced my study about Addressing Student-Perceived Barriers That Prevent Adolescent Students from Diverse Racial and Economic Backgrounds from Participating in Secondary School Ensembles and gave some information about my motivations for this research. In Chapter Two, I reviewed the existing literature regarding Music Pedagogies, Enrollment Demographics, and Accessibility. In Chapter Three, I described the methodology and my approach to analysis. In Chapter Four, I shared my findings. Here, in Chapter Five, I will share subthemes that I discovered through manipulating the data, the implications of these subthemes, and possible solutions to address them.

Based on the data presented, student-perceived barriers to ensemble participated included a lack of representation of specific minority groups, difficulty managing time commitments, and differing value systems. This research confirms the ideas put forth by some of the existing research I shared in Chapter Two. Shaw (2021) reported a lack of access to ensembles for students of minority groups. Bates (2012) felt that ensembles were inherently middle-class favoring. Putting these two ideas hand in hand, Culp and Clauhs (2020) suspected that economic strain, lack of minority representation, and familial scheduling conflicts discouraged participation. The Kodaly Envoy journal (2007) suggested that widely accepted sex stereotypes created a value system that made boys feel out of place in the music classroom. Lehmann, Sloboda, and Woody (2007) found that students’ personal value systems caused them to believe that their innate talent, or lack thereof, created musical success. While working with my data, I identified patterns in each of these areas.
Representation

Of the 176 respondents that were currently enrolled in an ensemble, 104 (59%) were female and 73 (41%) were male. The district reports a student body that is 48% female and 52% male. This shows a lack of male representation in ensembles as a whole, at least among the currently enrolled respondents. This supports the claims made in the 2007 Kodaly Envoy article.

In order to understand the demographic makeup of current ensembles, I inspected the self-identified race of students who reported being currently enrolled in an ensemble. Each minority group was represented proportionately with the district’s reported demographic makeup, so representation of minority groups within ensembles was not explicitly an issue on its own. However, when race was combined with students’ self-perception of their family financial situation, a lack of racial and economic representation became more pronounced. When asked if they felt being in an ensemble would be too expensive for their family, 195 checked ‘yes’ or ‘not sure’. Of those 195, 120 were non-white students. Of those 120 students, 80 were not in an ensemble. While this seems a small percentage in the overall pool of students (about 18%), it is this group of students that prior research expected would likely be left out (Bates, 2012; Culp and Clauhs, 2020; Elpus and Abril, 2019).

Time Commitment

Just over 36% of students reported that being too busy deterred them from joining an ensemble. A majority of these students were seventh graders. This is a concerning number of students who already feel a sense of overwhelm when it comes to time commitment even though they have only just begun their secondary education. The most popular time commitment was sports. However, within school, students were also faced with making course decisions that sometimes conflicted with ensemble involvement, even if they wanted to participate. There were
63 students between 7th and 9th grade who wanted to participate but reported having to choose between two conflicting electives. Some of these conflicting electives included technology courses foreign language courses, but not all possible elective conflicts were fully explored.

**Value Systems**

Middle and high school students are at an age of exploration. It is during this time that they build their personal value systems, and they pay attention to the value systems of their families and peers. Familial opinion may especially hold weight in a child’s decision to pursue music as they have likely been in that environment since birth, typically presenting them with only the musical opportunities and values offered by their families. While one might predict that external opinions would have a negative effect on students, this data showed that external opinions were more likely to have a positive influence when it came to ensemble enrollment. Of the 146 students who said their families did not value ensembles, only 16 reported that external opinions affected their decision to join or not join. However, of the 266 students who said their families found ensembles important, 63 students said that external opinions heavily influenced their decision. Similar to familial opinion, students were more likely to feel encouraged by friends to join an ensemble than they were to feel discouraged by their friends.

Perceived familial value systems varied between white and non-white students. Of the 173 non-white students represented, 79 (46%) of these students reported that their families did not value ensembles. In comparison, of the 272 white students represented, 100 (37%) of these students felt their families did no value ensembles. These statistics suggest that non-white families are less likely to place high value on music ensemble participation. Based on my previous data, without this value system in place, non-white students are less likely to join an ensemble. However, it is important to recall the possible factors that might affect a minority
ADDRESSING STUDENT-PERCEIVED BARRIERS IN SECONDARY ENSEMBLES

family’s view of school ensembles. Juliet Hess (2017) discussed that the traditionally Eurocentric music curriculum found in public schools makes minority students feel out of place and does not allow them to explore their own cultural traditions. These reasons alone might be enough to cause minority families to encourage their children to make a different elective choice. It could also be possible that minority families of disadvantaged SES would encourage their children to choose more college- and career-driven academics such as technology and foreign language.

There were two ways in which personal value systems and preferences could affect ensemble enrollment. The first was students’ perception of natural talent. There were 166 students who believed that they had no natural musical talent. While a majority of these 166 said that this did not ultimately affect their choice to enroll in ensemble, it is still a concerning percentage of students (about 37%) who believe they have little to no musical potential early on in their secondary education. The second personal value system was the students’ value of music inside and outside of school. Only about 43% of students responded ‘Yes’ when asked if they enjoyed music in school. In comparison, nearly 80% of students responded ‘Yes’ when asked if they enjoyed music outside of school. This disparity could simply exist because more students enjoy being passive music listeners rather than active musicians. On the other hand, it raises questions about the relevancy of the current music curriculum being presented to this particular group of students.

Implications

This research highlights important patterns in student choices and our country’s current music education frameworks. Considering these patterns can help create better environments for
authentic student learning, encourage music educators to branch out from current teaching practices, and inspire future research to fill in existing gaps.

The patterns highlighted in this data, especially among the subthemes, show that students are feeling a sense of overwhelm and need encouragement and support to thrive in the music classroom. My hope is that these overarching ideas will help move our music education frameworks into a direction that is more aware of student challenges and is authentically inclusive of students regardless of their backgrounds. Students would benefit from musical experiences that allow them room to explore all cultures meaningfully. They would also benefit from genuine encouragement from their music teachers from a young age on. This kind of encouragement could help reframe some of their personal beliefs about natural talent, the importance of the arts, and where they fit within ensemble classrooms. It could also help students learn to balance a larger myriad of activities that include the arts.

The patterns found in this research leave room for music educators to look for new ways to involve students in their music classrooms. First and foremost, music teachers need to make meaningful connections with all students, musical and non-musical. This can be difficult when music classrooms are often in a wing away from other classrooms. However, finding ways to get involved with students not already in the music program can create a connection and encourage students to try a music class or ensemble. Teachers can make these connections by starting or getting involved with an after-school club. They can make conversation while on lunch or recess duty. If schedules allow, they can also add a non-ensemble course to their teaching load like piano, guitar, or music technology classes. While the focus is to make ensembles more inclusive and appealing to a wide variety of students, non-ensemble courses can help music teachers get to know students who enjoy music but might avoid more performative music experiences.
Ensembles could also host an exploration day so that non-ensemble students gain an understanding of how the class works. All of these examples create opportunities for teachers to encourage a student to participate in an ensemble.

I feel it is important to emphasize that I do support and advocate for the traditional ensemble structure. However, I also recognize that offering only ensemble, performance-based classes does not serve the needs of all students. Based on this data, I believe we need to offer both ensemble and non-ensemble courses and utilize our non-ensemble courses to encourage musical growth. We should also use these non-ensemble classes to identify students who may truly enjoy an ensemble but have not been encouraged to try one. From this data, it is clear that young students crave and require encouragement in order to feel confident beginning and continuing their musical journeys. If they do not receive genuine support from their music educators, we may lose them before they have even begun.

Aside from connecting with students, it seems it may be equally important for music educators to reach the families of their students. Communicating with families about music ensembles and events will help students and their parents or guardians fully understand and take advantage of opportunities. It is important to consider barriers to this communication as well. Students from non-English speaking homes will need messages in their home language so that their families can understand the information being sent. Utilizing school interpreters (or, if not available, a free online digital translation service) can make the difference between a minority student joining or not joining a music ensemble, simply by providing non-English speaking families with the same information that English speaking families receive. Similarly, economic hardship can create a communication barrier. Parents and guardians may have trouble gaining
internet access or access to a device. Providing hard copies of information for students to take home can help remedy these problems and ensure equitable access to communication.

There are still gaps within this data that could inspire meaningful future research. As made clear in Chapter Four, several students selected the ‘Other’ option when available, but no further data was collected for them to elaborate what their other factors were. The potential data within these ‘Other’ responses could provide more detailed information that can help educators understand their students’ self-perceptions. This data also did not account for students who are in non-ensemble music courses or who take advantage of music opportunities outside of school instead of within the school day. Finally, when students were surveyed about what other activities took up a lot of their time, the time factors listed were based on my personal observations within my district. These time factors would likely vary from school to school, so this data may not be widely applicable. If I could change or add onto my process in future studies, I would like to gather more qualitative data by interviewing students and their families. This would provide telling data about the effects of familial support and would help researchers understand the relationship between students’ perceived values and the actual values of their families.

Throughout my research, it became clear that students feel most inclined to join a music ensemble when they feel represented, encouraged, and supported. Their family’s and peer’s opinions weigh in on their perception of ensembles, as do the opinions of teachers. They need assistance balancing time commitments. Music ensembles have seen a decline in enrollment throughout the last few decades. As current music education stands, ensembles run the risk of losing potential members to other classes and hobbies. Ensemble directors must learn to adjust their practices to welcome more students into their classrooms for the good of music education.
ADDRESSING STUDENT-PERCEIVED BARRIERS IN SECONDARY ENSEMBLES

as a whole. As Bob Dylan (1964) wrote, “The times they are a-changin',” - it is time for music educators to decide if they are ready to change, too.
ADDRESSING STUDENT-PERCEIVED BARRIERS IN SECONDARY ENSEMBLES

Resources

Dylan, B. (1964). The Times They Are A-Changin' [Recorded by Bob Dylan]. On The Times They Are A-Changin'. Columbia Studio A.


ADDRESSING STUDENT-PERCEIVED BARRIERS IN SECONDARY ENSEMBLES


Appendices
Appendix A
Consent letter

Institutional Review Board  Full Board Protocol Approval

Date 12/1/2021

Principal Investigator: Rachel Brahier
Protocol Number: 2021-43
Protocol Title: How middle school students choose ensembles
Protocol Approval Date: 11/4/2021
Protocol Expiration Date: 11/3/2022
Review Category: Full Board Review
UWSP FWA: 00017591

Dear Rachel:

The above-referenced human-subjects research project has been approved by the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Institutional Review Board (IRB) Committee. This approval is limited to the activities described in the approved protocol, and extends to the performance of these activities at each applicable site identified in the application for IRB review. In accordance with this approval, the specific conditions for the conduct of this research are listed below, and informed consent from subjects must be obtained as indicated. Additional conditions for the general conduct of human-subjects research may be detailed below.

Additional Conditions:

All individuals engaged in human-subjects research are responsible for compliance with all applicable UWSP Research Policies. The Principal Investigator is responsible for assuring all protocol personnel review and adherence to applicable policies for the conduct of human-subjects research.

The IRB maintains an official protocol file for each study to meet the University’s regulatory obligations for record keeping. Principal Investigators are responsible for maintaining all records related to the protocol, and are required to share with the IRB. The IRB is not responsible for maintaining study documents for researchers.

Your project approval expiration date is listed above. As a courtesy, approximately 30 and 60 days prior to the expiration of this approval, IRB Administration will notify you via e-mail reminding you to apply for continuing review. It is your responsibility to apply for continuing review and receive continuing approval for the duration of the study. Lapses in approval should be avoided to protect the safety and welfare of enrolled subjects. When you plan to close your study, submit a Protocol Closure Form to irb@uwsp.edu.

No changes are to be made to the approved protocol or study documents (i.e., consent forms, surveys, etc…) without prior review and approval of the IRB. To modify an existing protocol, complete the Protocol Modification Form and submit to irb@uwsp.edu.

If there are any injuries, problems, or complaints from participants, you must notify the IRB at irb@uwsp.edu within 24 hours.

If you have any questions, please contact me. Good luck with your project.

Sincerely,

David Barry, Ph.D.
IRB Chair
dbarry@uwsp.edu
Appendix B

Survey

Elective Ensemble Choices

My name is Miss Baumann. Some of you may have or have had me as a music teacher at John Muir. As part of my master’s research, I am inviting you to take a survey. Participation is voluntary. It will only take you a few minutes. I am researching to find why some students elect to join music ensembles, and why some don’t. I am hoping for your very honest opinions and answers. The surveys are completely anonymous. I will not see who writes which responses. There is no judgement - I’m just looking to gain knowledge!

If you begin the survey and decide not to complete it, you may exit the survey at any time. If you have questions, my email is pasted below.

Thank you for your help!
Miss Baumann
mbaumann@wausauschools.org

1. Gender
   - Male
   - Female
   - Non-binary

2. Race (select all that apply)
   - White
   - Black or African American
   - American Indian or Alaska Native
   - Asian
   - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

3/7/2022
3. Ethnicity

- Hispanic or Latino
- Not Hispanic or Latino

4. Grade

- 7th Grade
- 9th Grade

5. Are you currently in any in-school ensembles (choir, band, orchestra)?

- Yes
- No

6. If yes, what made you choose to join?
7. If yes, what made you choose to join? Check all that apply.

- [ ] I enjoy being in an ensemble and making music.
- [ ] My family encouraged me to join.
- [ ] My friends encouraged me to join.
- [ ] My friends are in the ensemble.
- [ ] I feel I am musically talented.
- [ ] I wanted to try something new.
- [ ] I wanted an easy class.
- [ ] I like the teacher.
- [ ] I feel a sense of belonging.
- [ ] Other

8. If not, which of the following reasons made you decide not to join? Check all that apply.

- [ ] I am not interested in music ensembles.
- [ ] I wanted to join, but was more interested in other classes can had to choose one.
- [ ] I don’t like to sing.
- [ ] I don’t like to play instruments.
- [ ] I don’t think my family could afford the cost.
- [ ] I don’t feel I fit in with the people who are in music ensembles.
- [ ] I don’t think that I am musically talented.
- [ ] I don’t get along with the teacher.
- [ ] I am too busy to join an ensemble.
- [ ] Other

3/7/2022
9. Do you think your parents/guardians would think being in an ensemble is too expensive for your family?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

10. What do you think your family thinks of music ensembles (choir, band, or orchestra)? Check all that apply.

- They value music and ensembles and encouraged me to join.
- They value music and ensembles but are okay with me pursuing other interests instead.
- They do not feel music ensembles are very important but wouldn't mind if I joined.
- They do not feel music ensembles are important and would not like if I joined one.
- Other

11. What do you think your peers think of music ensembles (choir, band, or orchestra)?

- My friends are in any ensembles and want me to participate with them.
- My friends are not in any ensembles but would respect me for participating.
- My friends are not in any ensembles and might think negatively of me for joining one.
- Other

12. How much did these opinions affect whether or not you joined an ensemble (band, choir, orchestras)?

1 = did not affect; 5 = greatly affected

1  2  3  4  5

0  0  0  0  0

3/7/2022
13. Do you feel you have natural musical talent?

- Yes
- No
- Some natural musical talent

14. Did this affect your decision to join an ensemble (band, choir, orchestras)?

- Yes, it affected my decision. I chose to participate in an ensemble because I think I am naturally talented.
- Yes, it affected my decision. I chose not to participate in an ensemble because I don't think I have natural talent.
- No, it did not affect my decision. I chose to join an ensemble for other reasons.
- No, it did not affect my decision. I chose not to participate for other reasons.

15. Do you enjoy music outside of school?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

16. Do you enjoy music in school?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes
17. What other interests do you have that take up a lot of your time?

☐ Sports
☐ Art
☐ After-School Clubs
☐ Community Work
☐ Church
☐ Foreign Language Courses
☐ Technology

18. What do you think music teachers could do to encourage more students to join school ensembles (band, choir, orchestras)?

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Microsoft. The data you submit will be sent to the form owner.

Microsoft Forms

3/7/2022