

A Phenomenological Investigation of Competition in High School Bands

by

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the lived experience of competition in high school band and the manner in which competition influences and frames band curricula. A hermeneutic phenomenological method based on the works of van Manen and Vagle was used to investigate what it was like for participants to be in competition. A theoretical framework organized around Schwab's commonplaces of education was used to interpret findings related to the curricular areas of the teacher, learner, subject matter, and milieu. I examined data through a lens incorporating principles of John Dewey's philosophy related to each of the commonplaces.

Twelve individuals participated in the study representing experiences had both as students and as music educators. Participants lived and taught in communities throughout the United States and brought differing levels of teaching and competitive experience. Data were generated through in-depth interviews and collaborative phenomenological texts. Research questions included: What is the lived experience of competing in a high school band like?; and, How does competition frame and influence high school band curricula?

Findings indicate that competition was a meaningful and influential part of participants' work as band directors and educational experiences as students. Competition was approached with tension as participants acknowledged negative concerns over the influence of competitions on their students, yet chose to engage in competitive activities. Marching band contests offered a creative outlet where directors could develop custom materials and they did so with a significant motivation to win. Competition was perceived as an influence on band directors' professional reputations, feelings of competence, and how

band programs were viewed in the community. Students were motivated by competitions and reacted strongly to competitive results such as rankings, ratings, and other distinctions.

Findings also indicate that band curricula emphasizing competition share similar curricular facets: (a) teachers carefully control and manage classroom activities and curricular choices; (b) students are viewed as skilled performers who are dependent upon their teachers for learning; (c) subject matter is narrowly considered around measurable behavioral objectives and repertoire selection; and, (d) the educational environment is dominated by the teacher who may use competition to motivate students to work and practice more.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
CHAPTER	
1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY	1
My Experiences	2
Statement of the Problem.....	11
Purpose of the Study	13
Research Questions	13
Research Design	14
Defining Competition	19
Historical Roots of Competition in Band.....	22
Topics in the Literature.....	30
Significance of the Study.....	32
Chapters of the Document.....	34
2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE	36
How Can Competitions Fairly and Accuately Evaluate Performances?.....	39
Does Competition Influence Students to Work Harder?.....	66
How Does Competition Influence Musical Materials and Methods?	82
Experiences of Being in a High School Performing Ensemble	87
Position Papers and Essays	90
Curriculum.....	95

CHAPTER	Page
3 METHOD	103
Phenomenology.....	104
Theoretical Framework.....	112
Participant Selection	127
Data Generation.....	138
Organization and Data Analysis.....	143
Trustworthiness.....	147
Ethical Considerations	151
Timeline	151
4 BEING IN COMPETITION	153
Phenomenological Perspective.....	153
Organization of Findings.....	155
Tension.....	157
Planning, in Competition.....	163
Results	178
Culture.....	206
Chapter Summary	217
5 UNDERSTANDING COMPETITION THROUGH CURRICULUM	221
Understanding Competition through Curriculum: The Teacher	223
Understanding Competition through Curriculum: The Learner.....	233
Understanding Competition through Curriculum: Subject Matter.....	243
Understanding Competition through Curriculum: Milieu.....	248

CHAPTER	Page
Answering Research Question 2	254
6 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS	260
The Phenomenon of Being in Competition	263
Planning	268
Results	272
Competition as a Curricular Phenomenon.....	297
Tradition	333
Implications	335
REFERENCES	351
APPENDIX	
A INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL.....	372

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Participant Demographics, Perspectives, and Settings	129

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Primary Themes and Subthemes Discussed in this Chapter	156

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Competition was a significant part of my experience as a high school band student and work as a high school band director. Many of my most vivid memories of high school are connected to band competitions and some of the most trying and rewarding moments of my early teaching career took place as a part of organized band contests. My experiences are likely similar to many other music educators as competition is an established practice in American high school bands (Humpheys, 1989; Keene, 1982), and competitive opportunities exist in every state (Music for All, n.d.; NAFME, n.d.). The ubiquity of competitive opportunities and degree to which these events are promoted in the field of music education make competition a likely part of many students' musical experiences in band.

This study is a phenomenological investigation of competition in high school bands and how competition may frame and influence band curricula. Twelve participants shared their lived experiences as high school band students and directors to inform this study. Their experiences allow for a broader exploration and understanding of what this phenomenon represents, as van Manen (1990) explained, "we gather other people's experiences so we may become more experienced ourselves" (p. 62). Before sharing the participants' perspectives, I first offer my own. I am not a participant in the study, however, my experiences are a part of how I approached this inquiry. As van Manen (1990) explains, "the problem of phenomenological inquiry is not always that we know too little about the phenomenon, but that we know too much" (p. 46). While I will discuss the particular processes I used to account for my personal experiences, suppositions, and feelings in chapter three, I offer the following description as a means for the reader to know my relationship with the

phenomenon and the experiences I carried with me as I completed the study. The following section is a lived experience description (van Manen, 2014, p. 298) of my experiences, both as a high school student and as an early-career music educator.

My Experiences

High School

Band competition in many ways set the tone for my high school music experience. I attended high school in Montana at a large school with a well-known music program. My high school band was one of the few competitive marching groups in the state. Montana is known for its harsh winters so our marching season was short and we had to travel out of state to compete.

The band was large. I recall the first meeting where 250 of us were crammed into a room designed to comfortably hold 110. High school band was quite different from middle school band in a number of ways. The marching season was short, but filled with performances. We performed at each home football game, a parade through downtown, and most importantly, a competition for which we would travel out of state to attend. I had never traveled as a student before and the enormity of the band and the frenetic schedule were somewhat intimidating.

Early band experiences were difficult. I was not a great trombone player as a freshman and what I lacked in my playing ability I made up for in my poor coordination and clumsiness. Learning formations was a challenge. A few other students helped me figure it out, and gradually I got to the point where I was marching to the right places, but frequently doing so on the wrong foot. Marching was hard for me and my lack of skills was noticed by others.

Upperclassmen got frustrated with my slow pace. A number of them had marched in drum and bugle corps during the summer and they were marching experts. In the low brass section, there was one particular leader who was an incredible marcher and quite effective at letting me know that my mistakes on the field would cost the band points in the upcoming contest. I became frustrated with his persistent and quite public negative feedback and began to dread marching band rehearsals. Plus, as the season progressed, the mood at the rehearsals was becoming increasingly intense.

The contest took place in early October. We had been rehearsing every day in class and twice a week in the evening for the entire month of September. Looking back on the experience, I cannot believe it was just one month; it seemed much longer. The competition consisted of two performances. Bands would perform once in the morning or early afternoon and then the highest scoring groups were invited to perform again as part of the finals. I had no idea what to expect. We performed in both rounds of the contest and everything went well. In the evening performance I miscounted one of the moves, turned early, and briefly collided with another band member. I was immediately scared that my misstep would cost the band and that others would find out about my mistake. Fortunately, I did not see a judge around me when it occurred, so I hoped it would not be noticed. After the performance all the bands were asked to line up on the field and the results were announced. We won! We were the top band in our division and were second place in the overall contest to a band from Idaho. We were overjoyed and I was also relieved. My mistake had not cost us. Our director was thrilled and the bus ride home felt like a several-hundred-mile victory parade. It felt really good to win. The victory stayed with me

throughout high school. When we returned to Montana, parents had prepared a welcoming party and there was a celebration for us at the school.

Marching band was the major area where we felt competition, although we were adjudicated frequently in concert band as well, these events could not have been less important. Where we traveled out-of-state for marching band contests, my school frequently hosted the concert festival. Instead of a bus trip, we performed in our high school's gymnasium. We always earned superior ratings. Always. In fact, the superior was just an expectation and my director never really discussed it. I think I assumed that everyone got superior ratings for a while, but as I got older I started to realize we were unique. The festivals would post score sheets in the corridors, and you could see how groups from various schools fared. It was not until I had studied the sheets that I realized that getting a superior was not common. Once I compared our results to others I started to feel great about what my band was accomplishing and started to idolize my director for helping us do so well.

College

I went to college in a neighboring state. As a junior and senior, I considered my director a role model and music education became a clear career choice. I was the only student from my high school to attend my university and I was quite proud of where I was from, and in particular the band program I was a part of. I remember vividly my first aural skills class when I started music school. Aural skills was taught as one large section for all the music majors and there were 40 to 50 students in the room. We had one faculty member who was charged with leading instruction and then a cadre of upperclassmen undergraduates were present as teaching assistants. As class began, the professor welcomed us to the school

and then asked “Who here is from a great high school music program?” My hand and several others shot up. He then asked “Who played in a band that got superior ratings?” Again, I was eager to share my success so I raised my hand. Next he inquired “Did anyone get a I at solo and ensemble festival?” As a matter of fact, I had as a senior so I raised my hand again. I was feeling good. Then finally he asked, “Did anyone here win the John Philip Sousa Award at their high school?” Well, again, I was guilty as charged, along with three or four others. I felt great.

My first music professor had just pointed out how successful everyone had been in high school and I stacked up pretty well! Then, he turned to the group of upperclassmen and asked, “Do any of you care about anything I just asked?” None of them raised their hands. Not one. I was crushed and felt like I had been completely manipulated. It was also one of the first times I questioned whether or not all of the awards and accolades that my band had won in high school really mattered. It was a powerful lesson that was reinforced throughout college for me. As I continued through college I started to have genuinely conflicted feelings about my high school experiences. I had put such a great amount of value into the competitive success that my band had achieved, but now I was not supposed to think that was important. This conflicted feeling persists for me.

Early Teaching

I carried conflicting feelings about competition into my early teaching. I felt like I should not care about ratings and results, but at the same time felt that if I was doing a good job, good ratings would follow. I was the band director at a large high school in Idaho. I was a 23-year-old beginning teacher and was excited to lead an established program. The band consisted of approximately 80 students, an average size for the area, and they were

accustomed to competing. Most of the bands in the area participated in two or three marching band contests per season: two local and one out-of-state. In the spring, all of the area bands attended a concert festival typically held at a local university.

My first year at the school was overwhelming in a lot of ways. I was hired in July and a band camp had been scheduled for the second week of August. My predecessor had selected music for the marching band before he left, but I did not like it, so I changed the show at the last minute. I did not know anyone in town, and I had to quickly assemble a staff. The district provided funds for an assistant director as well as a colorguard coach, and I knew I could use the help. When I arrived in town I met an alumnus of the high school who had started a business designing marching shows. He expressed interest in working with me, and I was overjoyed when he agreed to be an assistant director.

My relationship with the assistant director became tenuous. He was a product of the local musical community and he emphasized the importance of doing well at contests. He talked about rivalries with other high schools and it quickly became apparent to me that the festivals were a big part of establishing yourself as a music educator in this community. He emphasized the contests to the students and wanted them to be motivated to do well at the competitions. I echoed his sentiments. The students were motivated and as we competed it was clear that they took the results very seriously. I occasionally thought back to what my aural skills teacher would say and shook my head. My feelings were conflicted, but if we were going to compete, I felt like it was important that we try to win.

The season was difficult. We were motivating the students to get great results but we were not performing well. We finished near the middle of our division at all of the contests. Each contest became a process of evaluating how bad the results were and hoping we could

make the next show better. We were performing below my own and the students' expectations. No one felt successful and the poor results made the ambiance of the band far worse.

As we entered concert band season things improved. I felt like I was establishing a better relationship with the band and I enjoyed how we sounded. The concert band festival took place in April and we had been hard at work. I did not stress a great deal about concert band festival. I never had when I was in high school, and I approached it somewhat perfunctorily. We performed and it did not go well. We were in the second movement of our most difficult piece and the trumpets did not come in when they were supposed to. The band panicked and there were about seven measures of chaos before we all unified at the next rehearsal number. It was terrible and I was humiliated. The students felt terrible (ironically with the exception of the trumpet players who failed to enter) and we left with ratings of "excellent," which of course felt anything but excellent. The performance had a lasting impact on me.

A couple of weeks after the festival I was taking some instruments to the local repair shop to be inspected. The repair shop had a very social atmosphere about it. The two women who ran the business knew all of the local teachers and were a great source of band director gossip. When I came in they told me they had heard about the festival performance. I was mortified when they shared with me what they had been told. A band director from a neighboring school was quite critical of my work. According to them he had said "Emmett's been given this great program and he's killed it. The band can't play." I was heartbroken. I felt a combination of anger, humiliation, and embarrassment. I had never considered that the performance would be viewed so negatively by other directors.

It was hard for me to get over that comment. I worried that even though I had only heard of this one director's opinion, the perspective might be pervasive throughout the area. As the school year ended, I thought a lot about competing and reflected a great deal about why I interpreted the ratings so personally. I had conflicted feelings, and again thought back to my time in college when all the ratings and scores were irrelevant. I decided I needed to de-emphasize results from that point on. I was going to take the opposite approach that I had the prior year. I was going to be all about the band, the students, and the music. We would go to competitions, but my constant mantra would be to do the best we could for ourselves. I did so somewhat hypocritically as I was still very much hoping to compete well, but I consistently told my students that the scores were inconsequential.

It worked. I decided I needed to do more myself, so that summer I learned how to write drill. I selected the marching band music and designed a show that was appropriately difficult and engaging for our audiences. I did not hire an assistant director that year and instead just had staff members who assisted with colorguard and drumline. I was much more in control.

The season began and immediately the spirit of the band was different. The students had known me for a year and I knew them. We had a good rapport and they already sounded good, and they knew it. We had our first home football game, and the band played at halftime and parents were excited about the show. It was such a contrast from the previous season. As the competitions went on, we did well. We were second place in our division at our out-of-state contest and had a strong showing at a local event. The band was doing great and I was feeling infinitely more competent.

One contest remained and it was the most important. At the end of each marching season the local university hosted a competition in their stadium. The venue held 35,000 people and the event is the most significant contest of the year for area schools. A few weeks before the contest, there was an organizational meeting which a few other directors and I attended. I sat near one of the most established directors in the area whose band had a dynastic competitive record. During the meeting he commented, "You know, I think we might just enter for comments this year and not get a rating."

The directors in the room were stunned. Entering for comments only would end his dynasty and people would notice if the most successful band in the area was not participating for a rating. After I got over the shock of his idea, I became excited. Perhaps he had the same conflicted feelings as I did about competing and he was taking action. Foolishly, I decided to join his cause and added that if he was comfortable going comments only that I would do the same. I did not realize how stupid a decision that was. Here was this long-established and incredibly successful band director threatening to take his band out of competitive consideration and then there was me, the second year teacher who was killing programs. I was quickly put in my place. A recently retired teacher quickly reminded me of my youth and inexperience and encouraged me to learn more about teaching before I offered my perspectives so boldly. I did not speak again at the meeting, and the other director acquiesced to entering the festival for the same competitive consideration as everyone else.

The final contest happened and our performance went well. We were second in our division and third overall. When results were announced I was overjoyed. It was the best

rating that the band had earned in the last several years and it felt great to do well. It was like my freshmen year of high school all over again. The students were elated and I was stoked.

I felt vindicated, but hypocritical. I had been telling the students all season that the results did not matter and here I was letting the results define my professional work. When I received the sheet with a summary of all the different bands' scores, I immediately looked to see how my band finished in comparison to the director that had accused me of killing the program. I was petty, but the hurt of the prior year was still there. I could not help but feel good, but also felt guilt that this should not feel this good. I was conflicted.

As concert band festival approached I began to feel competitive stress again. This was the event that was so heartbreaking for me the prior year. This was the place where my competence was questioned. I again emphasized to the students that we just needed to prepare our best and all would go well, but in the back of my mind I was thinking about redemption. I desperately wanted a good rating but could not express this to the students.

The performance went well. The band received a superior rating from all of the judges. I was thrilled and the students were thrilled. The students felt like they had worked hard and that they had truly earned the rating. I was so proud that they were happy with how they sounded. I again felt vindicated. I looked to see how my band fared compared to the director who had made the negative comment about me. I held a grudge and I could not help but compare. My band's score was higher, so I guess I won.

The weekend following the festival, I was again dropping off some instruments at the local music store and heard that my band's festival performance had been a topic of conversation. One of the owners of the store informed me that a different director had called the band's performance "one of the best he's ever heard at festival." I again felt great.

What a different feeling. I felt like I had gone from the new director who is killing a program to a respected educator. Quite a change of course and what a different feeling for a second year teacher.

What shocks me as I recall all of these experiences is that I was so focused on my professional reputation. I am stunned by my vanity. My second year of teaching felt like it was more about the students and their success, but it had this constant undercurrent of me trying to resolve a grudge. I wish I could say that the grudge was not a part of how I engaged with my job, but it was and it influenced my students' education. Competition facilitated my grudge, my insecurities, my desire for redemption, and my feelings of elation and success.

My feelings are conflicted. I loved my high school band experience but regret that I valued the competitive success more than all the great musical moments that occurred. My college experiences introduced a lot of skepticism about competition into my thinking about this topic. It was in college where I began to question my high school beliefs. I now look back on these experiences and often wonder what it would have been like had I never competed in band. Would I have valued being a part of my high school band as much? Would I have taken such an interest in music education? Would I have had less stress as a beginning teacher? Would I have defined my success differently? I cannot definitively answer these questions. I am a product of my experiences. Instead, I want to better understand my experiences and the experiences of others in competition in high school bands.

Statement of the Problem

Band is one of the most visible and well-known areas of music education in the United States. Allsup (2012) has called it “one of the successes of public music education” and commented that experiences in band have “shaped the musical and social experiences of

generations of young people” (p. 179). For many alumni of school band programs, a significant part of their experience in a school band has been competition. Competition is so prevalent that in a number of states one of the primary services provided by professional organizations in music education is the sponsoring and administration of competitions and events (Barnes & McCashin, 2005; Keene, 1982; Payne, 1997). Whether through All-State Honor Groups, Solo and Ensemble Festivals, Marching Band Competitions, organizations such as Bands of America and Music for All, Concert Band Festivals, or the All-American Marching Band sponsored by the National Association for Music Education, competition is endemic in music education and particularly pervasive in band.

Competing is a common part of the American high school band experience, and I posit that it is a substantial aspect of the band curriculum. Competition communicates a certain set of educational and musical values. Through competing, students may learn what is most important in their musical development, what is most valued, and the experiences that are considered most significant. Similarly, teachers who compete may approach their work feeling pressure to prioritize certain skills and knowledge, to achieve competitive success, and to meet the competitive expectations of their students, schools, communities, and colleagues. As Eisner (1998) explained:

Values are expressed in what we choose to assess in school, the amount of time we devote to various subjects, and in the location of the time that is assigned to what we teach. Our educational priorities are not expressed by our testimonials or our publicly prepared curriculum syllabi, but in our actions. By our works we are known. (p. 40)

If we are known by our works, and our works communicate our values, then what is communicated through competition? What is meaningful to students about competing? What is meaningful to teachers about competing? What values are communicated to both

teachers and students? Who influences the competitive experiences? Essentially, what is it like to compete? This curiosity about the phenomenon of competing shaped this study.

Purpose of the Study

Band competitions are a ubiquitous element of American music education. While not every band competes, the opportunity to do so is present in every state and competition is a defining part of many band students' high school music experience. This study examines what it is like to compete and the manner in which band curricula may be informed and framed by competition. While competition can manifest itself in multiple ways within the high school band, this study narrowly examines interscholastic high school band competitions involving both concert and marching bands.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- What is the lived experience of competing in a high school band like?

This question specifically examines the experience of competing in high school bands. Participants' accounts of attending competitions, preparing for contests, and reacting to results following events are discussed through this question. The findings related to this research question provide a human perspective on band competition and describe the meanings people who participated in this study made from their competitive experiences.

- How does competition frame and influence high school band curricula?

This question examines the manner in which competition may influence band curriculum choices. Teachers make myriad decisions regarding what their students' experience in band and the extent to which competition might influence the pedagogical techniques used, subject matter choices made, and manner in which students are considered in curricular

choices relate directly to curriculum. Findings related to this research question discuss the broader influence competition may have on students' and teachers' experiences in band.

Research Design

This study was informed by the lived experiences of twelve participants who have competed as either band directors, high school band students, or both. I employed a phenomenological research design that interpreted the meanings of participants' lived experiences. Van Manen (1990) explained how phenomenology focuses on meaning:

In phenomenological research the emphasis is always on the meaning of lived experience. The point of phenomenological research is to “borrow” other people's experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience in the context of the whole of human experience. (p. 63)

This study provides insight into the meaning of competing through the experiences and reflections of the twelve participants.

All of the participants' experiences took place as planned parts of formal music offerings in American schools. Competition in high school band is a curricular experience. To better understand the curricular elements of the phenomenon, I examined the experiences using practical curriculum inquiry (Schwab, 1970). Practical inquiry examines how curriculum is experienced in action by teachers and students, offering a means to better understand how the curricular choices associated with competition are felt and lived by those in music programs.

Phenomenological Inquiry

Phenomenology is an established method of qualitative inquiry employed in research in both general and music education. The choice of phenomenological inquiry for this study was both conceptual and methodological in nature. I wished to find a means to specifically

understand how competition is experienced and lived, rather than focus on specific cases of people who compete. By focusing on the phenomenon of competition, phenomenology provided a means to better understand competing through people's experiences. As Vagle (2014) explained, the phenomenologist "is not studying the individual but is studying how a particular phenomenon manifests and appears in the lifeworld" (p. 23). This requires a delicate distinction as it is through the participants' experiences that the phenomenon becomes visible, yet "the 'unit of analysis' in phenomenology is the phenomenon, not the individual" (Vagle, 2014, p. 23).

Phenomenology originated with the work of the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl (1859 –1938). It has been further developed by scholars and philosophers such as Heidegger (1962), Merleau-Ponty (1962), Giorgi (1985), and van Manen (1990).

Phenomenology serves as both a philosophical school and mode of qualitative inquiry. Because of this dual identity and the variety of phenomenological perspectives developed, it is important to ground a study in a particular phenomenological tradition. I provide a detailed discussion of the facets of my phenomenological framework in comparison to other methods in chapter 3.

The goal of this hermeneutic phenomenological study is to interpret and describe the participants' experiences to better understand the meaning of competing. The goal is ambitious and as van Manen (1990) explained, has inherent shortcomings:

To *do* hermeneutic phenomenology is to attempt to accomplish the impossible: to construct a full interpretive description of some aspect of the lifeworld, and yet to remain aware that lived life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal. (p. 18, emphasis in original)

This study cannot explain all the myriad meanings associated with the phenomenon but can contribute to the understanding of competing by interpretively describing these participants' experiences.

The core phenomenological question of this study is what is it like to be in competition? It is a question of description and of meaning. Through interpreting experience, phenomenology attempts to answer questions that center on “what something is really like” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 42). Doing this requires one to make a distinction about how experience is viewed.

This study takes a decidedly ontological view of experience where competing is a phenomenon with which participants have found themselves in the world. This differs from seeing competition as a phenomenon to which participants have directed their attention or consciousness. In describing hermeneutic phenomenological questions, Vagle (2014) explained that “phenomena, in this case, are conceived as the ways we find-ourselves-in the world—in-love, in-pain, in-hate, in-distress, in-confusion,” or in this study, in-competition. The use of the preposition “in” is particularly important. Being in-competition connects to a state of being rather than a means of knowing.

Finally, this method of this phenomenological study features elements from multiple phenomenological scholars, but primarily the work of van Manen (1990). I have additionally employed processes outlined by Moustakas (1994) and organizing principles offered by Vagle (2014). I have been deliberate in situating this study within the hermeneutic phenomenological method, however, I borrow processes developed in other phenomenological traditions. Phenomenology presents a challenge because as van Manen (1990) commented, “it has been said that the method of phenomenology and hermeneutics

is that there is no method” (p. 30). To structure this study, I sought out processes that would assist in crafting the research, but that would not contradict the guiding philosophical principles. To this point, I look to van Manen’s (1990) distinction between methodology, and processes and techniques. Van Manen (1990) explained that methodology includes “the philosophic framework, the fundamental assumptions and characteristics” (p. 27), but is separate from processes and techniques, which involve the “practical procedures that one can invent or adopt in order to work out a certain research method” (p. 28). I have borrowed processes from Moustakas, who advocates for a conflicting phenomenological method, in a manner consistent with hermeneutic phenomenological principles.

Method

Participants were recruited through postings on social media networks and personal correspondence. I sought diverse perspectives on the phenomenon including those of both male and female band directors, people who had experienced the phenomenon only as a student, and persons from urban and rural settings. The study included twelve participants and the overall pool met my desired criteria. Data were generated over a period of 10 months, which included one unstructured interview and one semi-structured interview. In addition to interviews, I interacted with participants through email correspondence and collaboratively-edited individualized phenomenological accounts. I used thematic analysis based on procedures established by van Manen (1990) to organize findings and employed practical inquiry (Schwab, 1973) as a means to examine the findings through a curricular lens.

Practical Inquiry

To examine competition as a curricular phenomenon, I employ practical inquiry, a term used by Joseph Schwab in his writings on curriculum in the late twentieth century. Schwab (1970, 1973) recommended that all curriculum be developed and examined emphasizing the real people and activities involved with teaching and learning. Schwab explained, “Curriculum in action treats real things: real acts, real teachers, real children, things richer than and different from their theoretical representations” (1970, p. 633). Schwab believed it was essential to see curriculum as it was implemented and not theoretically as it is imagined. At the core of his argument was the thought that curriculum development should be grounded in the practical and specific situations in which it will be eventually enacted:

Theories of curriculum and of teaching and learning cannot alone tell us what and how to teach, because the question of what and how to teach arise in concrete situations loaded with concrete particulars of time, place, person, and circumstance. (1971, p. 494)

To facilitate curriculum development and inquiry, Schwab offered specific areas that should be investigated related to curriculum. He posited four commonplaces of education: the teacher, the learner, the subject matter, and the milieu. Curriculum should be developed considering the particulars of who will be teaching, who will be learning, the educational environment and context in which the learning and teaching will take place, and the subject matter that is to be addressed. As Schwab explained:

Defensible educational thought must take account of four commonplaces of equal rank: the learner, the teacher, the milieu, and the subject matter. None of these can be omitted without omitting a vital factor in educational thought and practice. (1973, pp. 508-509)

Each of the commonplaces is viewed equally, an essential component of the process. Schwab was sensitive to the issues that may arise when a particular commonplace is emphasized at the expense of the other three. For example, he discussed how an emphasis on subject matter can fail to take into account the specific people and context in which the learning will take place, while an emphasis on learners may leave out important subject matter. Schwab believed viewing each of the commonplaces equally provided the opportunity to develop a balanced and relevant curriculum.

Schwab had developed the commonplaces as a means for curriculum development, but they also serve as a useful heuristic for examining curricular practices. Schubert (1986) explained that the practical inquiry which Schwab espoused provides meaningful insight into curriculum. Practical inquiry can not only aid in the development of new curricula, but can also provide a reflective examination of existing educational practices. Schubert explained:

Practical inquiry centers on deliberation, the human search for meaning and understanding that enriches groups and institutions as they continuously refine their sense of value and direction and the means to move toward it. (1986, p. 288)

Through practical inquiry educators can refine educational practices to better achieve educational aims. The commonplaces provide a means to examine the specifics of educational situations as they are lived. In fact, Schubert specifically recommended that phenomenological research be used to learn about the specific lived experiences related to curricula (1986, p. 288).

Defining Competition

Exploring experiences related to competition requires a functional definition of what competition is. Kohn (1992) offered a helpful framework in his book *No Contest: The Case Against Competition*. While this text frames the use of competition in education from a

negative point of view, Kohn offered a framework helpful in creating an operational definition of competition for this study.

Kohn organizes competition into two distinct categories: structural and intentional (p. 4). Structural competition is situational and has a win/lose framework. It is characterized by what Kohn calls “mutually exclusive goal attainment” (Kohn, 1992, p. 6). Simply put, in a structural competition in order for one person to win, others must lose. For example, in a basketball game, only one team can win. There is a scarcity of success to be pursued by both teams as each wants to be the winner. Most sporting events would be considered examples of structural competition.

In music, any event in which rankings are assigned or one group is awarded a prize over others can be considered structural competition. In these situations, only one band can earn the top ranking, so competitors vie for that single spot. The competitors need not be performing at the same time as is the case in a basketball game. The key element is the inclusion of a distinction, award, or ranking that is not achievable by everyone. Similarly, job interviews and college admissions can be seen as examples of structural competitions. Many people apply for a single position, or more students apply for admission to a college than the college can accept. As long as there is a scarcity of success, the structure of the event dictates the competitive framework.

Intentional competition is attitudinal, as Kohn explains: “here we are simply talking about an individual’s competitiveness, his or her proclivity for besting others” (1992, p. 5). Scarcity of success is not a factor in this type of competition, it is simply a situation in which people wish to be viewed more positively than others. This can be seen in music festivals in which only ratings are awarded. There is no structure preventing all participants from

receiving a top rating, but some may desire to earn higher ratings than others and use ratings as a means of comparison.

Bernard (1960) offered an additional view of competition from the standpoint of how success is determined in the event. He described two categories of competition: autonomic and decisive. In autonomic competition, success is determined by the event itself. For example, in a basketball game, the winner is decided by the number of times the ball passes through the hoop. The team that gets the ball to go through the hoop the most times wins. Conversely, in a decisive competition, success is determined by a decision maker as in the case of a job interview. A person or persons award the position to someone considered to be the best candidate.

Most music contests are decisive competitions in which a judge or panel of judges is hired to evaluate performances. A decisive competition can be either intentional or structural. In a music contest, a judge could be asked to rank performances as would be appropriate in a structural competition, or assign rankings and/or provide feedback to performers. Participants with an attitude aligned with intentional competition could then use the judge's feedback to influence their judgements of their abilities in relation to others.

Finally, it is important to understand the role evaluation of music performances plays in musical competition. Without evaluation, structural competition in music cannot occur. Radocy (1986) has written extensively on the topic of assessment in music and explains the quandary of evaluating musical performances:

Evaluation of musical performance obviously cannot be quantified by counting: there are no linear or logarithmic performance units. A detailed evaluative description of a performance, however, can be written; several descriptions may be compared for commonalities. Performances can be ranked directly or compared on the basis of some set of global or holistic numeric ratings. Performances can also be

assigned to a category, as in the widely used festival rating system. Again, the quantification is not simple and direct; it is based on someone's judgement. (p. 24)

Radocy offers a number of methods for evaluating performances but acknowledges that the results of the evaluation are always subjective.

Historical Roots of Competition in Band

Competition has deep roots in American music with evidence of music competitions being held as early as 1737 (Mark & Gary, 1999). Keene (1982) noted that the first contest including music students was a singing contest held in 1897. As bands became a part of school music programs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they began to compete as well (Humphreys, 1989). The band contest movement started in the late 1910s and early 1920s and is credited as being a major factor in the growth of music programs following World War I (Hash, 2015; Humphreys, 1989; Keene, 1982;). Kansas was among the first states to hold a contest with the All-Kansas Music Competition held in 1912 (Keene, 1982). Other states followed with events in Missouri, Oklahoma, Michigan, Connecticut, and Wisconsin (Fonder, 1989; Keene, 1982). As the contest movement spread from state to state, competition became a topic of interest in music education periodicals (Dykema, 1923). The first national band contest was held in Chicago in 1923 (Humphreys, 1989). Many of these early contests were sponsored and run by music industry entities such as the Band Instrument Manufacturing Association or the Conn Company (Hansen, 2005; Humphreys, 1989; Keene, 1982; Whitehill, 1969).

The roots of many of current competitive practices can be traced to the early National Band Contests. This is surprising as the 1923 National Band Contest was plagued with problems (Humphreys, 1989). The event was poorly organized, only one judge was hired to rate the groups performing, and the instrumentation and repertoire varied so

significantly from group to group that many felt it was unfair to compare them (Humphreys, 1989; Keene, 1982). Despite the challenges of the first event, the contest was extremely popular and continued on for several years. Keene (1982) celebrated the contest movement's success, as positioning contests as "an easy and natural vehicle for a public relations tour de force" (p. 303).

The 1923 National Band Contest was organized and run by the National Association of Band Instrument Manufacturers (Holz, 1962; Maddy, 1957). Following the inaugural contest, the sponsors felt that the "band contests should be conducted by school organizations rather than by the industry" (Maddy, 1957, p. 30). Subsequent national contests were organized by a collaboration between the National Association for the Advancement of Music and the Music Supervisors National Conference (Maddy, 1957). The tradition has continued, and professional music education organizations such as the National School Band Association (Birge, 1966; Humphreys, 1989) and various state and national associations were formed with a key part of their mission being to assist in the administration of contests (Keene, 1982). By running the contests through music education organizations, the influence of industry was reduced and instrumental music educators were able to discuss issues, ameliorate some of the concerns with the early events, and raise the overall performance standards of the groups competing (Keene, 1982).

Early contests were confronted with a number of challenges. Among the most serious was the need to standardize the performances of the groups participating. Early contests featured bands with significant varieties of instrumentation performing an array of musical selections (Humphreys, 1989; Maddy, 1957). It was difficult for people to compare the performances. After the initial success of the 1923 National Band Contest, the contest

movement proliferated to include multiple state and local events (Humphreys, 1989). Contests were a new phenomenon and music educators required assistance in preparing for and organizing the events. To aid educators, the Music Educators National Conference Committee on Instrumental Affairs along with the National Bureau for the Advancement of Music published their first band contest bulletin in 1924 (Humphreys, 1989; Maddy, 1957). The document included “lists of compositions recommended for state contests, together with recommendations for conducting and judging state band contests; prescribed conditions under which trophies would be furnished by the Bureau to winning bands and members of winning bands in state contests” (Maddy, 1957, p. 30).

The first band contest bulletin in 1924 addressed issues related to administration of contests and repertoire, but the problem of instrumentation remained. Contests had to confront the ongoing issue that, unlike the orchestra, the band had no established standard instrumentation. The Music Educators National Conference, National Association for the Advancement of Music (Humphreys, 1989; Maddy, 1957) and the American Bandmasters Association attempted to solve the issue, however with different motivations.

The Music Educators National Conference (MENC) and National Association for Advancement of Music (NAAM) were both primarily interested in improving the judging practices at their contests and the standardization of instrumentation was of critical concern. According to Maddy (1957), instrumentation became a formal part of the judging rubric beginning with the 1927 band contests, however the standard instrumentation was not set until the following year. Finally, in 1927 the first standard instrumentation was published in the “School Band Contests Booklet” (Maddy, 1957, p. 30) and was to be implemented for contests taking place in 1928. The published instrumentation required 68 musicians

including a preponderance of woodwinds and a stunning requirement of 24 clarinets, as they would “take the place of the string choir of the symphony orchestra” (Maddy, 1957, p. 31).

While the contest organizers worked towards establishing their standardized instrumentation, the American Bandmasters Association worked separately to achieve the same end. The bandmasters were primarily concerned with the lack of band music published in a manner that would allow the same version to be played by multiple different groups. They particularly felt that the variety of band instrumentations reflected poorly on the band idiom when compared to music written for orchestra (Manfredo, 2006). To this point, John Philip Sousa (1930), the renowned composer and bandmaster, commented:

The orchestra has had a decided advantage over the wind band, because from the time of Haydn, the father of the orchestra, up to the present time, its orchestration has not changed. (p. 28)

Sousa lamented that band instrumentation, particularly military bands and professional bands varied so significantly that publishing music that was appropriate for all of the groups was impossible (Manfredo, 2006). After much deliberation, the American Bandmasters Association set standard “symphonic band” instrumentation of 72 instruments.

The American Bandmasters Association and Music Educators National Conference did not work together on solving the problem of instrumentation, as the American Bandmasters Association was primarily concerned with publishing and the standing of the band in comparison to the symphony orchestra. The American Bandmasters Association was not specifically worried about the contests; however, I include both groups because eventually their efforts overlap. The initial instrumentation which was set by the Music Educators National Conference for the contests was not viewed positively. The list was met with opposition from band directors, school administrators, and members of the music

industry such as instrument manufacturers and publishers (Maddy, 1957). Members of the American Bandmasters Association were called to help.

To address the concerns, the Music Educators National Conference tasked famous bandmasters John Philip Sousa, Herbert L. Clarke, Edwin Franko Goldman, Frederick Stock, and Taylor Branson to serve on an advisory committee to set the instrumentation (Humphreys, 1989; Keene, 1982, p. 304; Maddy, 1957). Several of the members of this advisory committee were also members of the American Bandmasters Association. This committee set a standardized instrumentation of 72 musicians of which half were to be woodwinds. The instrumentation reflected few changes from the original 68-piece instrumentation. The established instrumentation contradicted current trends in which school bands were featuring predominantly brass instruments (Keene, 1982). Instead, the required instrumentation emulated that of the famous Sousa, Gilmore, and Goldman bands as well as the early collegiate bands at the University of Illinois (Manfredo, 1995). Bands were quick to change as ensembles failing to conform to this set instrumentation were penalized in subsequent contests (Fonder; 1988; Humphreys, 1989; Silvey, 2009a).

This instrumentation drew the continued ire of many of the instrument manufacturers who had hoped that the standardized instrumentation would rely heavily on trumpets and saxophones, two of the most profitable instruments at the time (Maddy, 1957). When the instrumentation included the oboe and clarinet, instruments largely produced in Europe, manufacturers were forced to import instruments or build facilities to produce these lower profit instruments in the United States (Maddy, 1957). This set instrumentation has had a lasting impact. The standard band instrumentation today still closely resembles the ensemble envisioned by the committee.

The impacts of the instrumentation changes went well beyond the instrument manufacturers. Music publishers were forced to dramatically retool their catalogs to carry music that could be performed by ensembles of the new instrumentation (Maddy, 1957). Additionally, the National Contests also developed a required list of repertoire from which participating groups would have to perform. This repertoire list had a significant impact on the bands that could participate in the contests. According to Silvey, the repertoire list “mandated the proficiency level needed for participation” (2009b, p. 60) and forced a number of bands not to compete until they were able to perform repertoire from the required list.

Prevailing economic conditions in the United States and the beginning of World War II made travel for the contests too expensive for many schools. In lieu of the national contests, a plan was devised in 1937 for ten annual regional festivals (Humphreys, 1989). These contests were supervised by a “National Board of Control” which set policies to make the contests consistent from region to region (Humphreys, 1989). This change promoted rapid growth of the contest movement even though the national contests were not revived. Still, the success of the contest movement was undeniable, as Keene commented that contests had grown to “Olympian proportions” (1982, p. 304), and by 1940, district and state competitions had served over half a million students including 10,000 bands, choirs, and orchestras, 7,500 instrumental and vocal ensembles, and 15,000 instrumental solos (Keene, 1982, p. 304).

Criticism of the contest format and an emphasis on “winning” forced many changes (Birge, 1966, p. 304-305; Payne, 1997). Among the most significant changes was the adoption of a new system of festival ratings in 1932 which had been pioneered in both

Kansas and Wisconsin (Fonder, 1989; Humphreys, 1989; Keene, 1982; Klausman, 1966). This new ranking system would divide schools by enrollment and, within their respective divisions, adjudicators would rate the groups on a I - V scale. A rating of I was considered “Superior” and a rating of V was labeled as “Poor” (Humphreys, 1989). This was done with the hopes of decreasing the emphasis on competition between groups (Humphreys, 1989; Payne, 1987). Similar adjustments in scoring were experimented with in the National Solo and Ensemble Contests of the same period (Meyers, 2012). A. R. McCallister, who served as president of the National School Band Association, heralded the change to the new rating system as he explained that “everyone gains something by taking part” rather than the earlier ranking system “where few win and many lose” (Battisti, 2002, p. 219). This change also ushered in a shift in nomenclature as competitions were less frequently referred to as contests, but rather festivals or competition-festivals (Rohrer, 2002).

While the focus of the history to this point has dealt primarily with concert bands, marching bands have been active competitively on a significant scale for decades as well. Owing to the military tradition from which the marching bands arose, parade marching was one of the first areas in which marching bands competed (Vickers, 2002). In fact, parade marching was slated to be a part of the 1923 national band contest, but that portion of the event was cancelled (Keene, 1982). Marching bands gradually stepped their way from the parade route to the football field. Today, most people would associate marching bands more with their field show performances than anything else. The University of Illinois Marching Band is credited as being one of the first bands to incorporate field marching at football halftime shows and influenced college and high school bands across the country which quickly began performing at halftimes as well (Mark & Gary, 1999). Early halftime

performances featured simple parade style marching on the football field, but this was gradually expanded to include the formation of shapes and letters which later lead to more contemporary free-form shapes and abstract use of the football field (Garrison, 1986; Rickels, 2008; Vickers, 2002). Marching band competitions are common today and present in all 50 states (Rogers, 1985). Parade marching is still judged in some areas, but it is the field show that is most commonly adjudicated (Rickels, 2008). Competitive practices vary as some contests feature rankings and scores in a true contest type format while others use variations of the Kansas rating system mentioned earlier.

The historical development of band contests is very much the development of band curriculum. Through the deliberations on standard instrumentation, contests determined the instruments that would be studied by students across the country. For example, imagine how different bands might be today if the saxophone and trumpet were prioritized, as the manufacturers wanted, and the oboe and bassoon omitted. Similarly, by providing required repertoire lists and refining those lists with the assistance of groups such as the Music Educators National Conference and the American Bandmasters Association, competitions have influenced the very musical materials that are deemed acceptable for performance. These influences have been long-lasting. The modern symphonic band has few differences from the prescribed instrumentations developed in the 1920s. Required repertoire lists remain a common aspect of competitions today. The rating system developed in Kansas is employed commonly in band contests throughout the United States. In many ways, the competitive decisions made in the early 20th century have shaped band curriculum for the last 100 years.

Topics in the Literature

An expansive body of literature addresses competition in music education focusing on the following goals: establishing means of fair and reliable measurement and evaluation of performances; examining competitive influences on motivation; describing how competitions are facilitated and experienced; and expressing positions that are either critical of competition in music education or advocate for competition's continued use. Little consensus has been achieved in relation to any of these foci and competition continues to be an ongoing source of debate within the field of music education.

A core topic of investigation has been the measurement and assessment of musical performances. Researchers have examined the use of assorted measurement scales (Bergee & Cohen, 2010; Ciorba & Smith, 2009; Fiske, 1975; Saunders & Holahan, 1997) in an attempt to find the most reliable and consistent methods for adjudicating performances.

Additionally, as music contests utilize adjudicators to assess performances, scholars have explored configurations of adjudicator panels (Bergee, 2007; Bergee & Platt, 2003; Fiske, 1975, 1977, 1983) to attempt to facilitate fair evaluations which control for potential influences of individual bias. Additionally, researchers have discussed the dispersion of scores throughout the provided ratings scales and particularly evidence that scores in music tend to be quite high (Boekman, 2002; Hash, 2013a; Ivey, 1967; Meyers, 2012).

Participation in contests have been fraught with concerns over fairness and equity, and the potential influences of nonmusical factors in evaluations has been a significant area of study. Scholars have examined geographic, financial, and demographic relationships to contest scores (Brewer, 2013; O'Leary 2016; Rickels, 2011; Sullivan, 2003) and found troubling influences. Similarly, elements such as judges' prior knowledge of a performer

(Miller, 1994; Radocy, 1976) or even time of day that the performance takes place (Bergee & Platt, 2003; Bergee & Westfall, 2005) have additionally been found to potentially impact results. Perhaps most troubling however are the studies finding connections between race, gender, and performer attractiveness and evaluation (Ryan & Costa-Giombi, 2004; Van Weelden, 2002; Wapnick et al., 1997).

A separate line of inquiry includes studies examining if competition might influence students and/or band directors to work harder and achieve more. Specific studies examining motivational implications of competition (Austin, 1988, 1991; Hurely, 1996; Vispoel & Austin, 1995) express mixed and at times conflicting conclusions. Additionally, researchers have surveyed the attitudes and perceptions of directors, students, and other school stakeholders such as principals and parents (Battersby, 1994; Hurst, 1994; Stamer, 2004, 2006; Rothlisberger, 1995). These studies suggest an overall positive perception of competitive musical experiences. The research on motivation, attitudes, and perceptions of competitors provides a glimpse of how competitions are experienced but these studies do not provide a detailed view of the phenomenon.

The most insight that the existing literature offers into the experience of being in an ensemble that competes can be found in the few qualitative inquiries into the experience of being in a high school ensemble. This area of inquiry has examined the culture of the high school ensemble (Morrison, 2001), the environment of the high school music classroom (Adderley, Kennedy, & Berz, 2003), and the experience of being in a high school band (Abril, 2013; Adderley, 2010). Perhaps most directly related to this inquiry was Shaw's (2015) examination of work-life balance in competitive high school band directors. Each of these

studies describe the experience of being in, or leading a high school ensemble but do none examine the experience of competing specifically.

Scholarship addressing competition portrays the lengthy debate of music educators on the topic. Nearly a century ago, Dykema (1923) outlined the arguments for and against competition in music education. Key points of concern regarding competition included: over-emphasis on preparation for competitions, emphasis on winning over learning, and unfair evaluation. In contrast, competition was thought to create interest and enthusiasm for music programs, inspire students, arouse interest from the community, and teach people how to compete fairly in a naturally competitive world (p. 61). Interestingly, the ongoing debate has deviated little from Dykema's (1923) concerns. A number of music educators and scholars have advocated for music competition (Buyer, 2005; Gallops, 2005; Pierson, 1994); while others have offered critical opinions (Austin, 1990b; Bergee, 1989; Floyd, 1986; Miller, 1994). Music educators continue debating the same key points, highlighting that competition is a continuing area of contention and concern within the field of music education.

To this point in time, no study has examined the lived experiences of those who compete. While music educators know a great deal about how competitions are organized, implemented, evaluated, and even perceived, we do not yet understand how competition is experienced. In focusing on the lived experiences of those who compete, this study provides a unique insight into competition in high school bands and furthers understanding of what it is like to compete.

Significance of the Study

This study is the first of its type to address the lived experiences of competing in, or leading a high school band. Competition is a pervasive component of the American band

experience and one that is experienced by thousands of young people each year. Students are not the only ones who compete. Competing is also a part of what band directors do. Competitions are not just events in which band directors participate, they are part of their professional life and responsibilities.

Competition includes much more than the competitive event itself. Competing includes the preparation for, the participation in, and the resulting consequences of competing. The phenomenon cannot be viewed narrowly as a series of events, when the phenomenon of competing may be part of the band experience for weeks and months at a time. Competition may start when the student first learns of an upcoming event or when the teacher begins selecting repertoire. Competition then continues as the results influence subsequent musical experiences as well as students' interpretations of their musical learning. With this phenomenon influencing band so much, how do people make meaning of their competitive experiences? What does it mean to be in competition?

The phenomenon of competition also has curricular implications. It is a planned event that students and teachers attend and impacts expectations and requirements for other curricular elements. Competition can influence the musical repertoire that students experience, the manner in which music is taught, and the environment in which children learn. Competition is a phenomenon that influences all of the commonplaces of education (Schwab, 1973). Yet, do music educators understand all of the curricular implications that come with competing? If it is "by our works that we are known" (Eisner, 1998, p. 40), do we understand how are works are experienced? This study will provide perspectives of how people make meaning of their work and learning in competition. It describes competition

and its influence on curriculum through lived experiences, providing a view of competition that has not been seen to this point in the field of music education.

Chapters of the Document

In Chapter One I shared my experiences with the phenomenon and outlined the problem, purpose, research questions, conceptual underpinnings, topics in the literature, and goals for this study. Chapter Two is a review of research addressing competition in music education. The review includes studies addressing the evaluation of musical performances, motivational influence of competition, facets of competitions, and qualitative studies describing what is it like to be in a high school ensemble.

Chapter Three outlines the research design and includes a discussion of phenomenology as a method of qualitative inquiry along with a description of the philosophical foundations informing this study. Additionally, I describe the theoretical framework that informed data analysis, provide information about the participants, and detail processes for recruiting participants, data generation, analysis, and trustworthiness. Chapter Four directly answers the first research question: What is it like to compete in a high school band? Participants' experiences are used to portray what it was like for them to be in competition both as teachers and students. Chapter Five addresses the second research question: How does competition frame or influence high school band curricula? I discuss findings related to established frameworks of teaching approaches (Fesntermacher & Soltis, 2009), views of students (O'Neill & Senyshyn, 2011), and interpret the findings through a Deweyan lens. Finally, Chapter 6 discusses major issues such as competition's influence on teacher development, curricular decisions, the use of competition as a means of teacher

evaluation, and a discussion of curricular alternatives. Chapter 6 also includes implications and suggestions for further research and professional practice.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Formal competitions in bands have taken place for over a century and became commonplace in the United States starting in the early 20th Century (Keene, 1984; Mark & Gary 2007). The use of competition has also been the subject of a prolonged debate amongst music educators (Miller, 1994; Rohrer, 2002). Given this combination of growth, controversy, and history, competition remains a popular and frequent subject of inquiry.

Maxwell (2013) explains, the literature review should “ground your proposed study in the relevant previous work, and give the reader a clear sense of your theoretical approach to the phenomena that you propose to study” (p. 145). To achieve this goal, I highlight the sources most relevant to the topic through a rigorous analysis of the existing body of literature. My goals for this literature review are to: “(1) understand the conversation already happening; (2) figure out how to add to this conversation; and (3) identify the best means of doing so theoretically and methodologically” (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012, p. 25). This review will provide a summary of the existing literature related to competition in high school bands and explain how this study will contribute to this extensive literature base.

Published literature reviews outline the primary arguments for and against the use of competition in music curricula (Payne, 1997; Rohrer, 2002; Williams, 1996). Rohrer (2002) highlighted four primary arguments used by critics of competition: “(1) overemphasis on the competitive aspect, (2) too much time spent on festival pieces, (3) poor adjudication, and (4) de-emphasis by the director of the other fine ensembles at an event” (p. 9). In contrast with these critiques, Rohrer (2002) discussed benefits of competing largely through nonmusical outcomes such as competition providing an “incentive for hard work, an [increased]

standard for performance, and a good social education” (p. 14). The arguments highlighted by Rohrer have persisted for decades and demonstrate a lasting concern within the profession regarding how much competition is emphasized and whether that may create an instructional imbalance.

Payne (1997) recognized that the topic of competition remains widely debated; however, she felt the literature supported an overall positive view towards the use of competition with bands. Payne discussed historical reforms in competitions and their effects on music education. In particular, she highlighted the decision to move from ranked festivals to “non-competitive” festivals at which bands receive only ratings. This reform was undertaken to reduce the emphasis on bands attempting to score better in comparison to other groups and Payne argued that this change reduced some of the perceived problems with band competitions.

Additionally, Payne’s (1997) review addressed prevailing concerns about the use of competition in general education as articulated in the text *No Contest! The Case Against Competition* (Kohn, 1992). Kohn’s arguments against competition were used in pieces critical of competition in music education (Austin, 1990a; 1990b, 1991) and Payne offered counterarguments to support educators’ use of competitions. In summary, Payne reached three conclusions:

First, in spite of numerous negative commentaries found in the literature, attitudes concerning band competitions appear to be positive among those involved in the process although students may become less positive as they mature. Second, the potential damage to student motivation and self-esteem is not supported thus far in the research. Third, contrary to the results of Kohn who cited research that repeatedly showed that competitiveness is associated with poorer performance among students and professional adults outside of music, research in music achievement supports the use of competitive settings (p. 11-12).

While Payne's review points to an overall positive perception of competition in music education, Williams (1996) came to the opposite conclusion. Basing the review largely upon research in general education, Williams highlighted the negative influences that competition can have upon student motivation and self-esteem. He was specifically critical of music programs that promote their competitive success to garner public support. To this point he referenced an excerpt by Hope (1992):

When music education programs must be justified by contest winning to the extent that all aspirations are cast aside except those that demonstrate the acquisition of technique sufficient to present a highly polished performance of a small number of works, ensemble development technique has become the means for providing content for public relations technique that will justify the music program in terms of prevailing values. With all of the benefits that may come from such conditions, the driving idea considered inherently valuable is winning competitions rather than advancing musical competence. The strategic analyst might interpret this in light of the fact that competition is not confined to music. Competition is not disciplinary. If competition is considered inherently valuable but music study is not, to what extent does this leave music education vulnerable to the vagaries of public opinion? (Hope, 1992, p. 732)

Williams concluded that in view of existing research and scholarship, particularly in general education, "it seems probable/likely that competition within music programs is not a healthy business" (1996, p. 20).

These literature reviews present quite different views of competition in music education. Where Rohrer (2002) offered an outline of the debate, Payne (1997) and Williams (1996) arrived at contradictory conclusions through their analyses. While consensus is lacking, the reviews highlight persisting questions addressed through research and scholarship on competition. The remainder of this review of literature is organized around three questions and three additional areas of study. The questions include:

- How can competitions fairly and accurately evaluate musical performances?
- Does competition motivate students to work harder and perform better?

- What are competitions like and how does competition influence the musical material and methods that are used by bands?

Following the discussion of these questions, I include a section addressing position papers and editorial columns related to competition in music education, a discussion of research examining the lived experience of being in high school bands, and a discussion of curricular frameworks and influences on band curricula.

How can competitions fairly and accurately evaluate musical performances?

Music educators have expressed concern with fairness and accuracy of music contests since the activity's origins. The rankings, ratings, and awards earned through competitive events can impact those who compete in a number of ways: directors may perceive awards as evaluative of their work as educators, students may see the awards as indicative of their musical abilities, and school administrators and community members may view competitive results as indicative of the quality of the band program at their school. Because competitive results can be such a powerful influence there is a need to ensure that contest evaluations are done in a fair and accurate manner. Two areas of research have emerged in relation to fairness in music competitions: 1) studies examining measurement and assessment and 2) the influence of nonmusical factors on competitive results. In the following section, I summarize literature related to the development of reliable rubrics and contest formats and then discuss the influence of nonmusical elements such as financial resources, race, attractiveness, time of competition and others in relationship to competitive results.

Measurement and Assessment

Measurement and assessment is at the center of music competitions. There are many formats for competitions but all share a common trait of using an adjudicator or panel of adjudicators to evaluate performances. Using Bernard's (1960) classifications of competition, music contests can be labeled as decisive contests as they require performances to be evaluated by a "decision-maker," which in the case of music competitions is a judge or panel of judges. Judges then have a great deal of power in music contests as their evaluations can influence the ratings and rankings earned by bands in a very public and meaningful manner. Evaluations may influence directors' feelings of competence, community perceptions of band programs, and students' view of their work. Assuring that evaluations are as reliable and fair is of significant importance.

Judges place a human and subjective element into competitions. As Radocy (1986) explained, evaluation is "not simple and direct; it is based on someone's judgment... a good performance is one which significant individuals (perhaps adjudicators, principals, jury members, newspaper critics) *say* is good" (p. 24, emphasis in original). As a means of understanding the extent to which judging is fair, many studies have examined reliability as a characteristic of fair and consistent adjudication.

Reliability, as defined by Asmus and Radocy (1992), is "the stability of the measure across time, which may be ascertained by determining the agreement between two different administrators of the same test at some time interval" (p. 144). Essentially, reliability means that an ensemble would receive the same score at a contest regardless of who is judging them, when they perform, or even where they perform. Reliable adjudication is essential for fair competition. To examine reliability, researchers have explored different rubrics and tools

used by adjudicators in the process of evaluation, inter-rater reliability at existing contests, various configurations of judging panels, and the role training and expertise of the judge may play in reliability of adjudication. The following section is organized around each of the preceding categories.

Instruments for evaluating music performances. The instrument used for evaluation has a significant impact on students' and educators' experiences in the contest. The instrument informs how results are determined, but also plays a role in providing competitors with feedback on their performances. Contest organizers have employed a variety of adjudication formats and instruments such as overall-score assessments, a format in which a single numeric score is given to a performance (Fiske, 1976, 1979); criteria-specific rating scales, a format where groups are evaluated on several areas such as tone, intonation, or expression (Stanley, Brooker & Gilbert, 2002; Latimer, Bergee, & Cohen, 2010; Saunders & Holohan, 1997); and facet-factorial evaluation instruments, where descriptors of positive performances are listed and judges evaluate the extent to which bands exhibit the pre-determined facets using a Likert-type scale (Abeles, 1973; Ciorba & Smith, 2009; Cooksey, 1977; Greene, 2012; Smith & Barnes, 2007). Researchers have explored each of these formats to determine the extent to which they aid judges in providing reliable results.

In addition to addressing issues of reliability, the instrument that judges use in contests provides feedback to competitors. A well-designed instrument should be reliable and serve as a “structure for self, peer, and instructor based feedback” (DeLuca & Bolden, 2014, p. 71). Researchers have found that the various instruments used in competitions provide differing amounts of feedback to competitors. For example, a global-score

evaluation provides the participant only with a numeric rating of their performance, where a criteria-specific rating scale provides feedback related to musical elements such as tone, expression, dynamics, or rhythmic accuracy. Teachers may make instructional decisions based upon the feedback offered by judging rubrics, and the level of specificity offered by the evaluation instrument influences the instructional utility of the tool. In the following section, I highlight the features and benefits of each type of instrument related to reliability and the type of feedback offered to the performer. While the scholarship in this area has produced little consensus as to what type of instrument is best, it does facilitate a discussion of the features and benefits of each type of evaluation instrument.

Overall Score vs. Criteria-Specific Evaluation. Fiske (1975, 1983) advocated for the use of an overall-score method as the most reliable method of evaluating musical performances. In a study examining the reliability of adjudication of trumpet performances (1975), Fiske studied if reliability varied depending on whether categories were assessed or if a single score was awarded. While Fiske (1975) found acceptable levels of reliability in all areas, he recommended the overall score:

Judges should give attention to the performance for the purpose of making one decision (and one grade) only rather than making several decisions in a relatively short time. In this way, more time is allowed for making the one decision, greater attention can be given to the performer, and results based on the one score will be subject to no greater error (and probably much less) than would be expected on the basis of several trait ratings. (p. 196)

For Fiske, the overall score system provided the most reliable method because it asked the judge to make only one evaluation. The single evaluation reduced the possibility of error but also reduced the amount of feedback provided for the competitor. Recognizing this shortcoming, Fiske (1975) advocated for global scores in situations where feedback to the performer was not needed, such as auditions for admission to a university school of music.

Guegold (1989) examined the results of the Ohio Music Education Association (OMEA) State Marching Band Finals and adjudicator consistency. Like Fiske (1975), Guegold found that individual captions (individual categories such as tone, intonation, or balance) were evaluated reliably and that acceptable levels of inter-judge agreement were found in each area. Guegold came to the conclusion that, “basically the OMEA marching band adjudication system works” (p. 103). Unlike Fiske, Guegold felt that the reliability of the captions added value to the contest and that the system, as it was implemented in Ohio, offered a fair and reliable evaluation of marching bands while providing more feedback than a global score.

Also supporting the use of individual captions was a study examining the reliability of choral festival adjudication forms with descriptive captions (Norris & Borst, 2007). This study found that descriptive rubrics yielded higher levels of inter-rater reliability than did more generalized instruments of evaluation. The authors recommended continued development of such rubrics as they believed “the goal of all assessment research should focus on the development of reliable and valid tools that are specific enough to provide diagnostic feedback for conductors and performers, yet global enough to allow for artistic expression” (p. 249). Norris and Borst highlighted that the added feedback provided by the rubrics was a valuable diagnostic tool for educators.

The support of descriptive rubrics and captions was not universal. Much like Fiske (1975, 1983), a number of studies have indicated support for the use of overall scores (Burnsed, Hinkle, & King, 1985; Garman et al., 1991; Owen, 1969; Smith, 2005). Owen (1969) found that not all captions on a rubric were equally reliable. In his study, overall rating and musicality were the two components of evaluation that were consistently reliable

when examining secondary school instrumentalists auditioning for festival bands. A later study by Burnsed, Hinkle, & King (1985) corroborated Owen's (1969) findings as they examined festival ratings of bands being evaluated in North Carolina and Virginia. Burnsed, Hinkle and King (1985) found acceptable levels of reliability for the overall ratings but significant variations in individual captions. Commenting specifically on the area of tone, which had been particularly unreliable, the authors lamented that "the fact that three out of the four groups disagreed on tone may indicate that tone is not a good aspect of performance for adjudication" (p. 27). They credited the lack of reliability of tone to varying conceptions of quality tone between judges. However, despite the variations in captions, the summed overall scores were assessed with an acceptable level of agreement. Similarly, Smith (2004) found high levels of reliability from a panel of judges evaluating an international string competition using a global score method. Smith emphasized that the global score method was effective particularly in situations in which feedback was not provided to the performer.

Global score use was further endorsed by Garman, Boyle, and DeCarbo (1991). This study examined orchestral festival ratings and inter-judge reliability using performance categories and global scores. Like previous studies (Burnsed, Hinkle, & King, 1985; Fiske, 1983; Owen, 1969) this study found high levels of reliability using global score evaluation and significant variation on performance categories. Interestingly, in their analysis, Garman, Boyle, and DeCarbo (1991) examined which categories were most indicative of success in overall score and found that intonation and technique were the most predictive of high overall scores. Their findings indicate that bands playing with the most accurate technique and consistent intonation were most likely to achieve a high overall score. Based on these

results, the researchers suggest directors may wish to focus specifically on these elements in rehearsals as they are most predictive of overall success.

Unfortunately, through all of this scholarship, no best means of evaluation has emerged as both overall score and individual descriptors have been found to be problematic and effective in evaluating musical performances. Latimer (2007) found both methods ineffective as he examined the use of a state choir adjudication form verses an overall score form. Results indicated that adjudicators were consistent less than 52% of the time and that even when judges evaluated individual captions reliably, they were unreliable when inter-rater reliability was examined.

Adding more ambiguity to the choice between overall score and the use of criteria-specific instruments, Stanley, Brooker, and Gilbert (2002) examined the use of criteria-specific evaluation sheets by conservatory faculty. The researchers interviewed faculty who had used the rubrics and gathered mixed results. Some faculty responded that rubrics emphasized fundamental performance techniques, but others felt that it distracted from the uniqueness of performances and asked the listeners to focus their attention on the evaluation sheet rather than the performance. Further, some lamented that they felt that the various criteria interfered with their ability to provide a holistic assessment of a performance.

The assorted evaluation instruments and rubrics provide insight into the intentions of competitions. A common theme is that contest organizers wish to fairly evaluate performance while providing meaningful formative feedback to performers. They are attempting to achieve an instructional and an evaluative goal with the same instrument. That both global score and criteria-specific means of evaluations have issues with reliability is

troubling, yet the manner in which the rubrics present results that are then acted on by directors in curricular decisions portends of further issues.

Development of Instruments for Evaluation. A number of educators have experimented with developing instruments for the evaluation of musical performances. Attempting to balance reliability with the added feedback provided by evaluations broken down into different captions, two studies designed instruments that would provide more detailed justifications for the scores awarded (Latimer, Bergee, & Cohen, 2010; Saunders & Holahan, 1997). Saunders and Holahan (1997) developed a criteria-specific rating scale in which judges were given a rubric with descriptive statements and a scoring range from 0-10 points for each statement. Saunders and Holahan explained “the judges, therefore, were able to provide specific information about (a) the areas and levels of performance accomplishment and (b) the areas and levels of performance accomplishment not yet achieved” (1997, p. 270). Latimer, Bergee, and Cohen (2010) similarly developed a rubric for use by the Kansas Music Educators Association as “a result of their desire to design an assessment tool that provided a descriptive teaching instrument and emphasized what they considered to be higher-order thinking skills” (p. 171). The rubric included areas such as tone, expression, dynamics, rhythm, and note accuracy. Each area had five levels with a descriptor for performance at each level of mastery. The rubric was found to be reliable and was viewed positively by many directors who felt that it provided relevant information about their performances which could be integrated into classroom instruction.

Researchers have also experimented with developing rubrics through constructing facet-factorial instruments of evaluation. In this method, the rubric designer compiles and curates a number of statements related to performance in a specific idiom. These statements

were typically gathered from existing critiques of performances, established adjudicators, or through collaboration with music educators. The statements were then organized and presented along with a Likert-type scale for the adjudicator. Scholars have accomplished this with high levels of reliability in the evaluation of clarinet performances (Abeles, 1973), university band performances (Sagan, 1983), high school choruses (Cooksey, 1977); orchestra performance (Smith & Barnes, 2007), and vocal performance (Ciorba & Smith, 2009).

Greene (2012) believed that the feedback provided through a facet-factorial type of adjudication could provide guidance in the development of marching band shows. In an application of the facet-factorial method to marching band evaluation, Greene (2012) developed a rubric which included areas such as music general effect, communication to audience, communication from performers, visual control, execution, and visual general effect. By compiling the list of statements from various adjudication resources, Greene believes he has isolated elements of performance which should be considered by marching band directors and show designers. Greene explained:

There are now clear indications of what adjudicators are looking for during their performance. If directors and show designers have developed a show concept that is appealing and effective with proper and relevant musical and visual selections, then it is ultimately up to the performers to execute said music and drill to the best of their training and ability. (p. 219)

While Greene explains this use of the rubric as a guide to planning shows as an asset to directors, it can also be seen as a rubric directly influencing curricular decisions. In this instance, the show designers and directors take the information from the rubric and design a show to fit the areas emphasized on the rubrics.

As Greene (2012) highlights, the instrument of evaluation can influence how bands are instructed. While Greene's study discusses the design and implementation of marching shows, knowing the evaluation areas that most often correlate with success may encourage band directors to emphasize those facets during rehearsals. For example, knowing that technique and intonation were the most predictive areas of success in some festivals (Garman, Boyle, & DeCarbo, 1991) an educator may choose to emphasize these areas in her teaching at the expense of spending time on other musical elements such as expression or tone. This is a curricular consequence of the evaluation instrument and one that was problematized over forty years ago by Oakley (1972). Oakley expressed concern that groups may become exceptionally strong in one area and neglect the need to be well-rounded. The result possibly may be ensembles which perform exceptionally well in-tune, but with little musicality or expression. To combat this phenomenon, Oakley recommended a minimum acceptable score in all evaluated categories so that any group earning top honors would have to demonstrate a level of competency in all categories evaluated.

Rating Inflation. Each of the instruments used in competitions rendered a score or rating of the performance. Band contests and festivals are often public evaluations of performances in which the results are widely available. The ratings, labels, and rankings earned by groups can be easily communicated and influence perceptions of stakeholders such as administrators, community members, and other educators. While there were a number of different rating scales employed, the most commonly used today is the Kansas adjudication system that was developed in the 1930s (Keene, 1982). The ratings range from I – Superior, to V – Poor. This rating system, while common to music contests, may be foreign to a person unfamiliar with competitive music events. Hash (2013b), using guidance

from the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors Association Manual (VBODA, 2010), offered an explanation of the Kansas system that equated the ratings to equivalent academic letter grades:

A final rating of I/Superior was equivalent to the letter grade “A” and represented a superior interpretation and performance, technically and musically. A rating of II/Excellent was equivalent to the letter grade “B” and demonstrated an excellent interpretation and performance of all selections, or a superior performance of one selection and excellent performance of two. A rating of III/Good was equivalent to the letter grade “C” and denoted a good interpretation and performance of all selections, technically and musically, or a combination of performances of the three selections which would justify an overall rating of “Good.” A rating of IV/Fair was equivalent to the letter grade “D” and represented a performance that approximated the technical and musical requirements of the music but was seriously lacking in its rendition. The rating of V/Poor was equivalent to the letter grade “F” and signified a performance which was unacceptable technically or musically. (p. 5)

A statistician might expect to see a normal distribution of scores in this system with an equal number of poor and superior ratings, and most of the competitive scores being in the middle of the scale (Huck, 2011). However, the distribution of scores tends to be heavily skewed towards the top portion of the scale. This has led to an ongoing discussion of rating inflation in music contests dating back to the earliest solo and ensemble events (Meyers, 2012).

Some research has uncovered a trend of rating inflation. Boeckman (2002) examined historic distributions of scores in band festivals in the state of Ohio. Results indicated that overall ratings have increased over the last 60 years. Boeckman found that 35.5% of bands performing from 1951-1970 earned a superior rating. This percentage increased to 45.8% for the period between 1971 and 2000. Similarly, Hash (2012) examined ratings in band contests in the state of South Carolina and found that ratings of either a I (Superior) or II (Excellent) were awarded 85% of the time. In a similar study in Virginia (Hash, 2013b), 91.5% of bands and orchestras received a superior or excellent rating with over half, 50.6%, earning the highest rating.

Brakel (2006) attempted to explain the rating inflation phenomenon by examining the Indiana State School Music Association Festival scores and found that judging panels had higher levels of inter-rater reliability for highly rated performances than for lower ratings. Brakel believed that this suggests adjudicators' reluctance to award low ratings, even if the assessment instrument provided for such an evaluation. If Brakel's suspicions were correct and not all adjudicators were comfortable assessing bands with the lowest designations on the rubrics, some bands may have received higher scores than they had earned.

Interestingly, Ivey (1964) noticed and articulated this trend of inflation decades earlier in a compelling opinion piece on evaluation in the *Music Educators Journal*. This essay described the challenge confronting judges because of the ramifications of the ratings assigned. As Ivey described:

More dangerous is the feeling that lower ratings, however well deserved, will reflect upon and publicly embarrass the teacher. The judge is therefore faced with lumping all the acceptable performances together under Superior, all mediocre work under Excellent, and all the bad efforts under Good. Such a system has manifold inherent evils. (p. 43)

Ivey goes on to discuss what he believes are the common reactions to the different ratings in a festival performance:

I - Wonderful job, glowing success
II - Not so hot; maybe a mistake to try.
III - Ugh! Total failure; give up.
IV - Suicide!
V - Never heard of it. (p. 44)

Ivey highlights the troubling power of the adjudicator in these events. As festival ratings were often seen as evaluative of a music teacher's competence, Ivey described the fear that a teacher may feel in approaching a contest: "the teachers view him (the judge) as a demon

with the powers of life or death over their professional status” (p. 43). Ivey’s view of judges portrays them as powerful figures within the profession and further illustrates the connection between directors’ professional reputations and the ratings they earn at contests and festivals.

Judging. Judges use instruments to evaluate performances but as Radocy (1986) reminded, an evaluation is what it is because someone said it was of a certain value (p. 24). Judges introduce a subjective element to evaluation and, given that they have a great deal of power in music contests, researchers have examined ways in which judging can be done in a fair, reliable, and unbiased manner. Researchers have examined judging and reliable evaluation in competitions through three overarching foci: 1) the number of judges at contests, 2) the training of judges, and 3) the backgrounds and expertise of judges. The ratings, rankings, and other evaluations offered by judges were meaningful to this study’s participants. The configuration of judging panels, qualifications of the people offering the evaluation, and the manner in which adjudicators were trained all can potentially influence the quality and utility of the evaluations.

Number of Judges. Many contests have attempted to ameliorate concerns regarding judge bias and subjectivity by employing multiple judges; however, the use of a panel of judges provides additional reliability concerns. Not only do judges need to evaluate performances reliably, they also need to agree with one-another. For example, if two language arts teachers evaluated an essay contest, it would be desirable for their evaluations to be similar. Slight variations are expected, but it would be alarming to see one judge rate an essay at 75 out of 100 points and the other judge assign 90 out of 100 points.

In music contests, studies have found that multiple judges are beneficial in the adjudication of musical events but little consensus exists regarding the number of judges that should be used or the scoring system for combining the evaluations from the adjudicators. Studies examining numbers of judges tested levels of inter-rater reliability and determined the optimal number of judges that should be employed to fairly evaluate performances. Bergee (2007) used audio recordings of eight high school wind instrumentalists and asked ten experienced and trained adjudicators to evaluate the recordings. Results identified significant differences in ratings and what the author termed “the possibility of substantive measurement error among raters” (p. 356). Bergee concluded that a larger panel of judges would improve reliability but that “musicians at present might not always receive the consistency and dependability of performance assessment that we would wish for them to receive” (p. 357).

The current body of research has not found an optimal size for judging panels. For example, Bergee (2003), Brakel (2006), and Hash (2013b) each found that larger panels were most reliable; however, Dugger (1997) found no reliability advantage to using five person panels as opposed to three. Findings from these studies back the notion that a panel of judges could be a more effective means of evaluation than a single adjudicator, however they do not speak directly to the manner in which scores might be calculated or compiled in these panels.

One possible method of calculating scores is the Olympic-style panel in which both the highest and lowest score for each competitor would be discarded and the average of the remaining scores would be used as the result (Bergee & Platt, 2003; Bergee & McWirter, 2005; Bergee, 2007). Bergee (2007) believed this method could be effective in producing

reliable scoring data but concluded that this method would add significant expense to contests as it would greatly expand the number of judges needed. King and Burnsed (2009) tested the use of an Olympic-style panel in state marching band festivals in Virginia. Results indicated a high-level of reliability; however, the authors noted that the reliability would not have been adversely impacted by the inclusion of all scores. In effect, there was no benefit to the Olympic-style model. Additionally, Chaney (1983) cautioned that the added costs of hiring an Olympic-size panel should not be the only worry. He noted that a system in which outlying scores are discarded encourages judges to attempt to vote similarly if they want their vote to count in the final result. This leads to greater consensus among judges, but discourages the adjudicators from having extreme views, either positively or negatively, even if that is how they truly feel. If the manner in which scores are compiled and calculated influences the score a judge awards then these configurations have introduced bias. With the significant meaning that directors and students attach to these ratings, any influence on judges to potentially raise or lower scores in the interest of being in line with other adjudicators is cause for concern. A director may be robbed of effusive comments and positive results at a contest because of the influence of the judging panel.

Training and Expertise of Judges. In addition to the debate regarding the number of judges that should evaluate a performance, a substantial amount of research has gone into determining the benefit of having expert judges versus judges that are trained to evaluate the performances, but may not have the same level of expertise. For example, if asked to evaluate tuba performances, would a judge who is an expert tuba player produce more reliable evaluations than a judge who is perhaps a clarinetist, but that has been trained in adjudication? These studies have focused on the abilities of judges to provide an accurate

evaluation; however they largely neglect the judges' abilities to provide feedback to the performers.

Studies have examined the importance of adjudicator qualifications such as career-level and education (Geringer, Allen, MacLeod, & Scott (2009); Hewitt & Smith, 2004; Pope & Barnes, 2015), primary instrument (Fiske, 1975), success in theory and history courses (Fiske, 1977), experience judging (Winter, 1993), the adjudicator's familiarity with the repertoire performed (Kinney, 2009) and the availability of a printed score for the works performed (Napoles, 2009; Wapnick, Flowers, Alegant, & Jasinkas, 1993). Findings suggest that it is more important to have adjudicators trained in the specific judging of musical performances rather than hiring judges with high levels of expertise on a particular instrument (Fiske, 1983; Hewitt, 2007; Hewitt & Smith, 2004; Winter, 1993) as long as the adjudicators have a sufficient level of musical maturity (Kinney, 2009; Hewitt & Smith, 2004). To this point, Fiske (1983) offered the following general recommendations for fairness in adjudication. He concluded that "reliability is the most important measure of a judge's ability" (p. 7) and that reliability can be best achieved with judges that are trained and certified in adjudication. He also believed that in competitive environments, the more important job of the judge was to correctly compare the performances rather than give accurate scores as he argued "the rank-order of performances has greater meaning for the performer and greater rater consistency than does the concept of absolute scores" (1983, p. 9). Fiske's recommendations prioritize reliability yet largely ignore the role of feedback in adjudication. If Fiske's recommendations were implemented, the manner in which adjudication might influence curricular decisions would be minimal. The consistency of evaluation might be better, but the educational merit of these evaluations might be lessened.

Fairness. Research related to the judging process, including the evaluation instruments used, provides a robust picture of how contests are evaluated and shows the influence contests may have on perceptions of band programs in communities, and directors' professional reputations and feelings of competence. There is a substantial body of research that examines factors that may influence success at competitions that are not directly related to music. These factors may include 1) demographic variables such as population of a community or enrollment in a school; 2) judges' prior knowledge about the performers, such as the reputation of the director or past competitive success of the ensemble; or 3) nonmusical variables such as the use of a music stand, stage presence of the performer or more troubling factors such as the attractiveness, race, and gender of the performer. Additionally, a director's skills and actions may influence competitive success. For example, researchers have examined how a director's conducting skill may influence evaluation or how the repertoire selected may influence competitive success. Both repertoire selection and conducting may appear to be musical elements, however, they are typically teachers' rather than students' responsibilities and thus may be seen as elements that are outside of the students' or competitors' control. I will now discuss the following nonmusical factors influencing evaluations: 1) financial and demographic influences, 2) prior knowledge of performers, 3) on-stage non-student-controlled variables, and 4) race, gender, and attractiveness. If contests are to be evaluative of what students and directors have achieved, any influence outside of the teaching and learning that took place poses a problem for the veracity of the evaluations.

Financial and Demographic Factors. Finances and enrollment may play a substantial role in competitive success, particularly in the area of marching bands. Schools

with more substantial financial resources are able to hire more non-certified staff and pay for custom designed drill and music. Schools with large enrollments have a larger base of students who can participate in bands. If these nonmusical elements are heavily correlated with competitive success, then directors wishing to build a successful competitive record may be particularly attracted to teaching positions in affluent communities with large student bodies. Rickels (2011) examined extra-musical factors influencing success in marching band contests throughout the United States. He found that groups with more performers, larger budgets, more hours of rehearsal, and a larger number of uncertified paid instructional staff members, compared to their competitors, had the best chance of being successful in competitions.

Rickels's (2011) findings are supported in studies examining major national marching band contests such as the Bands of America Grand National Championships, a national contest billed as "The nation's premier high school marching band competition" (Music for All, n.d.) (Brewer, 2013; O'Leary, 2016). Both Brewer (2013) and O'Leary (2016) found that successful bands in this national contest tended to be from areas of significant population, schools with large enrollments, and areas of relative economic affluence. In particular, bands from Texas and Indiana were found to be the most successful at the contests (O'Leary, 2016) and schools with Bands of America Finalists tended to have enrollments substantially larger than their state's average. Similarly, in a more localized examination, Dawes (1989) found that bands with larger numbers of students tended to be more successful in Alabama state marching band contests.

These findings corroborate Goodstein's (1987) study examining leadership behaviors in high school band rehearsals. While the focus of Goodstein's study was on leadership

behaviors of high school band directors, findings indicated that descriptive variables tended to be more predictive of successful band directors. In particular, Goodstein found that successful band directors tended to be older, have Master's degrees, work in more affluent school districts, have band booster organizations that actively fundraise, and teach in schools with large student bodies. Additionally, many of the most successful teachers had large marching bands and "top" concert bands with large numbers of students enrolled. While Goodstein discusses director qualifications, the relationship to school enrollment and financial resources is compelling.

Rickels (2011), O'Leary (2016), and Goodstein (1987) document the resources associated with successful bands. Sullivan (2003) examined the perspectives of directors without those means available. Sullivan raised significant concerns about the success of marching bands from areas of low population density. In his study, band directors from rural areas of Arizona were surveyed about their attitudes towards participating in the state marching band contest. The results showed that rural directors felt they were unable to compete with larger schools because they did not have the same financial resources and larger student population from which to recruit for their programs.

Bands with financial resources can often afford to hire the services of professional music arrangers and drill writers (individuals who chart the various formations and visual movements a marching band may execute during a performance). Hewitt (2000) found that, from his sample of 439 marching bands, 91% had used the services of a professional drill writer, 63% had wind music written specifically for their group, and 75% had percussion parts arranged for the ensembles. Hewitt's work provides an excellent rationale for hiring drill writers, as bands that accessed such services were substantially more successful than

those that did not. Interestingly, Hewitt also found that director involvement in the drill design process was inversely related to competitive success.

In the area of marching band competition, rural band directors' concerns have merit (Sullivan, 2003). Each of these studies offer compelling correlational data that demonstrate how larger schools with more financial means have more success in marching band competition (Brewer, 2013; Dawes, 1989; O'Leary, 2016; Rickels, 2011). This is further reinforced by Hewitt's (2000) findings regarding the use of professional arrangers and drill writers. Marching band, however, is but one context in which these variables influence competitive success.

Killian (1998, 1999, 2000) examined choir ratings at festivals in Texas and specifically studied the type of ensemble (e.g. treble, mixed voice, or male), school enrollment, and number of performers in the ensemble. In each of the studies, Killian found that groups with large numbers of performers from schools with high enrollments were more likely to earn superior ratings. Killian explained that these two variables should be seen as linked as schools with higher enrollments have a larger pool of students from which to draw to the choral program. Killian also found that the number of male singers in a choir was positively correlated to ratings. These studies largely corroborate those in the area of marching band in regards to school enrollment (Brewer, 2013; O'Leary, 2013; Rickels 2011) and ensemble size (Dawes, 1989; Rickels, 2011; Sullivan, 2003) and can be further reinforced by Lien and Humphreys (2001) who found that students from larger cities were most likely to make the All-State Concert Band in South Dakota.

Similar extra-musical factors may play a role in solo and ensemble contests. Hamman (1991, 1997) examined factors influencing high school band members' success at solo and

ensemble festivals. Findings suggested that students who had more rehearsals with their accompanist and who were taking private lessons on their instrument were most likely to be successful. Both private lessons and time with accompanists are expenses that must be incurred by either the school or the performing students' parents or guardians. This relationship points to a potential influence of financial resources and success. Several studies examining solo and ensemble festivals demonstrated that students participating from larger schools located in metropolitan areas were mostly likely to be successful (Bergee & Platt, 2003; Bergee & Westfall, 2005; Bergee, 2006). This led Bergee (2006) to opine that "the present study and others in this series have provided evidence that metropolitan or near-metropolitan residency, attending a relatively well-financed school, and especially, performing later in an extended sequence strongly influenced success at solo and small-ensemble festivals" (p. 254). While not related to finances or school demographics Bergee's study also notes the influence of the time of performance as significant to success, an issue I will address later in this review.

The influence of nonmusical elements on competition evaluations is troubling because it undermines the value of the results. If factors such as financial resources, school setting, or time of performance are associated with positive evaluations then competitive results may not be an effective evaluation of teachers' and students' work. Similarly, if these influences are known within the field, students and directors from small and rural programs may compete from a disadvantaged position.

Prior Knowledge of Ensemble or Director. Another area impacting adjudication can be adjudicators' knowledge about the performers, or what Forbes (1994) discussed as the "halo-effect" (p. 17). Forbes believed that an adjudicator's awareness of an ensemble's or

director's reputation may influence adjudication. This largely supports the perceived association between competitive success and professional reputation. For example, a band with an established history of success at contests or with a well-known director may be viewed positively prior to even playing a note. Forbes describes this as problematic as "ensembles are sometimes awarded ratings based in part on their reputation or the director's reputation rather than their performance" (p. 17). While the term halo-effect provides the connotation of positive influences upon scores, this is not always the case. Ensembles and directors with negative reputations can have their scores adversely effected by the halo-effect in the same manner that other groups may have their scores raised.

To bolster ratings, Batey (2002) encouraged directors to provide more background information about performing groups and repertoire such as rehearsal frequency, grade of performers, number of years the director has taught at the school, and selectivity of performing group to influence adjudicator opinions. This is particularly important because of the high stakes that Batey associates with adjudications; she explained:

Adjudication. The very word strikes terror in the heart many directors. It can mean job retention or loss; a successful recruiting year, or not; and validation of a director's skills, or lack thereof. (p. 1)

Radocy (1976) examined adjudicator knowledge about performing groups by investigating the influence of authority figures providing information such as a performer's background or an ensemble's institutional affiliation on evaluations of recorded performances. The recordings were judged by undergraduate music students and the study found that prior knowledge, even when it was false, played a role in the evaluations of the performance. This phenomenon was also identified by Cavitt (2002), who studied evaluators adjudicating recordings of a trumpet solo in which a professional trumpet player was asked

to play with accuracy and good tone in one recording; and with accuracy, poor tone, and no dynamic contrast in a second. Evaluators were asked to adjudicate the recordings and were told different ability and effort levels for the performances. The study found that while the good performances were not influenced by the ability and effort information, poor performances were evaluated more positively when they were told that the performer had expended more effort in preparation. Duerksen (1972) in an earlier similar study found that evaluators tended to rate recorded performances more positively when they were told the performance was done by a student rather than a professional musician. Finally, Sheldon (1994) found that knowledge of the type of event a performance was for made a difference in adjudication. Using high school band students as evaluators, he found that students judged performances more positively when they were told that the recording was made at a competition rather than a regular concert.

On-stage, non-student-controlled variables. Researchers have examined the influence of stage behavior, conducting technique, and the time of day of performance as elements that may influence competitive outcomes. I have included conducting as a variable as it is a musical element of the performance, but students neither engage in or have control over this aspect of an ensemble performance. Similarly, while repertoire is performed by students, it is often selected for them by their director.

Stage behavior has been shown to influence music evaluations. Wapnick et al. (1998) examined violin performances by including two groups of evaluators and comparing their assessments. One group watched video recordings while the other simply heard audio. Results indicated that performers who were more professionally dressed and that performed with better on-stage presence were evaluated more positively by those viewing the video

recording. These results were largely corroborated by Howard (2012) who examined choral performances. Similarly, Siddell-Strebel (2007) found that poor stage behavior impacted evaluations of cello performances. Van Weelden (2002) examined the expression of confidence and stage behavior of the performer. The study asked evaluators to examine videotaped examples with identical audio tracks and found that conductor's eye contact with the ensemble, posture, and overall expression of confidence influenced performance ratings. Fredrickson, Johnson, and Robinson (1998) examined the influence of pre-conducting behavior on performance evaluations. Behaviors included items such as eye contact, fumbling with materials, and posture. Results indicated that conductors demonstrating poor pre-conducting behaviors achieved lower scores.

A number of studies have examined the time of performance (Bergee & Platt, 2003; Bergee & Westfall, 2005; Bergee, 2006). If, as was the case in Bergee's studies, performances in the afternoon were the most successful, competitors might be well-advised to seek performance slots later in the day. However, while researchers have found the time of day to be significant in a number of studies, the time that is associated with success varies. Elliott, Schneider, and Zembrower (2000) found that students auditioning for the all-state band in a Mideastern state were most likely to be selected between the hours of nine and eleven in the morning. Similarly, Adderley (2001) examined auditions for the Central Jersey Music Educators Wind Ensemble and Orchestra and found that students were most likely to be selected for the wind ensemble in the first hour of auditions and for the orchestra during the second hour. While no consensus exists as to what time of day is most successful in contests, the findings of these studies are troubling given that successful scores are not distributed throughout an event and the time of performance may contribute to success.

A number of studies have examined the relationship between conducting skill and adjudication (Morrison et al., 2009; Morrison & Selvey, 2014; Price, 2011; Price & Chang, 2001, 2005). These studies shared a similar methodology in which participants were asked to evaluate video recordings of different conductors synchronized to identical audio recordings. Only the images that participants evaluated were different. Findings indicated that expressive conductors were evaluated more positively in many instances despite the audio being identical (Morrison et al., 2009; Morrison & Selvey, 2014; Price 2011). This led Price (2011) to conclude that “a conductor’s appearance and gestures might have an undue influence on performance evaluations” (p. 69). These results contradict an earlier series which found conducting had little influence on evaluation (Price & Chang, 2001, 2005; Price, 2006). Conductors’ influence on evaluations is significant as it underscores the connection between instruction and evaluation. If the performance of the teacher is correlated with successful evaluations then the evaluations may be more indicative of the directors’ work rather than the students.

Scholars have also highlighted repertoire selection as an important component of competitive success and a key task performed by band directors (Battisti, 1989, 2002; Blocher, Greenwood, & Shellhammer, 1997; Reynolds, 2000). Researchers have examined the relationship between repertoire selection and competitive success. The connection between the selection of difficult repertoire and contest results is of particular interest to some researchers. In this line of inquiry, Baker (2004) found that choirs performing repertoire of the minimum difficulty level were evaluated more negatively than those performing more challenging works. Similarly, Hash (2012) found that bands performing advanced repertoire received the highest ratings at high school band contests in the state of

South Carolina. Based on Baker's (2004) and Hash's (2012) findings, ensemble directors may be most successful by choosing music at an advanced level, however, within these results it should be noted that only groups of significant ability are likely to be capable of performing such advanced repertoire. In this sense, the performance of advanced repertoire may be an indicator of a successful group. These recommendations may encourage directors of accomplished groups to program more difficult repertoire, but directors of less established groups may not see the same benefits.

Much like conducting and repertoire selection, students rarely have choice over the title of the ensemble in which they perform. Silvey (2009) examined the effect of band label such as wind ensemble, concert band, or symphonic band on evaluation and found that there was no significant impact. Based on this study, students performing in a concert band have no advantage over those performing in a wind ensemble. Interestingly, Silvey also discussed that while experienced evaluators were able to explain the differences between a concert band and a wind ensemble, the labels are often used interchangeably in schools, meaning that a group labeled as a wind ensemble may not necessarily conform to the historical instrumentation configuration that would define that group. The role repertoire selection plays in evaluation again highlights teachers' influence on these evaluations. If directors are responsible for selecting repertoire and their selections influence the adjudication then the contests are perhaps more evaluative of directors' work than of students' performances.

Race, Gender, and Attractiveness. Perhaps most troubling in the areas of fairness in musical evaluation are studies examining the influence of performer attractiveness and race on performance evaluation. Wapnick, Darrow, Kovacs, and Dalrymple (1997) examined

whether attractiveness influenced evaluation of vocal solos. The experimental study had two groups of evaluators, one reviewing videotaped performers and the other listening to audio tapes. Attractive male and female singers were evaluated more positively in the videotaped adjudications. The authors also found that attractive female vocalists were evaluated more positively in the audio recorded group. In a subsequent study, Wapnick (1998) examined attractiveness and evaluation of solo violin performances and found similar results. In a study examining bias related to attractiveness in the evaluation of young pianists' performances, Ryan and Costa-Giomi (2004) found that attractiveness had opposite effects depending on the gender of the performer. Attractive female performers were evaluated more positively than their less attractive counterparts while less attractive male performers were evaluated more positively than attractive males.

In addition to attractiveness, race and gender have been found to influence evaluations of performance. In an examination of audition procedures for major American symphony orchestras, Goldin and Rouse (2000) found that the use of blind auditions increased the likelihood of female performers earning positions in orchestras. Elliott (1995) examined videotaped solo trumpet and flute performances to which an identical audio track was attached. The results pointed to a complex relationship between gender, race, and instrument selection. Both trumpet and flute were found to have strong gender relationships with male trumpet players and female flutists being evaluated most positively. Female trumpeters were adjudicated lower than male flutists. Black students were scored lower than White students and Black males were judged lowest. White females received lower scores than White males. While the results of this study are troubling, this is not the only way race has been found to be a factor in the evaluation of performances. Van Weelden and McGee

(2007) studied the relationship between repertoire and race. Specifically looking at whether conductors would be evaluated more positively if they were performing music associated with their race. The results showed that White conductors were rated more highly when performing a piece of standard Western art music while Black conductors were evaluated highest when conducting a spiritual.

The measurement and assessment of musical performances is an ongoing challenge for music contests. While substantial research has explored reliable and valid instruments and rubrics, little consensus has emerged as to the best method of evaluation. Similarly, while researchers have examined many different configurations of judging panels, no single method is seen as being most advantageous. Finally, regardless of the instrument used in evaluation or configuration of judges, substantial concern exists about bias in adjudication and the influence of nonmusical factors in competitive success. The influence of nonmusical elements on competitive success is germane to this study as it relates directly to how directors and students are evaluated in competition. Competitive results are meaningful to directors and students and the influence of any elements which are outside of their control is troubling. If a connection between competitive results and career advancement exists then any nonmusical or educational influence should be of particular concern.

Does competition influence students to work harder?

One of the primary arguments for competition in music education is that it motivates students (Rohrer, 2002). Proponents of competition argue that competitive events provide goals for students to work towards and recognition of their achievements. Still, other scholars have expressed concern that students may not interpret the results of contests appropriately. This area of the review will examine two categories of studies: a) studies

specifically addressing motivation, and b) studies examining how competition is perceived by those involved. Using competition as a motivational influence is a curricular decision. By introducing this element to students, educators are attempting to influence students' learning through the use of competitive goals and comparison with other students. Understanding the consequences and efficacy of competition to motivate students to achieve educational goals is central to the question of competition's value in instruction.

Motivation

Researchers have examined how students handle success and failure in competitions. Attribution theory is a common motivational framework that scholars use in this inquiry. Attribution theory explores how “the factors to which individuals attribute their successes and failures affect future self-perceptions, achievement behaviors, academic performance, and affective response (Austin, Renwick, & McPherson, 2006, p. 226). At the core of attribution theory is the extent to which a person recognizes their success or failure as a result of elements that they control, or rather, as the product of forces over which they have no influence. For example, in a music classroom, educators would like students to see a relationship between their effort and success. If a trombonist practices more, she will get better at the trombone. If a student believes that she will improve by expending more effort, she is then in control of her success. Conversely, students may perceive that they have a fixed level of ability and regardless of how hard they try, they will not improve. In this instance, the trombonist may not be incentivized to practice as she will not see it as producing an increase in ability.

In the context of competition, attribution theory is at work as students react to results such as ratings, rankings, or awards. For the contests to properly motivate students,

the results should be seen as a result of the students' effort. In effect, students will be most likely to work harder if they believe that their efforts produced their competitive success. One of the primary challenges in this framework is handling negative results. Students who work hard but receive a negative result may believe that their efforts were wasted and believe that they have a fixed level of ability. Similarly, they may also attribute their success or the success of others to good or bad luck, another factor which they do not control. If competition is to be used motivationally, it will be most effective if students recognize that their level of effort will lead to better contest scores. However, if students have negative attributions, competition may then have a detrimental influence on their musical interests.

Music Education. Asmus (1985, 1986) applied attribution theory in studies examining student attributions of success and failure in music contexts. Results indicated that students tended to attribute success and failure to internal factors such as effort and ability. Asmus (1986) explained that students shifted their attribution as they became older. Younger students were more likely to attribute success and failure to effort while older students saw ability as the determining factor. Asmus noted that while teachers can influence students' attributions, the shift in attribution as students age presents a challenge:

Most teachers want their students to apply themselves diligently in their musical pursuits. Unfortunately, the results of this study indicate that the older students get, the less likely it is that their attitudes are conducive for applying themselves at the levels teachers would want. Therefore, it seems crucial that teachers at all grade levels should encourage students to adopt effort related attributions so that students are motivated to put in the effort required to become proficient in music. (1986, p. 275).

Asmus highlights how significant attributions can influence students' desires to continue in music. He discussed that the shift in attribution from effort to ability largely takes place in sixth and seventh grade (1986, p. 275). This would pose a particular challenge for high

school band directors as this attributional shift may take place before students are involved in high school bands.

The manner in which students are motivated by competition has been examined in a series of studies (Austin, 1988, 1991). The studies examined elementary band students' reactions to performing in competitive and non-competitive environments. Findings indicated that students who had competed did not perform any better than those who did not (Austin, 1991), but they tended to desire competitive experiences more than those who had not been in a competition (Austin, 1988, 1991). This may pose a challenge for any teacher who may wish to stop competing. As Austin explained: "It seems that prior experience or success in competition (or both) tends to produce a type of dependency on continued involvement in competitive scenarios" (p. 104). Competition then may be a need based on familiarity more than anything else. Students that had competed before desired competition while those that had not preferred the non-competitive environment. Austin suggested that "these results call into question music educators' traditional acceptance of and continued reliance upon competitive teaching approaches, as well as the all-too-common assumption in education that learning will occur simply through scheduling of significant activities (contests) or the passage of time" (1991, p. 156).

Studies specifically examining competitions influence on students' attributions of success and failure portray the potential influence of competitive results such as ratings and rankings on students (Vispoel & Austin, 1995, 1998; Howard & Weerts, 1999). Findings indicate that students may recognize the role of effort and ability (Howard & Weerts, 1999), but they are most likely to attribute their success to others such as teachers or parents and attribute failure to themselves (Vispoel & Austin, 1995, 1998). That students often attribute

the competitive results they earn to elements outside of their control such as family influence or ability presents a challenge to teachers using competition to motivate students. If students do not recognize a relationship between competitive results and the effort they put into their musical studies, then competition may not effectively encourage them to increase their musical engagement. Further, if they are not successful in contests they may be more likely to react negatively.

Wood (1973) examined how contest results influenced students' self-perceptions. Findings indicated that students felt motivated to avoid failure more than they felt the desire to work towards a good competitive result. The study highlighted that grades and ratings at contests influenced students' self-perceptions as the students took solo and ensemble evaluations most seriously in their feelings of adequacy or success.

In a literature review that spanned across general education and music education, Hurley (1996) articulated that competition in music education may foment an increase in achievement but lamented that "the short term gains in performance afforded by competition is subservient to one of the major goals of music education" (p. 74). Hurley believed that competition in music placed an emphasis on ability and worked against students expending effort throughout their lives in musical participation. Hurley concluded that based on the literature he reviewed, "it is inherent in competition that young students associate winning with ability, and those who fail to receive a high reward relinquish effort because of a self-perception of a lack of ability, a fixed and unalterable attribute" (p. 84). In Hurley's thesis, students who performed at a high-level from an early age were more likely to want to continue to perform well while those who did not experience success were unlikely to work any longer believing that it would not produce a positive gain in their ability.

General Education. Researchers in the larger context of general education have also studied competition and the motivational impacts it may have upon students. These studies offer a broader understanding of how competition might influence a learning task or environment. Ames, Ames, and Felker (1977) conducted a study in which male fifth grade students were asked to solve puzzles in pairs in both competitive and non-competitive situations. They found “clear evidence that the effects of success and failure outcomes depend upon the reward contingencies of the performance setting” (p. 5). The effects of the competitive conditions could be quite striking, as the researchers observed:

Competitive conditions caused self-punitive behavior for failure outcomes and some ego-enhancing strategies for success outcomes. Failing subjects expressed strong negative affect and perceived themselves as less capable than their successful partners, while successful subjects perceived themselves as more deserving of reward than their failing partners. (p. 7)

In a later study, Ames (1981) compared student reactions in environments using competitive and cooperative learning structures. Ames found that:

While winning in a competitive setting produced evidence of self-aggrandizement, losing lowered children’s self-perceptions of their ability and feelings of satisfaction. The findings also suggested that cooperative group structures may provide an important mechanism for changing these self-defeating thought processes following a poor performance. (p. 283)

In a similar study in which students were asked to complete puzzles in both a competitive and non-competitive environment, Deci et al. (1981) indicated that “when [a student] focusses on winning rather than on the process of doing the activity well, the behavior is extrinsically motivated” (p. 80). Intrinsic motivation was higher in participants in the non-competitive group, leading researchers to suggest that when people see an activity as an “instrument for winning rather than an activity which is mastery-oriented and rewarding in its own right” (p. 81) they tend to emphasize the competition and not the activity itself.

This finding was corroborated in a later meta-analysis of literature on motivation in education in which the authors found that tangible rewards tend to have a substantial “undermining effect” on intrinsic motivation (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001, p. 1). Additionally, Amabile, Hennessy, and Grossman (1986) examined the influence of rewards on students’ creative work. They found a means by which intrinsic motivation could be shifted to be extrinsic through the introduction of a reward: “(a) a salient reward can be offered for engaging in the intrinsically interesting task, leading to perceptions that the task engagement is simply a means to the end of obtaining the reward; (b) the task can be made to appear as a means to an end in some other way than the offer of reward; or (c) the task can be directly presented as work rather than play” (p. 15). These studies point to competition potentially producing deleterious results for band students. If competition is used as a motivator to achieve more in music classes, but actually decreases students’ intrinsic musical interests, then competition is effectively motivating students to earn awards while lessening their interest in musical learning.

Nicholls (1984) discussed ability conception, an important component of attribution theory, in educational contexts. His findings suggest that ability conception may hinder a student’s desire to seek assistance in academic pursuits. Nicholls found that “students with low perceived ability would be more likely than those with high perceived ability to see a request for assistance as a demonstration of lack of capacity and thus, be less likely to seek assistance” (p. 342). While not specifically discussing competition, Nicholls addresses the idea that ability conception is developed through the comparison of self and others in what he refers to as a social self-evaluative perspective. Competition in education provides this comparative structure.

Further examining competitive and non-competitive goal structures in education, Vallerand, Gauvin, and Halliwell (1986) asked students to complete a task in which they had one practice trial to measure intrinsic interest in the task and then a second attempt which was part of a “tournament.” Participants were then randomly told if they had won or lost the contest and were left in the room where they could choose to play with the materials related to the task again. The results indicated that participants not winning the contest perceived themselves as less competent and displayed less intrinsic motivation than subjects winning the competition.

These results were largely corroborated by Vansteenkiste and Deci (2003) who examined how the impact of feedback following a loss or win in a competition impacts motivation. Results indicated that winners felt more competent than those not winning who additionally were significantly less intrinsically motivated. Feedback had an impact on motivation. Receiving positive feedback in the presence of another doing the same activity facilitated more intrinsic motivation than did winning a competition. The negative impact on motivation when losing a competition is greater than the positive impact from winning a competition. Vansteenkiste and Deci reported that positive feedback was an effective tool for counteracting the negative effects of losing, but regardless, damage was done. This led the authors to conclude that “if, instead of winning above all else, participants in activities and observers of the activities focused more on good performance than on winning, the results for the participants’ motivation is likely to be far more positive” (p. 298).

Motivational and psychological research expose some of the lasting impacts competition may have on students. That competition increases extrinsic motivation is a recurring theme throughout the aforementioned studies. While data in these motivational

studies were largely filtered through psychological theories or instruments, investigation into the lived experience of those that have competed may provide a valuable perspective that can illuminate more what it is like to be extrinsically motivated and how this influences a person's experience in a music classroom. Additional studies can both relate to and build upon the existing literature in this area.

Attitudes and Perceptions of Competitions

In relation to issues of motivation, some may assume that people will be more likely to participate in activities that they view positively or feel successful doing. Research related to competitors' attitudes and perceptions toward competition has addressed the reasons that music educators and students choose to participate in competitive events, how competing has been perceived by those taking part, and if competition has been shown to produce higher levels of musical achievement.

Hurst (1994) conducted a nationwide investigation into high school band directors' reasons for participating in music competitions. The survey included 293 respondents and found that directors believed contests provided students with a sense of accomplishment, helped maintain student performance and high standards, provided a means for evaluation, and gave direction to their teaching. In a study examining the attitudes of college band members towards their competitive high school experiences, Burnsed, Sochinski, and Hinkle (1983) found that college students had a neutral attitude towards their competitive high school experiences. Students who were in bands that competed more often than others tended to value the experiences to a greater extent and students from larger programs rated the experiences higher than students from smaller bands. Results additionally indicated that

“the pressure to compete that many directors often cite does not come from the students” (p. 15).

Larue (1986) surveyed band directors, band members, and members of parent booster groups to determine their attitudes towards their high school band programs, and specifically the extent to which competition was emphasized in the classroom. Findings suggested that programs that emphasized contest results to a greater extent had band members and parents who were more interested in the extrinsic rewards competition had to offer than those that did not compete as often. While the study did not articulate a causal relationship between being involved in and valuing competitions, Larue suggested that familiarity with competitions was associated with more positive attitudes towards it in the classroom.

Burnsed and Sochinski (1983) summarized a panel discussion and research presentation held at a state music education conference related to competition in high school marching bands. Attendees were presented with results from two papers (Burnsed, Sochinski, & King, 1983; Rogers, 1985) and then discussed findings related to personal experiences and trends. At the conclusion of the meeting, panelists were in agreement that contests were a valuable part of their curriculum, but that “an overemphasis on competition can be harmful” (p. 27). Findings also indicated that band directors feel pressured to compete, student attitudes towards competition varied by year in school, and competition was expected by parents, administrators, and students.

In a more comprehensive study, Battersby (1994) examined the reasons bands may choose to participate or avoid contests and competitive festivals. In addition to seeking opinions of directors, this study surveyed students. Battersby found that the most common

reasons to not participate were logistical such as scheduling and the financial costs associated with travel. Additionally, many directors expressed that they would only take students to events for which they felt they were adequately prepared. Like Hurst (1994), Battersby found that directors participated in contests to motivate students, raise standards, and build programs. Student opinions differed from those of their directors. Students expressed the benefits in terms of nonmusical elements such as social interactions that occurred during travel and competitions. Respondents who no longer competed but did so in the past were the most critical of competitive events. Directors from these schools felt that too much time and additional work was spent on the events and that there were not sufficient musical outcomes to justify the experience. This was reinforced by Werpy (1995) who found that nonmusical factors such as travel, participation in tournaments, and honor bands were most often mentioned by students when discussing reasons for participating in festivals.

Marching band contests were popular among respondents in a national survey of high school band directors and administrators (Rogers, 1985). Rogers (1985) found that administrators had a more positive view of contests than the music educators who participated in the survey. Additionally, directors and administrators differed in their opinions of the benefits of competing. While each group found significant public relations benefits associated with the contests, directors felt the events had fewer musical benefits than the administrators. Directors highlighted significant nonmusical benefits such as motivating students and recruiting new band members.

Rothlisberger (1995) investigated the impact of band participation in students' overall education and specifically addressed the topic of competition. Rothlisberger found that students valued competition and participated in band partly because it was competitive

but felt competitive results were just one of many indications of a successful program. Students valued competing but viewed band participation as a diverse experience with many different positive attributes. Linn's (1988) investigation of students' attitudes towards marching contests in the state of Wyoming had similar results. Students believed that competing in marching band made the activity more enjoyable but they did not view the results as important. Further supporting the positive perceptions of competitive activities, Franklin's (1979) investigation of attitudes and perceptions of school administrators, parents, band students, and directors, found that competitive activities such as all-state band, concert festivals, and marching contests were viewed positively by all surveyed.

Szot (2007) discussed student perceptions of contests through a summary of student comments following their experiences at contests and festivals. Szot found that students generally valued the experience of competing, hearing other student performances, and were particularly interested in adjudicators' feedback. Students expressed a desire for more constructive criticism, specifically desiring judges to provide concrete strategies for improving performances.

Sullivan (2005) and Meyers (2012) investigated attitudes and perceptions of participants in the Arizona State Solo and Ensemble festival. Sullivan's survey of educator attitudes and perceptions revealed that solo and ensemble contests were viewed positively as a means for students to develop their musical skills. However, both Meyers and Sullivan highlighted that the simultaneous scheduling of auditions for regional honor ensembles was a factor preventing students from participating in solo and ensemble festival. Meyers (2012), whose study surveyed student perceptions, found that students valued the opportunity to audition for regional ensembles more than performing in the solo and ensemble festival.

This largely supports Sullivan's conclusion that "results of the study present an interesting dichotomy between valuing solo and ensemble festival and not disapproving of the current schedule that has one day for two individual performance activities" (2005, p. 61).

Stamer (2004, 2006) investigated choral students' attitudes and perceptions toward participation in competitive choral festivals. Stamer (2004, 2006) found that students' perceptions of competition shifted as they progressed through high school. Sophomore members of the choirs found competing important and attached great value to the results. They valued contests in which winners were named more than those in which just ratings were awarded. In contrast, senior members of the choirs preferred to not compete. They found that the competition repertoire tended to be emphasized more and that competition prevented them from working on musical material that they preferred.

Several studies have been conducted to examine students' and directors' stress related to music competitions. Howard (2004) specifically explored stress in a variety of competitive musical idioms: solo performances, marching band, concert band, and small ensembles. Howard identified different levels of perceived stress. Solo contests were found to be the most stressful followed by small ensemble and marching band events. Howard suggested that solo contests may be the most stressful because students are alone where in an ensemble they are one of many performers. The study also showed that female students valued the ratings most but found the contests more stressful than males. Similarly, in an earlier study Howard and Weerts (1999) surveyed students in Iowa and respondents indicated that all types of contests were enjoyable but found solo and ensemble most stressful.

In an examination of American orchestra festivals, Barnes and McCashin (2005) found that festivals tended to be particularly stressful for music educators:

State representatives perceive that there can be a significant amount of pressure on the director, while students seem to feel somewhat less intense pressure. Job security for directors is impacted minimally, but the events appear to have significant impact on student achievement, translating into a moderate impact on orchestra curricula. (p. 40)

While Barnes and McCashin dismiss a significant impact on job security, Batey (2002) grounded many of her recommendations for festival success in the importance of these festivals in the evaluation of music teachers and their programs. Saunders and Worthington (1990) agreed explaining that “the success of an ensemble director sometimes is measured by occasional observations of classroom teaching skills but more often by public performances” (p. 26). These concerns are echoed by Clem (1978), who expressed similar concerns regarding the connection between ratings and marching band directors’ job security.

Others have examined the emphasis on competition as a potential cause of declining enrollments in bands in the state of Texas. Jolly (2008) examined barriers to student enrollment and found demands such as class scheduling, family influences, and the perception that band was “old school” and did not have a place in a contemporary school prevented enrollment. Jolly highlighted competition as an influence which amplified some of the barriers:

The focus on competition has created insurmountable time constraints on students which have forced them to choose between academic, financial, and band priorities. Next, the high level of competition has created a sense of elitism throughout the band program. In order to attain the highest quality performance, some band programs have chosen to utilize only the top-achieving students in competitions, leaving lesser qualified students on the sidelines of their band’s halftime performance field, or backstage to manage the concert band performance. (p. 176)

Jolly further problematized competition's influence on program priorities in Texas high schools.

The quest to win the trophy at all costs has come at a price for quality music education programs in Texas. Instruction of quality literature has often been replaced by execution of competitive shows that exploit student endurance, time commitments, school budgets and sometimes, UIL rules. In some cases in Texas band programs, music education for the sake of music has been overshadowed in the quest for the UIL gold medal, the sweepstakes trophy, or the utilization of props that would be the envy of any Hollywood or Broadway producer, once again overshadowing music for music's sake. (p. 177)

Jolly highlights the pursuit of competitive success can replace musical and educational objectives. This concern is hardly new in music education and can be seen as a reason for reform since the early band contests (Humphreys, 1989; Keene, 1982) and discussed in professional periodicals over fifty years ago by Andrews (1962) who viewed competition as hurting music's ability to be seen as a core academic subject.

The manner and degree to which competition has been emphasized in classrooms has been frequent topic of scholarship. An example of this interest can be seen in a selected bibliography of resources for marching band directors (Meaux, 2000). He provided a curated list of resources including texts related to marching band pedagogy, show design, styles of performance, and marching percussion. Of most significance is the area dedicated to competition. It is among the most substantial portions of the bibliography and contains more sources than areas related to pedagogical techniques, repertoire selection, and rehearsal planning. Similarly, Fleming (1976) examined perceived levels of emphasis on competition as he surveyed high school band directors, college band directors, and high school administrators. His study found disagreement between the three constituencies. High school band directors did not view contests as being overemphasized, while both college band directors and high school administrators expressed concern about the events. Additionally,

Fleming found variation in competition emphasis among the different regions of the United States. Findings suggested that the southeastern region of the United States placed the most emphasis on band competitions while a small number of states had no contests.

Finally, researchers have examined the effects that competitive structures have had on musical achievement. Temple (1973) conducted a study in which students from superior-rated competitive bands and students from non-competitive bands each took the Watkins-Farnum and Collwell Music Achievement Tests. The findings showed that students from non-competitive ensembles had higher levels of musical achievement on each of the tests. The most interesting finding of this study, however, may be what Temple experienced during the sampling process. The study utilized nominations from college band directors and found that there was difficulty in nominating groups who did not compete. Temple remarked, "The difficulty which the college band directors and music educators encountered in nominating bands of high quality that did not participate in band competitions and the fact that no non-competition band has a director younger than thirty-four implies that the quickest pathway to professional recognition for a young band director has been through the development of a fine competition band" (1973, p. 109).

Where Temple (1973) examined the achievement differences between competitive and non-competitive groups, West (1985) examined if festival ratings were indicative of higher levels of musical learning. The study examined correlations between festival ratings and scores of individual students on an established music aptitude test. The study took place in four Florida counties and found that students in bands receiving the highest ratings scored significantly better than those receiving the lowest ratings at large group festivals. Similarly, students participating and scoring highly in solo and ensemble also scored highly in the

musicianship test. These results led West to conclude: “What this indicates is that those teachers who are doing a better job of preparing their students for performances are also doing a better job of imparting musical skills and information to those students (p. 79). These findings contradict those by Temple (1973), but it is important to keep in mind that Temple’s study used students from bands that did not compete in the festivals at all as opposed to West (1985) who examined achievement levels using students all competing in the same events.

Participants in this study used competition to motivate their students, yet the extant literature does not answer the question: does competition motivate students to perform better, learn, or have more meaningful experiences in their music classes? How students are motivated remains a topic of debate; however, it does appear that competitive success and failure can play a role. Research in general education supports the assertion that competitive goal structures may develop extrinsic motivation in students and effectively lessen their interest in the musical component of their band experience. Finally, while competition can be seen as stressful, it is generally perceived quite positively by those who participate in it.

What are competitions like and how does competition influence the musical material and methods that are used by bands?

To this point, the review has examined how and by whom competitions are evaluated, the possible motivational impacts of competing, and the attitudes and perceptions of those that have competed. I now turn to the experiences of competing. The following section addresses how competitions are organized and facilitated and the manner in which students and teachers prepare for the events. Competition is a part of the curriculum as it is a planned experience taking place as a part of a formal music course. Competition may also

influence a number of curricular choices such as specific musical activities, materials and repertoire, or teaching behaviors. This section discusses competitive practices and competitive influences on band curriculum.

Competitive Practices

Significant variation exists in the manner in which contests are organized and the rules which govern participation. For example, some contests may choose to group ensembles into competitive classes or divisions based on the number of students enrolled in the group, while other contests may base competitive groupings on school enrollments. Some contests require repertoire to be chosen from a list of approved pieces, while other events allow for greater autonomy in musical selections. The format and rules of the competitive events can broadly be defined as competitive practices and can have significant impacts on those participating.

In an examination of practices and procedures in orchestra festivals throughout the United States, Barnes and McCashin (2005) found a number of similarities. Their study demonstrated that in most states, festival participation required an entrance fee, was organized by the state music education association, utilized a required or recommended repertoire list, employed multiple judges for large ensemble performance evaluations, and judges were selected either by the organization running the festival or hired by local teachers. Interestingly, these common practices do not differ significantly from the practices found by Cory (1951) in the 1950s.

In a study examining band contests in ten states, Gonzalez (2007) found a number of common competitive practices. Like Barnes and McCashin (2005), Gonzalez found that all festivals were run by state music education organizations or interscholastic competition

organizations such as the University Interscholastic League in Texas. Five of the ten states allowed bands to participate for comments only. Ensembles were classified most often by school enrollment, but in some instances by repertoire chosen or grade level. Half of the states offered contests in which groups could be selected to advance to a future competition. Six states utilized a prescribed music list and five states mandated that all groups perform a march. Three-person adjudication panels were most common and in eight of the ten states the Kansas rating system was utilized (I - Superior to V - Poor).

Some general themes of contest and festival participation have emerged. Contests are typically run and organized by a music education association. The Kansas rating system is commonly employed and frequently groups are asked to choose repertoire from a recommended or required list. While variations exist, it appears that overall competitive structures are similar throughout the United States. This highlights competitive results and practices as a common characteristic of high school band curricula. Additionally, the ubiquity of the Kansas ratings system means ratings may be widely understood throughout the country and supports the influence of ratings on directors' reputations. A superior rating would be understood in California as well as it may be in Texas. The common rating system allows for an efficient means of comparison.

Influence on Curriculum

The organizational structure of a contest has the potential to significantly impact curricular decisions. While the use of required repertoire may be the most obvious influence, how the students are taught in successful programs has been a topic of inquiry as well. To determine the teaching methods most likely to produce positive results, a number of studies have examined teaching behaviors and attributes of competitively successful educators and

offered recommendations based upon their findings. It is important to note that while the studies highlight teaching strategies that have led to successful performances, I do not wish to imply that the decision to compete has led to teachers choosing to use these techniques. They may choose to teach in the same manner regardless of if they competed or not.

In a review of literature on performance-based music instruction, Saunders and Worthington (1990) offered specific recommendations for teachers of performance groups. The authors felt that teachers and administrators failed to recognize the specific pedagogical choices and techniques that may have led to the positive ratings:

Music educators often assume that a superior performance is the natural result of good teaching. Music teachers and administrators are quick to produce a record of adjudication and festival scores to document the success of a program; yet, if you ask what the teacher does to produce such results, the response is often vague. (p. 26)

Saunders and Worthington go on to discuss that teachers who earn positive festival evaluations often excel in planning instruction in a manner that allows them to diagnose and address performance issues systematically.

In a series of studies, Goolsby (1996, 1997, 1999) examined rehearsal strategies of directors with varying levels of experience including expert, novice, and student teachers. An established record of superior ratings at festivals was used as part of the criteria for identifying expert teachers highlighting competitive success as a symbol of competence within the profession. Through the studies, Goolsby found that expert teachers tended to address musical fundamentals such as tone and balance more frequently. Additionally, the studies indicate that teachers earning the best ratings tended to talk a great deal less in rehearsals and students performed for a larger percentage of instructional time.

Cavitt (2003) examined error correction and teaching strategies used in a Texas high school band that was nearing a competitive performance. Results showed a learning

environment heavily dominated by the teacher. Rehearsal time featured 52% teacher talk, 6% teacher modeling, 19% student performance, and 5% individual performance. Student discussion was not indicated as a part of the rehearsal time and student talk was largely mentioned in regards to time spent off-task, of which there was little. Cavitt's results are similar to those found by Witt (1986) in a study examining use of instructional time in band and orchestra classes. Witt found that over half of rehearsal time was spent performing and nearly 40% in teaching episodes in which the instructor led activities. Band classes tended to stop more often than orchestra and had more teaching episodes of shorter duration, approximately 23 seconds on average.

Juchniewicz, Kelly, and Acklin (2014) examined rehearsal techniques used by educators whose ensembles consistently earned superior ratings. The study indicated that these directors emphasized musical fundamentals such as tone quality, balance and blend, and rhythmic accuracy. In particular, band directors in the survey indicated the importance of selecting appropriate repertoire of high quality.

A substantial body of literature addresses the significant curricular impact of repertoire selection (Battisti, 1989, 2002; Reynolds, 2000). Morgan and Burrows (1981) discussed repertoire selection as an important part of the process of preparing for choral festivals. They believed that it was most important to base repertoire selection around a piece's suitability for the performing group. Suitability refers to the extent to which the musical and technical demands of a piece of music match the musical skills and assets of a particular ensemble. When suitability concerns are prioritized educators consider technical demands of repertoire before aligning repertoire choices to curricular or other educational goals. Carney (2005) found a similar practice in band directors in the state of Florida. He

found that suitability was the most common concern for band directors and that the instrumentation of their ensemble and demands of festival programs dictated curricular decisions.

Some common themes emerged from the review of teaching strategies associated with positive contest and festival evaluations. Successful band directors are seen to excel at time management. They run efficient rehearsals in which music fundamentals are addressed most often. The classroom environment emphasizes performing as much as possible and one of the main teacher activities is the diagnosis and remedy of musical problems.

Repertoire selection was seen as a vital component and directors balanced the need to select music of the highest quality with ensuring that the repertoire's technical demands were appropriately matched to the skills of their ensembles. These studies speak to curricular elements of band programs and show a connection between contest evaluations, subject matter decisions, and instructional practices. While these studies discuss facets which are correlational and not necessarily causal of positive evaluations, they do provide insight into the common curricular elements in competitive high school bands.

Experiences of Being in a High School Performing Ensemble

The preceding literature provides an extensive view of the conversation around competition in music education. The research base is substantial, but it is overwhelmingly quantitative and focused on the evaluations conducted rather than the experience of being evaluated. To this point, not a single study on competition in band specifically, or in music education in general, has explored the high school band competition through a qualitative methodology offering the field little insight as to the lived experiences of being in an ensemble and personal accounts of competing. While researchers have not addressed

competition qualitatively, a base of qualitative inquiry that explores the experience of being in a high school performing ensemble exists. Literature that explores the experiences of being in band or in a secondary performing group is most relevant to this phenomenological study and is addressed below.

Studies have portrayed the experience of being in a high school band as one of joining a musical community (Abril, 2013; Adderley, 2009; Adderley, Kennedy & Berz, 2003; Laine, 2007; Morrison, 2001). These studies highlight the social and interactive elements of band membership and discuss formal curricular facets of band participation to a lesser extent. For example, Morrison (2001) emphasized that ensemble participation “becomes an aspect of students’ self-identity” (p. 25), a separate study characterized the high school band room as “a home away from home” (Adderley, Kennedy, & Berz, 2003, p. 190) promoting that students often feel comfortable and safe when in their band classrooms. The experience of being in an ensemble extended beyond formal class time as students’ discussed spending a great deal of non-class time in the ensemble rehearsal room, often choosing to socialize, eat lunch, or simply “hang out” in the classroom (p. 197). Abril (2013), through a study examining the “hardcore band kids” summarized the ensemble environment:

The adolescents in this study spoke passionately and sincerely about the importance of music in general and band in particular. They characterized band as a social learning space where they could find identity, lose themselves in performing, and work with peers to meet goals more ambitious than they could ever accomplish individually. (p. 446)

For these students the social and community aspect of band participation was as important as the musical goals they were seeking to achieve.

The nonmusical lessons taught through ensemble participation highlight the myriad influences that ensemble participation has on students. For example, Adderley (2009) discussed students' perceptions of their high school marching band experiences:

I found the students cognizant of the life lessons they learned, including the leadership skills they developed and which other students emulated. Many of these students matured, in part, because of working with these marching bands. Some students practiced their newly acquired or refined skills in non-musical school activities and in the larger communities in which they lived. The social bonding within the marching-band community also played an important role in the students' overall marching-band experience. Students developed friendships with other students they might not have otherwise. (p. 251)

That students highlighted the nonmusical learning and social aspect of band shows that the formal curriculum taught may be a secondary part of the experience of being in an ensemble for many students.

Competition can significantly influence band directors in the way they go about their work, feel stress, and derive job satisfaction. Shaw (2014) investigated the work-life balance of competitive marching band directors in a multiple case study of four teachers. Findings indicated that competitive high school marching band directors struggled with work-life balance and that competition influenced the amount of pressure band directors perceived. Participants discussed experiences such as being told "You better make state [finals]" (p. 69) on their first day working at the school, or having to reassure a parent that the band would still compete in a national marching band contest even though they had been accepted to perform as a part of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Similarly, participants discussed opposition from administrators to cutting back on competitive marching band activities, largely because administrators were aware of the prestige brought by competitive success brought (p. 30).

Shaw's study (2014) illustrated the incredible dedication that many high school band directors brought to their work. Participants recounted stories of 60-80 hour work weeks, countless weekend hours, and even pushback from family members and staff when they attempted to achieve greater work-life balance. One participant attributed a recent heart attack to stress from his job (p. 71) and others articulated discontent that they often commit more time than many of their students or colleagues. However, despite the participants' frustrations with the workload and time commitment, some felt this amount of work was required to do the job well, even going to the point of expressing frustration with a colleague who had recently started a family and wished to work less:

I feel like I signed on for this job and you know, maintain or continue to grow this program to what it is. A change in my personal life should not elicit a change in what the job is. (p. 71)

This study highlighted how influential competition can be in the life of a high school band director. Participants cited competitive influences and pressure coming from themselves, parents, and administrators. Competitive success, while not a focus of the study, was certainly a concern for many of the participants.

Position Papers and Essays

In addition to research on aspects of competition, a number of music educators have contributed to related discourse through position papers and essays. Finally, as this review has discussed the existing research related to contests, I have not yet summarized discourse on competition as it has been expressed in music education publications. A number of educators have offered position papers and essays debating the merits and detriments of competition in music. The following section discusses arguments for and against the use of competition in music programs.

Criticism of Competition

A number of educators have aired concerns regarding the use of competition in music programs. Critiques of competition have been common for decades and the arguments against its use in music curricula can be summarized in three overall themes: 1) competitions influence curriculum and shift goals away from musical pursuits (Bergee, 1989; Campbell, 1974; Floyd, 1986; Miller, 1994; Regelski, et al., 1966); 2) competition's relationship to job retention and influences on teacher practices (Baker, 1966; Miller, 1994; Goolsby, 1983) and 3) competitions are visible to the public and promote a view of bands which does not represent the activity as it should (Austin, 1990b; Floyd, 1986; Thurmond, 1978).

Regelski (1966) posited that competition may shift students' attention away from musical goals:

Unfortunately, many young musicians are being inculcated with the notion that musical success lies outside the realm of music and the aesthetic experience, and in the extra-musical realm of grades and ratings. (p. 61)

In Regelski's view, the pursuit of competitive accolades has relegated musical learning to secondary status in curricula. His concerns were echoed by Floyd (1986) who saw competition's serving as a curricular framework for many directors: "the structure of contests throughout the year has provided a comfortable curriculum base and syllabus for many programs" (p. 70). If students' experiences are based around a competitive schedule rather than musical objectives, the competitive awards become the focus of their learning which can effectively narrow the types of experiences available to them. Miller (1994) believed that the influence of competitions could effectively remove opportunities for creative expression for students and teachers in their curricula. Miller believed that

“creativity and individualism were the opposite of competition because the very nature of creativity is to originate something new and that defies standardization” (p. 33). Miller believed that competitive motivations focus curricula on doing the same thing in comparison to others when the nature of the arts is to create and innovate. Campbell (1974) particularly condemned the practice of comparing students’ works to one another in education as he discussed: If we can remove the noneducational role of ranking, sorting, and labeling which is none of its [education] business, then perhaps we can make our schools pleasant, interesting places where people come to learn” (p. 144). In Campbell’s opinion, competition had no place in an educational environment.

Educators have raised concerns about the manner in which competitions might influence music educators. Miller (1994) felt that directors’ perceived need to do well at competitions might encourage them to dedicate their energies to teaching the most talented and accomplished students who could help them earn positive ratings and relegate other students to a lower priority. This concern was largely based in the belief that there was a connection between competition ratings and rankings and job retention for music educators. As Baker (1966) explained “though a less-than-top rating spells out defeat for the students, the rating can represent potential disaster for the director, especially if he [*sic*] is not on tenure” (p. 143). Goolsby (1983) articulated a similar concern, but highlighted that competitive success may also be seen as a benefit and added source of job satisfaction for successful educators:

Who benefits from competition? Certainly a select few directors temporarily reap the rewards of victory. In an endeavor in which the financial remunerations are minimal, who can fault pursuit of recognition from peers and colleagues? (p. 32)

Both Goolsby (1983) and Baker (1966) articulate the overarching influence of competitions on directors' reputations and job security. If educators' livelihoods are connected to their success at these events, they may be more inclined to emphasize success at contests in their teaching.

The influence of contests on directors' jobs may be related to the public visibility of competitive events. Ratings and rankings are easily communicated to the public and once a band achieves success in these events they may have no choice but to continue:

Once a band is involved in these cavalcades there is not a way out except to win. Directors of those bands that do not place first are under much pressure from students and parents; the situation is quite similar to that of the old-style band contests. (Thurmond, 1978, p. 24)

The public visibility of contests has the potential to promote competitive outcomes over musical objectives and may have detrimentally influenced the view of music as an academic subject in schools as Floyd (1986) explained: "music contests have taken on a position of great importance in the public's view, while music education and the role of music education in the academic curriculum has been relegated to second class citizenship" (p. 70). Austin (1990b) believed that music educators are partly responsible for the public view of competitions: "the profession clings to the tradition of competition and contests with a level of single-mindedness that defies logic" (p. 25).

Works Promoting Competition

Educators advocating for the use of competition in music programs have emphasized the motivational potential of contests, the opportunity for feedback and evaluation, and the opportunity to hear other students perform. Buyer (2005), for example, discussed competition as a means to motivate students and to achieve nonmusical goals such as discipline and teamwork. He believed the competition helped students "become better

people” (p. 9). Whitney (1966) felt competition had a motivational effect that was not possible otherwise: “playing for comments only, on a festival basis, rarely induces such intense preparatory effort as playing for a rating” (p. 63) and “the educational musical values of performing for a rating will usually outbalance any drawbacks” (p. 64). Gallops (2005) discussed competitions as instilling a desire to improve. Gallops believed that more importantly than competing against others, students compete against themselves as they attempt to earn better ratings. Pierson (1994) echoed this sentiment as he believed competition was effective at motivating students, but “the emphasis must be on the learning process, not on the external rewards” (p. 10). Pierson further commented that students are motivated by hearing other students perform. Competitions then facilitate an opportunity for students to compare their work to that of their peers.

Through these opinion essays we can see the overall debate as was encapsulated by many of the reviews of literature (Payne, 1987; Rohrer, 2002; Williams, 1996). This is an historic debate with many of the works written decades ago. The same points continue to be brought up and it appears that this ongoing debate has done little to sway practices in the field. The discourse around competition shows that competition is a significant part of music education in the United States and that continued inquiry is needed to further explore the phenomenon.

Competition as a Form of Advocacy

Andrews (1962), in an article listing the perceived challenges facing music education, felt competitions could hamper many music educators’ goal of having music considered a core academic subject. She felt competitions identified music with extracurricular activities and not with curricular subjects and that this emphasis can send the wrong message to those

who make educational and curricular decisions. In contrast, Goolsby (1983) pointed out that competition can be an effective tool for advocacy for successful programs. Goolsby explained, “Few administrators would dare eliminate a winner” (p. 33) but lamented that only a select few directors reap the rewards of victory. Ultimately, Goolsby conceded, that competition was a part of everyday life and that it should be a part of music education. He rationalized competitions as a means of teaching “discrimination and judgement of musical performance” (p. 33), and believed that music education programs could utilize time spent listening to other groups at festivals as opportunities for students to evaluate and judge other performances.

Finney (1989) offered a differing perspective on advocacy through competition as he shared experiences running competitive theatre festivals. Finney discussed theatre festivals that were started to offer teachers a means of bringing awareness of their programs to the community as he explained: “In order to survive, many theatre teachers are forced to focus their energies on these competitions so that their school administrators will give them the recognition they need to build their theatre programs” (p. 38). The result, unfortunately, was events in which students were focused on winning and not on sharing their work with others. The same phenomenon could be occurring within competitive musical events.

Curriculum

As examined in this study, competition is both a part of the formal curricula that people experience and an element that influenced and framed curricular decisions. Scholars have discussed the demands of competition as a part of planned band activities and as influential in curriculum decisions (Allsup, 2010), however no study has specifically examined how competition frames curricular decisions. The following section reviews texts

that serve as curricular guides, models, or frameworks for high school bands. While extensive curricular frameworks exist, in much of the literature, curriculum development for bands is narrowly conflated with repertoire selection. This has led to an extensive body of literature dedicated to repertoire, but little that goes beyond this facet of curriculum development. Before discussing the more extensive curricular frameworks, I first have reviewed resources for repertoire selection in high school bands.

Repertoire Selection

The centrality and importance of repertoire selection permeates the writings related to band curriculum development (Allsup, 2010; Blocher, 1997; Cramer, 1997; Garofalo, 1976; Labuta, 1997/1972; Miles, 1997; O'Toole, 2003; Sindberg, 2012). Allsup (2010) highlighted that “the decisions a teacher makes about what is included in a course of study (and what is not) form the very heart of a class curriculum” (p. 215). While Allsup discussed curricular choices in a much broader scope than repertoire selection, the focus on the music that was performed remained of utmost concern. Battisti (1989) for example, described repertoire as not only subject matter content, but as the central focus of the learning activities: “The primary objective of the band program is the study and performance of high-quality music in a concert ensemble environment” (p. 25). Highlighting the role of the band director in curricular decisions, Battisti later explained, “The selection of music is one of the most important duties of the band director (2002, p. 239).

Battisti's sentiment was echoed by H. Robert Reynolds, the erstwhile director of bands at the University of Michigan, who penned an article entitled “Repertoire *Is* the Curriculum” (2000, emphasis in original). Like Battisti, Reynolds believed the repertoire selection to be a key determinant in the quality of students' experience, as he explained: “We

music educators make no more important decision than the selection of the material with which we teach our students” (2000, p. 33). Reynolds elaborated on the role of the repertoire in the curriculum, explaining his article’s title:

While it may be an overstatement to say that repertoire is the curriculum, we can all agree that a well-planned repertoire creates the framework for an excellent music curriculum that fosters the musical growth of our students. (p. 31)

Here Reynolds added an important perspective on framing curriculum in band. The repertoire framed students’ musical experiences.

With an understanding of the importance of repertoire to band curricula, a number of scholars have explored repertoire that is of the “highest artistic merit” (Gilbert, 1993; Ostling, 1978; Rhea, 1999; Thomas, 1998; Towner, 2011). The goal of each of these studies was to determine the works most worthy of study by young people and to provide a comprehensive list to aid directors in selecting music for their groups. Additionally, a number of reference texts have been generated to serve as a resource for music educators including lists of repertoire (Dvorak, Grechesky, & Ciepluch, 1993), and analytical guides to a curated list of band music of multiple grade levels (Miles, 2009, 2000, 1998, 1997).

Curricular Models

For many, repertoire has been a central focus of curriculum, yet a lingering criticism of bands is that they often prioritize the performance of repertoire over the understanding of music (Blocher, 1997; LaButa, 1997/1972; Reimer, 2003). A number of frameworks have explored means to broaden the subject matter addressed in large ensemble instruction. As Blocher (1997) explained:

High school bands, then, spend a great deal of time performing. Consequently, high school band directors must spend a great deal of time preparing bands for performances. It is during this music rehearsal time that band directors have the opportunity to address the academic role of school bands—by teaching not only the

performance skills and knowledge that band students need to perform specific music, but also by teaching for understanding “about the music” and music in general. (pp. 5-6)

This call for increased breadth was in response to a primary criticism of band curricula, that it prioritizes development of technical skill over other musical understandings. Reimer (2000) noted this issue related to students entering college music programs: “The problem with students entering music programs, it is widely observed, is not the level of their technical achievement but the shallowness of their musical understandings and the narrowness of their musical perspectives” (2000, p. 13). Interestingly, as Reimer reiterated concern for the narrowness of curriculum in performing ensembles, alternative frameworks to address music in a more comprehensive manner have existed for decades. For example, O’Toole (2003) explained that the Comprehensive Musicianship movement attempted to address the issue 35 years prior:

The concept of comprehensive musicianship has been discussed since 1965 and refers to the interdisciplinary study of music. Although performing ensembles might seem like the logical place to teach across disciplines, many directors focus solely on performing skills. (p. xi)

The following section explores some of these alternative curricular frameworks.

Labuta (1997/1972) offered one of the earliest curriculum frameworks for designing band instruction. His text, *Teaching Musicianship in the High School Band*, advocated for a broad band curriculum in which students would study “quality band literature which exemplifies the forms and styles of our great musical heritage” (p. 13). However, in addition to performing the works, students would examine musical elements such as form, timbre, melody, and historical context. Through this framework, students would explore musical selections, which were made by the director, in greater depth than often done in classes emphasizing performance alone. Additionally, the text offers guidance in long-term planning

with both a three and four-year sequences of topics. Labuta (1976) viewed the band then as a “learning laboratory” in which students would “deal with music as performers, creators, listeners, and critics” (p. 51).

Garofalo (1976) offered a curricular framework attempting to address many of the same concerns that Labuta (1997/1972) articulated. Garofalo’s (1976) text, *Blueprint for Band*, offered a process for designing learning units based in repertoire. In his system, music selection was paramount as “repertoire represents the foundation of the curriculum” (p. 28). The text offered guidance to directors to integrate content related to the historical context of the works performed; musical elements such as timbre, tone, and form; and a number of supplemental units related to topics such as conducting, transposition, acoustics, and sight reading. Garofalo also recognized that band students were often enrolled in the course for several years of high school and provided guidance for varying repertoire by year as well as sequencing the supplemental units.

Building on the works of Garofalo (1976) and Labuta (1997/1972), Miles (1997, 1998, 2009) discussed specific methods of framing band curricula. Using literature selection as a defining curricular characteristic, Miles (1997) offered models that prioritized a set of core band repertoire that every student should experience; a comprehensive music curriculum based on Garofalo’s *Blueprint for Band* (1976); a cyclic curriculum based on Labuta’s (1972) model; a model in which students study one piece in-depth on each concert; or a “hybrid cycle” in which:

The curriculum involves teaching a four-year cycle of literature in which aspects of historical period, form and structure, and musical elements are the instructional focus, one work for each of four concerts. Two works per year represent a specific historical period, and two works per year form the “Basic Band Curriculum” or the “Recommended Works” for band. (1997, p. 54)

Miles additionally recognized a dispositional requirement from band directors to not just rehearse the band, but to rehearse and teach for these curricular models to be successful:

To many music educators, there is a distinct difference in the approach to “rehearsing only” and “rehearsing and teaching.” The conductor who focuses totally on the methodology to achieve the performance—e.g., technique development, drill, repetition, special exercises, and other methods of preparation—is again encouraged to explore additional aspects of preparation for performance. (2009, p. 32)

The choice of repertoire was still essential to the curriculum, but the band director must specifically address the repertoire comprehensively in order for these curricular models to provide a well-rounded musical experience.

Sindberg (2012) and O’Toole (2003) each authored texts based upon the Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance (CMP) framework. The genesis of the CMP framework took place in the 1960s as an outgrowth of the Contemporary Music Project (Keene, 1987; Mark & Madura, 2013); however the model that exists today can be more clearly be traced to the work of the Wisconsin Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance Project (Sindberg, 2012, p. 61). Both texts (O’Toole, 2003; Sindberg, 2012) are based in a five-part model including the topics: selection, assessment, strategies, outcomes, and analysis. Repertoire is central to the curriculum planning process as it is the basis for the analysis of each part of the model. Each text offers guidance in music selection, determining appropriate outcomes, organizing lessons, music analysis, and assessment strategies. Model units related to established pieces of repertoire are included within each text. Additionally, the texts advocate for concerts which not only feature the learning that has been done by the students, but also that informs and educates the audience who attends.

Finally, the use of concert planning as a curricular framework has been additionally discussed by Russell (2006) who advocated for carefully considered concert schedules as a

means of exploring various genres, time periods, and themes of repertoire. He provided specific guidance for ensemble directors to address curriculum standards related to improvisation, composition, and evaluating music. A later article by Standerfer and Hunter (2010) used curriculum standards as a guide for repertoire selection resulting in a curriculum which addressed music broadly by including elements of improvisation, composition, and historical context.

Each framework offered a compelling means of framing curriculum. Most of these frameworks have existed for decades (Garofalo, 1976; Labuta, 1997/1992; Mark & Madura, 2013), yet are rare in educational practice. A common concern among music educators is that the expanded breadth of content offered through these frameworks would result in lower performance achievement, yet research studies contradict this conception. Garofalo and Whaley (1979) investigated the efficacy of the *Blueprint for Band* (Garofalo, 1976) curriculum model and found that not only did students perform at as high a level when compared to students taught through traditional means, the breadth and depth of their understandings was far beyond the traditionally-taught counterparts. Similarly, Austin (1998), in a review of literature on comprehensive musicianship-influenced teaching practices, found that the body of research overwhelmingly supported the efficacy of these teaching methods. The findings led Austin to comment: “regardless of the manner in which the approach [comprehensive musicianship] was implemented, results were uniformly positive” (1998, p. 28). In conclusion, Austin lamented: “nevertheless, research indicates that many ensemble directors continue to favor a traditional, performance-focused methodology” (p. 30). Similarly, Berg and Sindberg (2014) examined comprehensive musicianship practices applied during student teaching and found that despite learning about comprehensive musicianship

in their university methods courses, student teachers did not see such an approach modeled by cooperating teachers.

While scholarship supports the adoption of comprehensive musicianship based curricula, music education seems to stubbornly cling to entrenched practices. Band curriculum development is often seen as a task of repertoire selection, yet there are a number of established curriculum frameworks which could be employed that would broaden and deepen the musical experiences had by students. That many of these alternatives have existed for over 40 years is a testament to the resiliency of traditional practices and foreshadows the difficulty of affecting change in band education practices.

Summary

The field of music education has pursued band contests with great interest as is evidenced by the substantial body of literature on the topic. Significant contributions have been made in investigating the manner in which contests are evaluated, issues of fairness, the influence of nonmusical elements, and how competition functions to motivate students in educational contexts. While researchers have investigated the experience of being in high school ensembles, no studies have particularly examined what it is like for students and teachers to compete. Further, no scholars have investigated competition as a curricular phenomenon. This study addresses these gaps in the literature. By investigating the phenomenon of being in competition, this study portrays the lived experience of competing in a high school band. Additionally, this study examines competition as a curricular component and influence. In this manner, the study addresses the broader implications of competition in music education as it directly informs the educational experiences of students.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Band competitions are a ubiquitous element of American music education. While not every band competes, the opportunity to do so is present in every state and competition is a defining part of many students' high school music experience. The use of competition in music curricula has been a topic of debate and the subject of a substantial amount of scholarship. While existing literature has thoroughly investigated means of evaluating performances, influence of non-musical elements on evaluations, attitudes and perceptions of directors and students towards contests, and how competition might motivate students, no studies have examined what it is like to be in competition. The field knows a great deal about the quantitative evaluations that take place but quite little concerning the lived experience of competing. This study is an examination of the phenomenon of competition in high school bands, specifically examining large-ensemble competitions where bands compete interscholastically. Two research questions guided this study: 1) What is the lived experience of competing in a high school band like? 2) How does competition frame and influence high school band curricula?

This study is a phenomenological investigation of competition in high school bands and how competition may frame and influence band curricula. Twelve participants shared their lived experiences as high school band students and directors to inform this study. In this chapter, I describe the research design employed as well as phenomenological inquiry more broadly. I will situate my chosen methodology within a particular phenomenological approach, discuss how phenomenological data may be used as a basis for curricular inquiry, and outline the theoretical framework that informed this analysis. After outlining the

theoretical framework I explain participant selection criteria and recruitment techniques followed by a brief description of each participant. Next, I discuss the manner in which data were generated and analyzed. Finally, I explain procedures employed for conducting the study in a trustworthy and ethical manner.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is an established method of qualitative inquiry with bodies of research in both general and music education. Extant literature reflects great variation in procedures and methods (Hourigan & Edgar, 2014; Randles, 2012) providing no authoritative process for conducting a phenomenological study. Phenomenological research includes more than just procedures for selecting participants, data generation and analysis. As Kalfe (2011) explained, phenomenology “is an umbrella term encompassing both a philosophical movement and a range of research approaches” (p. 181). While this study is not philosophical, it is important to establish the philosophical foundations that have informed this research (Finlay, 2009; Ray, 1994; Vagle, 2014). Texts focusing on qualitative methodology encourage authors to ground their studies in the philosophical roots of phenomenology, but do not delve into the process of doing so (Creswell, 2009; Glesne, 2011; Grbich; 2013; Patton, 2014). Primarily, qualitative research texts offer operational definitions of phenomenological inquiry such as “a phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon” (Creswell, 2012, p. 76), or that phenomenological research explores “how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning” (Patton, 2014, p. 115). Both of these definitions are fitting for this study, as they highlight that the study’s focus is on experience and, in

particular, the shared meanings of those experiences. However, neither definition adequately provides a phenomenological foundation for a study. As Adams and van Manen (2008) explained, “phenomenology is a term that can carry quite different meanings depending on theoretical and practical contexts” (p. 614). The following sections define how phenomenology has been applied in this study. I will briefly discuss phenomenology as a branch of qualitative research and explicate the philosophical foundations of this study in comparison with a prominent phenomenological perspective.

Phenomenology as Qualitative Research

Phenomenology focuses on lived experience, which Adams and van Manen (2008) explain, could be seen as “the main epistemological basis for many other qualitative research traditions” (p. 616). However, unlike other qualitative methodologies, phenomenology is uniquely focused on how people experience the world: “it prioritizes how the patient experiences illness, how the teacher experiences the pedagogical encounter, how the student experiences a moment of success or failure” (p. 616), and in the case of this study, how music educators and students experience competition. To further differentiate phenomenology among other modes of inquiry, van Manen (1990) explained that phenomenology does not “aim to explicate meanings specific to particular cultures (ethnography), to certain social groups (sociology), to historical periods (history), to mental types (psychology), or to an individual’s personal life history (biography)” (p. 11).

Phenomenology instead has a specific focus on experience and the meanings people make from it.

One of the challenges of phenomenological research is that there is no single, specific method of conducting a phenomenological study. A number of texts offer

recommended procedures (Giorgi, 1985; Moustakas, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1989; Vagle, 2014; van Manen, 1990; van Manen, 2014); however, each recommendation approaches the process from a different phenomenological perspective and with significant variations. Differences in methods should be expected between phenomenological studies. As van Manen (2014) explained, “the further we delve into the phenomenological literature, the clearer it should become that phenomenological method cannot be fitted to a rule book, an interpretive schema, a set of steps, or a systematic set of procedures (p. 29). He further discussed that “phenomenological method is particularly challenging since it can be argued that its method of inquiry constantly has to be invented anew and cannot be reduced to a general set of strategies or research procedures” (p. 41).

With the understanding that there is no single established method for phenomenological inquiry, there are common elements of phenomenological studies that should be represented in any text, consisting of the following three steps: “(1) phenomenological reduction, (2) description, and (3) search for essences” (Giorgi, 1997). The phenomenological reduction is the process of becoming open to all aspects of a phenomenon by suspending, or bracketing, any presuppositions. It is a process of “describing in textural language just what one sees” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 89). The reduction allows for an open view of the experience. However, the process of bracketing, which is the term often used for suspending one’s existing biases and presuppositions, has been one of the most controversial topics in phenomenology (Vagle, 2014; Vagle, Hughes, & Durbin, 2009) as many believe it may be impossible for researchers to suspend their previous beliefs in an effective manner (van Manen, 1990). The description phase is the process of describing the phenomenon, through a perspective of openness, or through the position of the

phenomenological reduction. Finally, the analysis of the data reveals essences which can be seen as “essential qualities that made them that particular thing, and not something else” (Vagle, 2014, p. 29). Essences are often misunderstood and conflated with the process of essentializing, however, the view of essences, like each of the steps, varies and has different implications depending on the philosophical foundation of the study.

Philosophical Foundations of Phenomenology

Phenomenology originated with the work of the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl (1859 –1938). It has since been developed through the work of scholars and philosophers such as Heidegger (1962/1996), Merleau-Ponty (1962), Giorgi (1985), and van Manen (1990). While a complete exploration of phenomenological philosophy is beyond the scope of this paper, I would like to compare and contrast the method of phenomenology I have chosen, hermeneutic phenomenology, with the earliest form of phenomenology, transcendental phenomenology. To facilitate the comparison I will discuss three topics: phenomenological reduction, intentionality, and essences.

Phenomenological Reduction. Husserl believed that to begin a phenomenological study, we must first be free of our suppositions through a process he called Epoché, often also referred to as bracketing or the phenomenological reduction. As Moustakas explained: “in the *Epoché*, the everyday understandings, judgments, and knowings are set aside, and phenomena are revisited, freshly, naively, in a wide open sense, from the vantage point of a pure transcendental ego” (1994, p. 33). By removing the presuppositions and experiences of the researcher, a transcendental-phenomenological study presents a descriptive account of the phenomena, free of interpretation. “*Epoché* requires the elimination of suppositions and the raising of knowledge above every possible doubt” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 28).

Transcendental phenomenology is done from the perspective of a researcher who has suspended her prior experiences and sees the materials freshly and openly and attempts to describe the phenomenon as it is.

In hermeneutic phenomenology, the process of bracketing is viewed quite differently. Hermeneutic phenomenologists acknowledge that they bring experiences, suppositions, and biases to a study. They believe that suspending all of their personal beliefs and experiences may be impossible, so this type of inquiry is the result of the researcher's interpretations. As Vagle, Hughes, and Durbin (2009) explained, "those who practice interpretive phenomenology tend to believe that the researcher interprets meaning and therefore, inevitably, gives some meaning to the phenomenon" (p. 350). Similarly, van Manen (1990) shared doubts about the ability of researchers to truly bracket away their experiences: "if we simply try to forget and ignore what we already 'know,' we might find that the presuppositions persistently creep back into our reflections" (p. 47). So, rather than attempt to bracket away presuppositions and biases, hermeneutic phenomenologists attempt to remain open and see things freshly, while acknowledging the experiences they bring to the process.

Intentionality and Essences. One of the challenges of phenomenology is defining the phenomenon that will be the focus of a study and the manner in which intentionality is interpreted plays a role in this process. The concept of intentionality, one of the more complex ideas within phenomenological philosophy, provides a key means through which to understand phenomenological inquiry by defining the relationship between the phenomenon being investigated and the people experiencing it.

Intentionality, according to Vagle (2014), is “the inseparable connectedness between subjects (that is, human beings) and objects (that is, all other things, animate and inanimate, and ideas) in the world” (p. 27). This definition may be more confusing than helpful, because the root of intentionality is intention, which, in common parlance refers to what we might plan to do or be a reason for doing something. This is not accurate in the philosophical definition of intentionality. Intentionality is not something that a person plans to do or intends. Instead, intentionality is the relationship between the person and the phenomenon.

As Vagle explained:

One must have an experiencer—the subject in philosophy—and something that is experienced—the object in philosophy. However, one is not studying the subject or the object exclusively. One is studying the relationship between the two, a relationship that might be love, hate, concern, struggle, understanding, learning, dying, communicating, disagreeing, forgiving, and so on. (p. 36)

In this sense, intentionality is not why a person would act a certain way when they are competing in high school band, but rather the means with which they are connected to competition. This is not a study particularly of the participants or of competition, but is instead, the study of the connection that links the two.

The manner in which intentionality is understood differentiates transcendental (Husserlian) and hermeneutic (Heideggerian) phenomenology. In transcendental phenomenology, phenomena have “essential qualities which make them that thing and not something else” (Vagle, 2014, p. 29). The focus is on describing the features of the intentional relationship to explicate the essential qualities that define the phenomenon. In contrast, hermeneutic phenomenology is more about “manifestations than about essences” (Vagle, 2014, p. 30). Manifestations refer to ways in which the phenomenon rather than essences which attempt to describe the singular essential facets of the phenomenon.

Interpretation is at the core of hermeneutic phenomenology rather than description. Additionally, interpretation is not a step, but a process that happens automatically as we live our lives; interpreting is a part of being. Vagle (2014) explained that in this ontological view of intentionality, “there would not necessarily be an ‘essence’ of a phenomenon, but plausible interpretations of manifestations and appearances” (p. 29). So, where transcendental phenomenology seeks a description of the essential qualities, hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to describe manifestations of the phenomenon that occur as we are being-in-the-world with the phenomenon through interpretations that are always occurring as a part of being.

The manner in which intentionality and essences influence phenomenological method may be best seen through exploring the prepositions that we might use to describe the phenomenological approach (Vagle, 2014). Intentional relations take place between a subject and an object, but the preposition used to describe the relationship has significant meaning. In transcendental phenomenology, the subject is conscious *of* the phenomenon. Husserl emphasized, according to Vagle (2014), that “consciousness is always *of* something... placing the genesis of the consciousness with the subject, which is then *directed* to the object of the intending” (p. 37, emphasis in original). It is a much more epistemological relationship in which the subject is directing consciousness towards the phenomenon. This stands in complete opposition to the preposition *in* as it is used in hermeneutic phenomenology.

Hermeneutic phenomenology takes an ontological perspective that is based in being. Vagle (2014) explained, “phenomena in this case, are conceived in the ways in which we find-ourselves-in the world—in-love, in-pain, in-hate, in-distress, in-confusion” (p. 38) and

in this study, *in* competition. In hermeneutic phenomenology, the subject-object relationship is quite different. The subject is not directing consciousness towards the object, but instead “the intended meanings come into being” (Vagle, 2014, p. 39) as a part of being in the world with the object. However, there is something awkward about the phrase “*in* competition.” It defies common speech patterns in that we do not typically think of competition as a state-of-mind like we might with love or pain. However, being *in* competition is quite different from being *of* competition. Using love as an example, consider how differently the perception is when I change the preposition from “I love my significant other” to “I am in love with my significant other.” Using this same example, Freeman and Vagle (2013) explain, “the in-love seems to be more a state of being, one marked by depth, multiple facets and dimensions ... connectedness. Saying ‘I love someone seems a bit more removed, a bit more contained in one person” (p. 729). Being *in* competition then goes beyond the person and instead focuses on what it is like to be-in-the-world with competition.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology in this Study

This study uses a hermeneutic phenomenological approach based largely on the work of van Manen (2014, 1990) and Vagle (2014). I acknowledge that I bring presuppositions and feelings about the phenomenon to the study. I had strong experiences with competition as both a high school band director and student. I provided a brief summary of my experiences as part of chapter 1 and will later detail reflexive procedures I performed during the study to maintain a sense of openness to participants’ experiences.

In this study, I viewed competition from an ontological perspective. The experiences that informed the participants’ views are seen as having taken place while they were *in* competition. The results are not presented as essential structures or universal truths of the

phenomenon of competition but rather, are offered as plausible manifestations of what it might be like to be-in-the-world with competition.

Van Manen (1990) explained that “it has been said that the method of phenomenology and hermeneutics is that there is no method” (p. 30). However, he offered six guidelines that I used to develop a methodological structure:

1. turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
2. investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
3. reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
4. describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
5. maintaining a strong and oriented relation to the phenomenon;
6. balancing the research context by considering the parts and the whole. (p. 31)

As I explained in chapter 1, the phenomenon of competition is a topic of significant interest for me and has been a meaningful part of my life, thus satisfying van Manen’s first guideline. I discuss how I implemented the remaining guidelines in the following sections of this chapter as they deal directly with data generation, analysis, and the manner in which I present the findings.

Theoretical Framework

To better understand findings, I used a theoretical framework consisting of four interacting elements. Schwab’s (1970/1973) commonplaces of education were used to organize findings around the curricular areas of the teacher, learner, subject matter and milieu. Additional components of the framework were used to interpret findings related to specific commonplaces. The *Approaches to Teaching* framework (Fentsternmacher & Soltis, 2009) discusses the manner in which teachers carry out their work using three contrasting approaches: the executive, facilitator, and liberationist. The unique characteristics of the approaches allowed me to connect findings to broader conceptions of teacher practice.

Additionally, I drew upon the work of O'Neill and Senyshyn (2011) who examined how views of learners are connected to established learning theories such as behaviorism and constructivism.

O'Neill and Senyshyn illustrated a connection between the behaviorist paradigm and the view of the learner as a skilled performer. This connection was particularly relevant to participants' experiences and offered a means to situate the teaching practices described in a broader educational context. Finally, I examined data through a lens incorporating principles of John Dewey's philosophy related to each of the commonplaces. This Deweyan lens offered a means of understanding competition in relation to progressive educational values and practices. The following section discusses each component of the theoretical framework and how it was applied in this study.

Commonplaces of Education – Practical Inquiry

I have used practical inquiry, a term used by Joseph Schwab (1970, 1973) in his writings on curriculum, as a means to examine competition as a curricular phenomenon. Schwab recommended that all curriculum be developed and examined emphasizing the real people and activities involved. He explained, "Curriculum in action treats real things: real acts, real teachers, real children, things richer than and different from their theoretical representations" (1970, p. 633). Schwab believed it was essential to see curriculum as it was implemented and not theoretically as it was imagined. At the core of his argument was the thought that curriculum development should be grounded in the practical and specific situations in which it will be enacted:

Theories of curriculum and of teaching and learning cannot alone tell us what and how to teach, because the question of what and how to teach arise in concrete situations loaded with concrete particulars of time, place, person, and circumstance. (1971, p. 494)

To facilitate curriculum development and inquiry, Schwab offered specific areas that should be investigated in relation to curriculum. He posited that there are four commonplaces of education: the teacher, the learner, the subject matter, and the milieu. Curriculum should be developed considering the particulars of who will be teaching, who will be learning, the educational environment and context in which the learning and teaching will take place, and the subject matter that is to be addressed. As Schwab explained:

Defensible educational thought must take account of four commonplaces of equal rank: the learner, the teacher, the milieu, and the subject matter. None of these can be omitted without omitting a vital factor in educational thought and practice. (1973, pp. 508-509)

Each of the commonplaces is viewed equally, an essential component of the process.

Schwab was sensitive to the issues that may arise when a particular commonplace is emphasized at the expense of the other three. For example, he discussed how an emphasis on subject matter can fail to take into account the specific people and context in which the learning will take place; while an emphasis on learners may leave out important subject matter. Schwab suggested that viewing each of the commonplaces equally provides the opportunity to develop a balanced and relevant curriculum.

Though Schwab developed the commonplaces as a means for curriculum development, they also serve as a useful heuristic for examining curricular practices, which is the manner in which they are employed in this study. Schubert (1986) explained that practical inquiry is a process that provides meaningful insight into curriculum as it can aid in the development of new curricula as well as provide a reflective examination of existing educational practices. Schubert explained:

Practical inquiry centers on deliberation, the human search for meaning and understanding that enriches groups and institutions as they continuously refine their sense of value and direction and the means to move toward it. (1986, p. 288)

Practical inquiry offers a means to examine educational practices and the commonplaces provide an analytical heuristic to explore the specific facets of curriculum. Phenomenological data is particularly well-suited to this type of inquiry. Schubert (1986) specifically highlighted the potential for phenomenological research to examine lived experiences related to curricula (p. 288).

In the field of music education, Schwab's commonplaces have been used as a guiding heuristic for examining teaching and learning situations (Barrett & Rasmussen, 1996; Campbell, 1999; Miranda, Robbins, & Stauffer, 2007; Olson, Barrett, Rasmussen, Barresi, & Jensen, 2000). Campbell, Thompson, and Barrett (2010) employed the commonplaces as a means for pre-service teachers to organize their observations in field service placements. They offer a diagram on which students can take notes, featuring an area for each of the four commonplaces with an embedded square to discuss the learners' overall educational experience in the classroom. Campbell, Thompson, and Barrett described this central square as the "nexus among the four commonplaces because it draws attention to core curriculum concerns related to quality" (2010, p. 121). I employed this same tool as a part of my curricular analysis in this study.

Approaches to Teaching

Fenstermacher and Soltis (2009) offer three contrasting approaches to teaching: the executive, the facilitator, and the liberationist. Through their framework, Fenstermacher and Soltis examine teaching through five variables which determine the approach that is used. They describe these criteria as the *MAKER* framework consisting of the following elements:

“Method (*M*): pertains to skills and techniques teachers use to assist students in gaining the knowledge, understanding, and skill that teachers intend their students to have” (p. 7); awareness of students (*A*) “refers to what the teacher knows about his or her students, including such things as their interests, talents, and concerns; their personal histories and family backgrounds; and their performance in previous years of schooling” (p. 7); knowledge of the content (*K*) discusses “what a teacher knows about the subject matter he or she is teaching” (p. 8); ends (*E*) examine “the purposes teachers have for their teaching and for their students” (p. 8); and finally the Relationship between the teacher and students (*R*) refers to “the kinds of connections that teachers forge with their students” (p. 8). The manner in which teachers prioritize each variable, or a combination of the variables, portrays their approach to teaching as that of either the executive, facilitator, or liberationist.

The executive teacher is “a manager of complex classroom processes, a person charged with bringing about certain outcomes with students through using the best skills and techniques available” (p. 4). Through the *MAKER* framework, the executive:

stresses *M* and *K* (methods of teaching and knowledge of subject matter) and places comparatively less emphasis on *A* (awareness of students), *E* (Ends that guide the activities of teaching and learning), and *R* (relationships between teachers and students). (p. 16, emphasis in original)

The executive looks at the classroom from the perspective of a manager. The complexity of the classroom requires order, and the executive can provide it. As Fenstermacher and Soltis (2009) explain:

These are the kinds of things that executives do. They manage people and resources through planning, action, assessment, and reaction on the basis of experience and evidence. Executives make decisions about what people will do, when they will do it, how long it is likely to take, what standard of performance will be attained, and what happens if these standards are not met. (p. 11)

The executive teacher's focus on results and measurable outcomes relates directly to competitive results and the extent to which participants were invested in attaining positive competitive outcomes.

In contrast to the executive, the facilitator "places a great deal of emphasis on students as persons" (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2009, p. 24). Where the executive emphasizes subject matter, the facilitator is most interested in what the students bring to the classroom. Within the *MAKER* framework, the facilitator emphasizes *A* (awareness of students), *R* (Relationships with students), and *E* (Ends). The facilitator approach is the antithesis of the executive. As Fenstermacher and Soltis discussed: "facilitation entails not simply becoming aware of the personal histories of one's students, but also helping them use the knowledge and understanding they bring to school" (p. 28). The facilitator then hopes to acknowledge and extend the students' prior experiences where the executive is more focused on delivering subject matter to the student.

Finally, the liberationist borrows from both the facilitator and executive, but with a different goal in mind. The liberationist prioritizes the development of the student to "use the full intellectual inheritance of civilized life" (p. 44). To achieve this goal, the liberationist emphasizes knowledge, like the executive, and ends, like the facilitator. However, the liberationists' view of knowledge and ends is unique to this approach. For example, knowledge to the executive is something to be acquired, where knowledge for the liberationist is to be acquired because it allows the person to participate fully in their social world (2009, p. 50). Similarly, the liberationists view of *E* (ends) emphasizes not just the education of knowledgeable citizens, but rather the education of "persons who are also ethical, just, and loving, who are imaginative in thought and discerning in conduct, and who

are committed to the advancement of humankind” (p. 45). I compared the approaches to teaching described by participants with the characteristics of each approach as delineated in the *MAKER* framework (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2009, p. 7) and used the similarities as a difference to discuss actions of educators in curricula emphasizing competition.

The Learner as Skilled Performer

Schwab discussed learners as the “beneficiaries of the curricular operation” (1973, p. 502) and in practical inquiry that means examining specific learners who experienced the phenomenon of competition. Just as curricula incorporating competition may have emphasized certain approaches to teaching, a particular view of the learner and learning process may be present as well.

O’Neill and Senyshyn (2011) offer a framework that examines how theories of learning promote particular views of learners. Their work emphasizes that:

learning theories are not merely passive descriptions or explanations of learning phenomena. They are also active prescriptions that share (directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously) our understanding of what the concept of learning means (i.e. how we experience, talk, and think about music learning). (p. 4)

This framework, through pairing traditional learning theories with contrasting views of learners, is based upon the “understanding of how learners gain knowledge, understanding, and skills” (p. 5). The O’Neill and Senyshyn framework is expansive and I used only the component that focused on the behaviorist view of the learner as a skilled performer, which was germane to participants’ experiences.

O’Neill and Senyshyn posit that the view of the learner as a skilled performer is dominant in instrumental music education. As evidence, they offer the example of band methods books prioritizing a behaviorist approach to learning:

Few would argue that band method books and instrumental tutor books are prolific manifestations of the behaviorist approach to music learning. They are premised on the most influential ideas to come out of the behaviorist tradition—that the transmission of knowledge or information from teacher (expert) to learner (novice) is essentially the transmission of the *appropriate* response to a certain stimulus. (2010, p. 18)

Within this view, as a learner needs to become a skilled performer, educators choose the method of drill and practice and transmission of expertise for instruction. Thus, learners are heavily reliant upon the teacher for their growth and learning. The authors explain that in this view, the teacher can be seen as responsible (or to blame) for the students' achievements (or lack thereof) (p. 20).

Expectations of learners are shaped by the manner in which they are viewed. O'Neill and Senyshyn described the expectations associated with the behaviorist view of the learner as a skilled performer:

...expectations for music learners, which include (but are not limited to) viewing the learner as (a) compliant and capable of following direct instructions to achieve a specified outcome, (b) a novice in need of training or direct instruction to develop the necessary skills for achieving a successful performance, and (c) an accurate producer of written notation. (p. 20)

The learner is largely seen as passive but capable of developing extraordinary skill in musical performance. In this view, the evidence of learning is improvement in performance skill.

Emphasizing skill development may overlook other musical learning such as “comprehension and analytical skills, an aesthetic appreciation for music as a valued cultural art form, a sense of agency, and an understanding of the manipulative functions of music in a variety of contexts” (p. 20).

In contrast to the view of the learner as a skilled performer, constructivism promotes the learner as a collaborator. In the constructivist view of music learning, “learning cannot be separated from its social context” (O'Neill & Senyshyn, 2011, p. 22). This perspective is

influenced by concepts credited to Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner and views the learner as a collaborator growing through constructing knowledge individually and socially and interacting with her environment in a systematic way. If the learners are viewed as collaborators, the way they interact with the commonplaces is drastically different than that of the skilled performer. In a constructivist paradigm, learners have greater autonomy, seek musical experiences, and bring their prior knowledge to interactions with other members of the musical community to create new understandings. Learning is a social musical experience that is constructed by the learners rather than transmitted by the teacher. As the goal for the skilled performer was to accurately produce performances, the collaborators construct “understandings in ways that will help them negotiate the complex web of musical and cultural diversity that exists in our world today” (2010, p. 24). I compared views of learners described by participants’ to the views of learners described by O’Neill and Senyshyn (2011). While only the behaviorist paradigm was present in the study’s data, the contrasting view offered through constructivist principles served as a useful contrast to the traditional, skilled performer view of the learner that was present.

A Deweyan Lens

I used a Deweyan lens to examine data related to each of the four commonplaces: the teacher, learner, subject matter, and milieu. To develop this lens, I curated and synthesized principles from Dewey’s writings related to each curricular area, outlining how each commonplace might be envisioned within a progressive classroom. The following sections outline the tenets of Dewey’s philosophy that I used to data related to the commonplaces.

The Teacher. Dewey (1916, 1938/1997) promoted a view of the teacher which was embedded in the learning environment and collaborative with students. Dewey (1938) rejected the idea that children were a component to be managed and instead advocated for the learning process to be seen as a social one in which learners and teachers are invested equally in each other's success:

When pupils were a class rather than a social group, the teacher acted largely from the outside, not as a director of process of exchange in which all had a share. When education is based upon experience and educative experience is seen to be a social process, the situation changes radically. The teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on that of leader of group activities. (p. 59)

In this view, the teacher is not the manager or controller of the educational experience but instead is a resource who can guide and assist students.

Dewey recognized that teachers may need to motivate students to learn, but approached the motivational task with constraints. Instead of incentivizing or pushing students to engage in learning tasks, Dewey challenged teachers to investigate their students and to build on their existing curiosities about the world. Rather than fomenting action, the teacher should direct the curiosity and “keep alive the sacred spark of wonder and fan the flame that already glows” (Dewey, 1910, p. 34). Dewey described this process as giving direction to students. While this might appear congruent with the executive-oriented teacher or a managing type of influence, it is quite the opposite in Dewey's view. Dewey (1902) explained that direction poses “the problem of selecting appropriate stimuli for instincts and impulses which are desired to employ in the gaining of new experience” (p. 18). Rather than direction being the task of assigning the student to particular subject matter, direction is based heavily in the teachers' awareness of the student. As Dewey (1938/1997) later discussed:

The greater maturity of experience which should belong to the adult as educator are put to him in a position to evaluate each experience of the young in a way in which the one having the less mature experience cannot do. It is then the business of the educator to see in what direction the experience is heading.” (1938, p. 38)

As educators recognize the direction of experience, they recommend new experiences and direct the students in a manner which fits their curiosity and the subject matter. However, it is the awareness of the student that is of most importance to the educator.

The Learner. Fenstermacher (2006) offers a bridge between the views of the learner promoted by the learning theories such as behaviorism and constructivism, and a Deweyan view of the learner by contrasting traditional teaching practices with more progressive concepts. Fenstermacher explained, “until the student is understood and treated as an intentional agent in his or her learning, it should not surprise us that he or she often lacks the will to excel as a learner in the setting of the school” (p. 112). The learner has agency and autonomy, and like the collaborator, learns in a way that “emphasizes the social role of education” (O’Neill & Senyshynn, 2011, p. 26). Unlike the skilled performer, the explorer does not have a set subject matter outcome, rather, the explorer is the center of the curriculum. As O’Neill and Senyshynn explain “for Dewey, the ‘what’ of learning is replaced with an almost existential-like emphasis on the ‘how’ of learning” (p. 26).

Dewey emphasized the actions and experiences of the child in the learning environment as the focus of the curricular experience. Dewey (1902) explained:

The child is the starting point, the center, and the end. His [*sic*] development, his growth, is the ideal. It alone furnishes the standard. To the growth of the child all studies are subservient; they are instruments valued as they serve the needs of growth. (p. 9)

Dewey emphasizes the learner as the basis of curricular design and believes that subject matter decisions should begin with the learner in mind. Prioritizing the learner provides a

number of benefits in Dewey's view. Education should take advantage of what the child is already doing: "The child is already intensely active, and the question of education is the question of taking hold of his activities, of giving them direction" (Dewey, 1900/1943, p. 36). Dewey provides a compelling view of how children are motivated to learn. It is more effective to take advantage of the activities that children are already interested in and direct them towards educative ends. Rather than viewing the motivation as a process of starting the learning activity, Dewey would recommend motivating learners by directing the curiosities and activities that are already occurring.

At the core of Dewey's beliefs about the learner is agency. The learner must be empowered to act in her learning. Dewey (1938/1997) stressed this as a core argument of an education which is based in experiences:

No point in the philosophy of progressive education is sounder than its emphasis upon the importance of the participation of the learner in the formation of the purposes which direct his activities in the learning process, just as there is no defect in traditional education greater than its failure to secure the active cooperation of the pupil in construction of the purposes involved in his studying. (p. 67)

The benefits of the learner playing a role in the direction and content of her learning activities are profound. Dewey posits that learners will become more engaged in their learning because it will feel as if it is a part of their natural social life. The school activities will not be removed from their everyday lives, but rather will be an extension and a powerful influencer on their ongoing life. In this sense, Dewey offers a powerful rebuke of the teacher-centered practices of traditional education and most importantly a criticism of teaching as a means of transmission. In fact, Dewey (1900) took particular issue with the value of learning in a manner in which students merely follow directions. Dewey offered the example of learning to cook using recipes from a cookbook:

“Why do we bother with this? Let’s follow a recipe in a cookbook.” The teacher asked the children where the recipe came from, and the conversation showed that if they simply followed this they would not understand the reasons for what they were doing. (p. 38)

In Dewey’s anecdote, the children are in fact successfully cooking the recipes that are provided in the text, but their level of understanding is shallow. They do not understand why they are doing what they are doing, but they are successfully engaged in the subject matter. In this example, Dewey challenges educators to value the depth of understandings that the children achieve over the simple engagement of the subject matter that they may demonstrate.

Subject Matter. One of the most interesting aspects of Dewey’s educational principles is that he rarely discusses subject matter specifically. He offers no set of subjects, skills, or topics that education should address and did not write about music in particular. I believe the key tenets of his philosophy are best represented within the context of the commonplace of the learner. As Dewey (1902) discussed, “the child is the starting point, the beginning, and the end” (p. 9). To this point, all subject matter decisions should be based upon knowledge of the learner. In fact, Dewey (1938/1997) specifically warned against the view that subject matter be determined for the learner and then provided to them over a period of time, as he explained “the educator cannot start with knowledge already organized and proceed to ladle it out in doses.” For subject matter to be brought into the educational experience, it should be done in collaboration with the learner.

Milieu. Dewey has written extensively about the educational environment. Dewey (1916) believed the educational environment is the central point of interaction in education:

The development within the young of the attitudes and dispositions necessary to the continuous and progressive life of a society cannot take place by direct conveyance

of beliefs, emotions, and knowledge. It takes place through the intermediary of the environment. (p. 26)

In many ways the school environment is the instrument of education in Dewey's philosophy.

While the environment includes more than just the physical characteristics of the learning space, Dewey provided guidance as to what an ideal environment might include. With the work of the child viewed as the primary concern, the environment would consist of workshops, laboratories, and opportunities to explore the natural surroundings. For Dewey, the ideal educational environment is one in which the child can explore and work along with the educator and other learners.

The Deweyan environment is a stark contrast to that which Dewey observed in traditional schools where he expressed frustration that "there is very little place in the traditional schoolroom for the child to work" (Dewey, 1900/1943, p. 48). The Deweyan learning environment is active as opposed to the ordered and often sedentary environment of the traditional school. Fostering an environment of activity is one of the chief concerns of the school as it is essential to learning. Dewey (1916) explained:

It is not the business of the school to transport youth from an environment of activity into one of cramped study of the records of other men's learning; but to transport them from an environment of relatively chance activities (accidental in the relation they bear to insight and thought) into one of activities selected with reference to guidance and learning. (p. 320)

This conception of environment stretches beyond physical surroundings such as the walls of the room and setting of the school. "The environment consists of those conditions that promote or hinder, stimulate or inhibit, the characteristic activities of a living being" (Dewey, 1916, p. 13). In this sense, the environment must be thought to include other people and their behaviors. Dewey (1938/1997) called these variables the objective conditions and explained:

Objective conditions covers a wide range. It includes what is done by the educator and the way in which it is done, not only words spoken but the tone of voice in which they are spoken. It includes equipment, books, apparatus, toys, games played. It includes the materials with which an individual interacts, and, most important of all, the total social set-up of the situations in which a person is engaged. (p. 43)

Dewey is essentially describing how the learning environment brings together the commonplaces and that the commonplaces interact through the environment.

The importance of social interaction cannot be underestimated in Dewey's views. Interacting with other people is one of the primary methods of life and as such, should be a primary method of the school. For the child "his world is a world of persons with their personal interests, rather than the realm of facts and laws" (Dewey, 1902, p. 5). The child will learn more through interactions with people than with knowledge presented in manners separated from social interaction and experience.

In an ideal educational environment, social interaction will be prioritized. This draws a significant contrast to the traditional educational practices which Dewey criticized. To this point, Dewey (1938/1997) contrasted the traditional school and the progressive model that he espoused, stating "the non-social character of the traditional school is seen in the fact that it erected silence into one of its prime virtues" (p. 62). Instead of order and silence, a learning environment should be filled with activity, exploration, discussion, and interaction. This can be a shock to some observers of this type of environment as what may appear to be children operating with a lack of manners when is in fact "due to the eager interest of children to go on with what they are doing" (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 61). These curated components of Dewey's philosophy provided a set of progressive educational tenets to which I could relate to compare findings. Through this comparison, I produced a critical discussion of the findings.

This framework facilitated an examination of findings from a curricular perspective. The commonplaces of education (Schwab, 1970, 1973) provided an analytical heuristic with which I could organize findings related to specific curricular components. Each additional component offered a means to better understand the manner in which particular curricular elements functioned. By comparing teacher practices to established instructional approaches (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2009) I was able to describe how teacher actions described in this study compare to established instructional paradigms. The connection between learning theories and views of students provided a means to situate the learners' curricular experience within broader educational traditions and epistemologies. Finally, by examining the findings through a Deweyan lens, I was able to discuss the curricular facets of participants' experiences within the context of progressive educational values.

Participant Selection

Participant selection practices were approved by the Arizona State University and State University of New York-College at Potsdam institutional review boards. I sought multiple, diverse perspectives on the phenomenon to provide a robust exploration of the experience of being in competition. Van Manen (1990) explained that participant data informs phenomenology as “we gather other people’s experiences because they allow us to become more experienced ourselves” (p. 62). Despite van Manen’s (2014) belief that “it does not make sense to ask how large the sample of interviewees, participants, or subjects should be, or how a sample should be composed and proportioned in terms of gender, ethnicity, or other selective considerations” (p. 352), I established a set of general criteria for participation in this phenomenological study as well as a set of perspectives I sought to include through purposive sampling (Maxwell, 2013). I established the following criteria to guide participant

selection based on an analysis of phenomenological participant selection practices established in the literature:

- They must have had the experience that is the topic of the research
- They must have the capacity to provide full and sensitive descriptions of the experience.
- They must have an interest in the experience under investigation.
- They must be willing to participate in interviews and other data gathering activities.(Moustakas, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1989; van Kaam, 1969)

In addition to meeting the above criteria, I heeded Moustakas's (1994) recommendation that diverse points of view based upon considerations such as age, race, religion, ethnic and cultural factors, gender, and political and economic factors would add depth to the study (p. 107). This process of purposive sampling (Maxwell, 2013, p. 97) provided additional criteria beyond the initial selection criteria. In particular, I sought perspectives of both male and female band directors, people who had only experienced the phenomenon as a student, persons from urban and rural settings. I also wished to include perspectives of people who had achieved differing levels of competitive success.

Participants were solicited through recruitment posts placed on the Band Directors' Facebook Group, an active social media community with more than 10,000 members (BDG, 2016). My initial postings yielded 15 responses. I responded to participants with an explanation of the expectations of the study and to setup an initial interview. Only 7 participants returned my email and agreed to be a part of the study. Of this group, all participants were male and worked as band directors. They represented a variety of regions of the United States and had differing levels of success in competition. Since my initial efforts failed to identify any female participants, I sought the participation of women band directors I had been aware of during my time teaching high school band, or who I had become aware of through mutual friends. Finally, I identified two participants who had

participated in high school band contests but never pursued music education as a profession. One volunteered for the study after hearing about the project through a mutual workplace acquaintances and the other was specifically recruited because he had been a part of a band program with an established record of success including several national marching championships. Each participant met all criteria for phenomenological research and the resulting pool included 12 participants: 9 men, 3 women, 10 band directors, and 2 students. Table 1 displays participant demographics, the primary perspective they shared experiences from (student or director) and the setting of the school that they attended (urban or rural).

Table 1. Participant Demographics, Perspectives, and Settings

Participant	Age	Gender	Race	Perspective	Setting
Adam	25	Male	White	Director	Rural
Alan	28	Male	White	Student	Urban
Andrea	37	Female	White	Director	Urban
Christopher	30	Male	African-American	Director	Urban
Gregory	34	Male	White	Director	Urban
James	28	Male	White	Director	Urban
Jeff	25	Male	African-American	Director	Urban
Jessica	29	Female	White	Director	Rural
Mark	33	Male	White	Director	Rural
Michaela	33	Female	White	Director	Urban
Roger	27	Male	African-American	Director	Rural
Tom	25	Male	White	Student	Urban

In the following section I include a brief description of each participant. While their experiences will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, these descriptions provide demographic information, music education background, and a summary of their competitive experiences as both a student and director (where applicable).

Adam

Adam joined the study in response to the recruitment call I had posted on the Band Director Facebook Group. I had known Adam prior to the study while he was pursuing his

undergraduate degree in music education. We never worked together formally, but I was aware of who he was and that he would soon be completing his degree and pursuing work as a high school band director. Adam is a White, 25-year-old man living in the Southwestern United States, who had completed his first year teaching during the course of the study. He holds an undergraduate degree in music education from a major school of music and participated actively in the school's concert and athletic bands. As an undergraduate he had the opportunity to intern with a number of area schools and through those experiences interacted with some of the most well-known and competitively successful teachers in the area. During the fall semesters, Adam worked additionally as a rehearsal technician for area high schools. In this capacity he would assist in before- and after-school rehearsals and accompany the bands to select competitions. As a high school student, Adam participated in a band program that was considered one of the most successful in his state. His band was a frequent contender for state marching championships and was particularly successful during Adam's time in school.

Alan

Alan joined the study after hearing about my research topic through mutual work acquaintances. He is a 28-year-old, White male who participated in band throughout his high school studies. He attended a large, suburban high school with a substantial band program. Alan participated in marching, concert, and jazz band and was particularly involved in the school's drumline. Alan's experiences occurred entirely as a student. He has no formal training in music past high school and never had interest in pursuing music education as a career. He now works as a technician for a major technology retailer and remains active in music, working as a DJ for local parties and events and is passionate about creating electronic music with programs such as Ableton Live and Logic.

Andrea

Andrea recently completed her twelfth year of teaching at a large suburban high school in a mid-sized city in the Rocky Mountain region of the United States. She is a 37-year-old, White woman, who has worked at the same school her entire teaching career. She attended a regional university near her hometown and holds a bachelor's degree in music education. She has led a large band program which has achieved considerable competitive success. Her bands have an established history of superior ratings and she is well-respected by area music educators. During our time interacting, Andrea was in the process of making a career change and was moving to a new state where she would be seeking a position as a middle school band director. The change was motivated by her husband securing a new position within his company and Andrea's desire to have fewer after-school responsibilities. Andrea attended high school in the same community in which she taught. When she was a student, Andrea's high school band was active in band competitions in marching, jazz, and

concert genres. Her band was successful at competitions, but was often bested by rival schools from the same district.

Christopher

Christopher is a high school band director working in a large city in the western United States. He recently completed his eighth year of teaching and transitioned to a new teaching position at a newly constructed high school. He holds an undergraduate degree in music education from a large state university and has additionally earned a master's degree in music education. Christopher is an African-American male, who was 30 years old at the time of the study. He joined the study by responding to the recruitment post on the Band Directors Facebook Group. He meets all criteria for the study and we had not met prior to our interactions through this project. Christopher attended a large high school with a highly-competitive marching program. As a college student he was active in his university's marching band and also participated in a drum and bugle corps for two seasons.

Gregory

Gregory is a high school band director working in the Midwestern region of the United States who had recently transitioned from a rural position in the Rocky Mountain region of the country, and prior to that, led a competitive band program in the Southwest. He is a White male who was 34 years old at the time of the interviews. Gregory holds an undergraduate degree in music education from a small state university in the Midwest and a master's degree in music education from a large Southwestern school of music. He attended a rural high school with a large, highly-competitive marching program. Additionally, as an undergraduate student Gregory worked as a member of a number of marching band staffs assisting in brass sectionals and teaching drill. He joined the study in response to the call for

participants placed on the Band Directors Facebook Page and met all criteria for participation. Gregory and I attended the same university and I was aware of Gregory prior to the study. We had conversed once or twice prior to his participation, however, we had never discussed his teaching experiences of competition specifically.

James

James is a high school band director working in the Northeastern United States who recently completed his fifth year teaching. He teaches at a large high school in a suburban community near a major American city. He is a White man who was 28 years-old at the time of the study. His current position is the only teaching job he has ever held with the exception of brief appointments as a substitute teacher. He holds an undergraduate degree in music education and also studied saxophone extensively. He attended a large suburban high school with a regionally-renowned music program. Additionally, James has participated as a member of a drum and bugle corps as a college student and later returned to work on the instructional staff of the same organization. James joined the study in response to the recruitment post placed on the Band Director's Facebook Group. He met all criteria for participants and I had never met or spoke with James prior to his participation in this study.

Jeff

Jeff is a high school band director in the Atlantic coast region of the United States who recently completed his second year teaching. He is an African-American male who was 25 years old at the time of the study. He attained his current teaching position immediately following his graduation from a regional state university in the Midwest. As a high school student, Jeff participated in a non-competitive marching band and active concert band. As an undergraduate student he joined the university's marching band and additionally marched

with a drum and bugle corps for two seasons. Jeff joined the study in response to the recruitment post I had placed on the Band Director's Facebook Group. He met all criteria for participation in the study and we had never met prior to the interviews conducted for this study.

Jessica

Jessica is a high school band director working in the Midwestern region of the United States. She is a White, female, who was 29 years old at the time of the interviews. She holds an undergraduate degree in music education from a large, private, university. She began teaching in 2008 and recently completed her sixth year in the field. During the study, Jessica transitioned to a new teaching position. She had been teaching in a small community with a large high school band program and transitioned to a school situated within a larger city, but with significantly lower enrollment in the music program. Jessica participated in two high school band programs as a student having moved schools between her junior and senior years. Each was active in marching band competitions and participated in adjudicated events for concert and jazz bands. Her bands achieved varied levels of success in competition, so she had experienced the feeling of both positive and negative results. She was active in the band programs and additionally participated in solo and ensemble festivals on both a brass and woodwind instrument. I invited Jessica to participate in the study after failing to produce female participants during initial participant recruitment efforts. To ensure that the study included female participants, I purposefully invited women who I knew had been working with competitive band programs. I first met Jessica when she was a high school student. I had served as her band director for two years after which I left to pursue graduate school and she transferred to a neighboring school. I had little contact with Jessica

over the past decade with the exception of being aware that she had chosen to pursue music education as a career.

Mark

Mark teaches band for grades 6-12 in a rural school district in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. Mark grew up in a large city not far from his current teaching position and attended college at a large state university. Mark holds an undergraduate degree in music education and a master's degree in music. He has been in his current position for 7 years and prior to that had worked as a substitute teacher while completing his graduate degree. Mark is a White male who was 33 years old at the time of the study. Mark attended a large high school with a fledgling band program. During his time in high school, he experienced a number of band directors and felt that the program was hampered by the frequent turnover of teachers. When Mark was in high school, his band was active in concert band festivals and contests and participated in their first ever marching competition. Mark joined the study through the recruitment post on the Band Director's Facebook Group. We were previous acquaintances as Mark was an undergraduate student in bands for which I had been a teaching assistant. We had remained connected through social media, but had not communicated directly with one another for several years. Mark met all criteria for participation in the study and brings the perspective of a rural band director to the research.

Michaela

Michaela is a music educator living in the Western United States who had recently transitioned from a high school teaching position in the Northeast. She is a White, female who was 33 years old at the time of the interviews. She has taught for 8 years and has held three different positions, two as a high school band director, and one as a middle school

music teacher. She began her undergraduate studies at a state university in the Northwestern United States and then transferred to a major school of music in the Southwest where she earned a degree in music education. Following her undergraduate studies, she earned a graduate degree in percussion performance from a well-known private school of music in the Northeast. Michaela's high school experiences are unique among the participants. She grew up in a small town in the Northwestern United States with a fledgling high school band program, but a large university school of music nearby. She began to study percussion at the university as a high school student and soon was performing in percussion ensembles and other groups. As Michaela became more involved with the university music program, she stopped participating in her high school band program. Michaela had never competed as a high school student. I invited Michaela to participate in this study as part of my effort to include the perspectives of female band directors. I had studied with one of Michaela's parents during my undergraduate degree work and knew her briefly as she began participating in university music offerings as a high school student. I had remained in contact with Michaela through social media, where I became aware of her work as a high school band director. We had not spoken in the 10 years prior to the study.

Roger

Roger is a young band director who recently completed his fourth year teaching. He teaches in a rural community in which he is the band director at both the high school and middle school. Roger is an African-American male who was 27 years old at the time of the study. He earned undergraduate degrees in music education and history from a regional university in the Southeastern United States and went on to earn a master's degree in teaching immediately after his undergraduate studies. As a high school student, Roger was a

part of a competitive band program that competed in marching and concert band events. Roger responded to my recruitment post on the Band Directors Facebook Group. He met all criteria for participation and we had not met prior to our interactions in the interviews.

Tom

I had worked with Tom during his undergraduate studies. He was not a music major, but actively participated in his university's band program. In high school, Tom participated in one of the most competitively successful marching programs in the country. His band was active in national marching band competitions and was a perennial finalist. The director of Tom's band was well-established in the field and is a frequent speaker and clinician at music education conferences and events. Tom and I interacted many times while he was a college student, but rarely discussed his high school band experiences. Tom graduated several years before I began the study, a time during which we had not stayed in touch. As I embarked on this study I recruited Tom as a participant, as I felt the perspective of a person from a nationally competitive ensemble would be valuable. At the time of our interviews, Tom was a White, 25 year-old graduate student studying medicine and biology at a major Midwestern university. He no longer performed on his instrument, but was enthusiastic about music. Tom had graduated from high school band 7 years prior and remained connected with the program as his younger siblings participated. He had not seen the band perform often, but had traveled to the national marching band championship the prior year to see his sister's final competitive performance.

This study's participants bring a diverse array of perspectives. Participants' competitive histories range from James who had actively competed as a high school student, drum corps member, and director, to Michaela who had never experienced band

competitions until she started teaching. Participants taught and learned in a mix of school settings from Mark's rural community in the Northwestern United States to Tom who went to school in one of the nation's largest cities. The study included experiences from female and male band directors and both African-American and White participants. Finally, while the majority of participants experienced this phenomenon as a music educator, Alan and Tom offer their views of competition from the student perspective only. Through this group of participants, this study examines the phenomenon of competition in high school bands through diverse points of view and contexts.

Data Generation

Data were generated over a period of 10 months, which included one unstructured interview and one semi-structured interview with each participant conducted via the Skype and Google Hangouts video conferencing platforms. In addition to interviews, I interacted with participants through email correspondence and the collaboratively-edited individualized phenomenological accounts using the word-processing platform Google Docs. Additionally, I invited all of the participants to write any anecdotes or experiences they had with the phenomenon and share them with me; however, none chose to do so. I had hoped that an additional method of communication might facilitate the sharing of different types of information (Laverty, 2003; van Manen, 2006) but I suspect that the participants were satisfied that their experiences were communicated through the interviews.

Interviews

I conducted two pilot interviews prior to the study to test my interviewing process and received feedback from the interviewees. In both interviews, the participants enjoyed the

process and felt that we had remained focused on exploring their specific competitive experiences. Each pilot interviewee commented that the experiences felt conversational, yet remained focused on their personal experiences. Initial interviews with study participants were conducted in an unstructured and conversational format. After a brief discussion of their basic information such as location, age, teaching experience, and other background questions, I asked one question to initiate the conversation about competition: “What are your most vivid memories competing in high school band?” The goal was to encourage participants to share their experiences in an effort to “investigate the phenomenon as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it” (van Manen, 1990, p. 31).

The unstructured nature of the interviews provided a conversational interaction in which I was able to encourage participants to reflect on their experiences more deeply. Vagle (2014) recognized open-ended interviews as an important data generation practice in phenomenological research and discussed that these interviews, despite their lack of formal structure, can be quite focused and rigorous: “it is a myth that the unstructured interview technique is ‘wide open’ and without boundaries or parameters” (p. 79). Instead, the interviews were more of an improvisation on my part in which the goal was to maintain a “clear sense of the phenomenon under investigation” and “be responsive to the participant and the phenomenon throughout” (Vagle, 2014, p. 79). This responsibility relates directly to van Manen’s (1990) recommendation that researchers “maintain a strong orientation to the phenomenon” (p. 31). I found this strategy to feel more like I was the director of the conversation rather than the questioner. As participants would veer to topics that were not germane to the phenomenon, my job was to maintain the conversational tone of the

interaction while reorienting them to the experiences they had competing. The process was improvisatory, but with clear direction and focus.

The conversational nature of the interviews provided a more collaborative element to the process. I was not only acting as the inquirer, but I was attempting to facilitate reflection and direct the participant to consider their competitive experiences more deeply.

Van Manen (1990) explained how this process aids in data generation:

[T]he conversational interview turns increasingly into a hermeneutic interview as the researcher can go back again to the interviewee in order to dialogue with the interviewee about the ongoing record of the interview transcripts. The hermeneutic interview tends to turn the interviewees into participants or collaborators of the research project. (p. 63)

The ongoing conversation allowed me to revisit experiences with the participants and ask reflective questions such as “was that what it was really like?”

Two frameworks informed the interview process. First, recognizing the improvisational nature of the interactions, Vagle (2014) recommended phenomenological researchers consider the comedian Tina Fey’s rules of improvisation (emphasis is included in the original):

- Rule 1: **AGREE.** *Always agree and SAY YES*
- Rule 2: *Not only to say yes, but YES, AND (you are supposed to agree and then add something of your own)*
- Rule 3: **MAKE STATEMENTS** *(Don’t ask questions all the time)*
- Rule 4: **THERE ARE NO MISTAKES** *(Only Opportunities)* (pp. 83-84)

These rules were of significant assistance. For example, I was always careful to agree with everything the participants said. I wanted to validate their experiences and encourage them to think more deeply about them. In instances where conversation may have hit a lull, I would react to a participant’s statement and add something. This might be an additional question, a request for clarification, or a connection to something they had said prior.

Finally, I would offer statements for participants to react to when questions were not effective. This might include a statement such as “this experience is really memorable for you” or “that experience must have been quite rewarding.” In these instances, participants would often react to my statements in either agreement or correction and often would continue their discussions beyond the statement.

In addition to the improvisational guidelines, I used van Manen’s (1990) recommendations of asking participants to reflect on the lived existentials of time, space, and human relation (p. 105). Through the existentials participants reflected upon where, when, and with whom the experiences took place. I used the following specific guidelines from van Manen (1990) within the interviews:

1. Describe the experience as you lived through it. Avoid causal explanations, generalizations, or abstract interpretations.
2. Describe the experience from the inside, as it were; almost like a state of mind.
3. Focus on a particular example or incident of the object or experience.
4. Try to focus on an example of the experience which stands out for its vividness, as it was the first time.
5. Attend to how the body feels, how things felt, how things sounded.
6. Avoid trying to beautify your account with flowery terminology. (1990, p. 105).

In interviews I would encourage participants to be descriptive and avoid discussing why they felt the experiences occurred the way they did, but rather how, what, and with whom the experiences took place. I encouraged participants frequently to tell the story of a particular incident or experience and describe events in the order in which they took place. After initial experiences I would ask participants about how they felt, and to describe additional elements such as sound or imagery in addition to their initial offerings. These guidelines were challenging within the interviews but effective. Participants frequently offered richer and more meaningful descriptions of their experiences when challenged to consider additional existentials.

The preceding frameworks informed both interviews with each participant; however the second interview had more structure than the first. After the first interview, I conducted an initial analysis of the transcribed text and prepared a preliminary list of ideas which I felt the participant had highlighted as well as a list of areas in which I wanted clarification or elaboration of what they had said. While the overall conversational nature of the interview was maintained, I also had a focus on the overall question of “is this what it was really like?” (van Manen, 1990, p. 99). This question would challenge participants to reflect more deeply on their experiences and also served as a means of clarifying what participants were attempting to express. Participants frequently elaborated upon their experiences shared in the first interview and in many instances offered additional data which deepened the overall phenomenological document.

Individual Phenomenological Texts

The goal of the interviews was the construction of an individualized phenomenological text based on the experiences of each participant. This is similar to an individual textual description in Moustakas’ (1994) methodology, and more closely resembles what van Manen (2014) would call a “lived experience description” (p. 221). I had intended this process to be one like Lavery (2003) explained, where: “the researcher and participant work together to bring life to the experience being explored, through the use of imagination, the hermeneutic circle and attention to language and writing” (p. 21). I embedded questions throughout the documents based upon any areas I desired clarification following the second interview. I had hoped the questions would encourage participants to engage more meaningfully with the text, and shared the texts with the participants through Google Docs which would allowed me to track any changes or edits they made.

Unfortunately, participants' engagement with the texts was limited. They were responsive to the questions which I had provided, however, they were reluctant to change materials beyond small factual errors related to their age or years of teaching experience. The answers to the embedded questions were helpful in adding depth and clarity to the experiences in the original documents, but I feel the level of collaboration that had been developed in the interviews was not maintained into the documents. While these documents served a valuable role in data generation, they may also be seen as a means of member-checking.

Researcher Memos

I used researcher memos as an analytical and reflective tool throughout data generation and analysis. Maxwell (2013) describes memos as “any writing that a researcher does in relationship to the research other than actual field notes, transcription, or coding” (p. 19). I used memos to record overall thoughts following interviews, lingering questions, and to highlight emergent themes. Additionally, as I began constructing the individual phenomenological texts, I first wrote a memo addressing the key experiences and themes I saw related to the participant and reflected upon the memo as I read and examined transcript data. Memos were also a methodological tool used to focus and refocus my efforts on the notion of the phenomenological question and the philosophical foundations of the study. I found that the memos helped maintain my strong orientation to the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990, p. 31) and assisted in providing clarity related to the overall research questions.

Organization and Data Analysis

The process of data analysis involved three phases: 1) analysis of interview data and generation of individual phenomenological texts; 2) analysis of individual phenomenological

texts to generate findings related to research question 1 (chapter 4); and 3) use of the findings to examine the phenomenon through practical curriculum inquiry to address research question 2 (chapter 5). I will first describe the overall process used to discover thematic elements and then describe the specific analysis procedures for each step.

I used thematic analysis as a means to organize and make sense of the data. A theme in phenomenological research is not the result of a recurring idea, but is instead “a focus of meaning” (van Manen, 1990, p. 87). Themes are a means of making the complex elements of the phenomenon more understandable, so themes should not be seen as the result of frequent or recurring mention, but rather, the attempt to describe meaning in the phenomenon. Once I identified themes, I began the process of evaluating them as either incidental or essential. As van Manen (1990) explained, “not all meanings that we may encounter in reflection on a certain phenomenon or lived experience are unique to that phenomenon or experience” (1990, p. 106). It is the process of “determining the universal or essential quality of a theme that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is” (p. 107). In this study the process involved examining themes to see if they were essential to being in competition, or if the theme was removed, would the competitive experience have remained the same. This process resembles in many ways what Moustakas (1994) might refer to as imaginative variation.

I used van Manen’s (1990) three methods of isolating thematic statements throughout analysis of interview transcripts and individual phenomenological texts. His methods include: 1) the wholistic approach; 2) the selective or highlighting approach; and 3) the detailed or line-by-line approach (p. 93). Each method provided a different level of granularity to the analysis. In the wholistic approach, I approached the texts with the

question, “*What phrase may capture the fundamental meaning or main significance of the text as a whole?*” (p. 93). Similarly, the selective and detailed approaches each asked the same question, but related to smaller fragments of the text.

Step 1: Analysis of Interview Data and Generation of Individual Phenomenological Texts

This process used van Manen’s (1990) thematic analysis procedure and was embedded in the data generation process. After each interview I transcribed and analyzed the data to attempt to discover themes as they emerged. I constructed concept maps (Grbich, 2013, p. 97) related to each participant with themes and examples of text represented that theme as I went through the wholistic, selective, and detailed analyses of the interview texts (van Manen, 1990, p. 93). Following the construction of the concept map, I reflected on the themes in an analytical memo and began the process of evaluating themes as incidental or essential. I then used the concept map and researcher memo as a guide to construct the individual phenomenological text for each participant.

Step 2: Analysis of Individual Phenomenological Texts to Create Findings

I used the individual phenomenological texts as the basis for the findings related to research question one that are presented in chapter 4. The process for analyzing the individual texts was similar to examining the interview transcripts. I used van Manen’s (1990) wholistic, selective, and detailed (p. 93) process in identifying themes and generated a concept map of the emergent themes across the twelve individual documents. I connected specific experiences that informed each theme to the concept map and began a process of writing research memos related to each theme. In these memos I evaluated the theme as incidental or essential and attempted to refine the meaning of what was expressed through

the various themes. At the conclusion of the analysis, I constructed an outline of the overall thematic structure that served as a basis for chapter 4 of this document.

Step 3: Use of the Findings to Examine the Phenomenon through Practical Curriculum Inquiry

I have used practical inquiry, a term used by Joseph Schwab in his writings on curriculum in the late twentieth century, as a means to examine competition as a curricular phenomenon. This study's second research question asks how competition influences or frames band curriculum. Practical inquiry offers a theoretical basis for investigating this question. Practical inquiry employs Schwab's (1970, 1973) commonplaces of education as an analytical heuristic. I examined the data presented in chapter 4 and organized findings related to each of the four commonplaces: the teacher, learner, subject matter, and milieu. After organizing the data by commonplaces, I applied additional frameworks in areas such as the teacher and learner as a means to better understand the data.

I examined the data within the commonplace of the teacher to determine if participants employed a particular approach to teaching. I used Fenstermacher & Soltis (2009) framework of approaches which listed three possible orientations to teaching: executive, facilitator, and liberationist. After examining the data, I found that the executive orientation was dominant and framed my discussion of teacher actions and behaviors around executive characteristics. Similarly, I used a framework established by O'Neill & Senyshyn (2011) to examine data related to the commonplace of the learner. The O'Neill & Senyshyn (2011) framework connect views of students with established learning theories such as behaviorism and the learner as skilled performer, and constructivism and the learner as collaborator.

Finally, I employed a framework of Deweyan principles related to each commonplace to generate a critical interpretation of the data. I developed this framework prior to data generation by curating elements of Dewey's philosophy and constructing a Deweyan view of each commonplace. I then contrasted the participants' descriptions with the characteristics espoused by Dewey. Through the comparison I generated an interpretation of the data which contrasts the curricula represented in the participants' experiences with progressive educational tenets.

Writing as Method

Writing was an integral part of the analytical process. Through the construction of the individual phenomenological texts, extensive maintenance of researcher memos, and multiple drafts of findings, writing was the method of this study. Van Manen (1990) explained that "writing is closely fused into the research activity and reflection itself" (p. 125). While this may seem tautological as this study is a written document which naturally would involve writing as an essential part of its construction, I highlight that writing was not just the process of organizing and presenting findings, but it was one of discovering meaning and phenomenological reflection.

Trustworthiness

It is critical for researchers to establish trustworthiness. As Stake (1995) outlined, "qualitative researchers have a respectable concern for validation of observations, they have routines for "triangulation" that approximate in purpose those in the quantitative fields, but they do not have widely agreed upon protocols that put subjective misunderstandings to a stiff enough test" (p. 44). To this point, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 247) explain that qualitative researchers must arrange for "credibility, transferability, dependability, and

confirmability” within their research design. Providing specific guidance, Creswell (1998, p. 201-203) presented eight strategies for conducting trustworthy qualitative research including prolonged engagement, triangulation of data, peer checking or debriefing, negative case analysis, clarifying researcher bias, member checking, rich and thick description, and external audits. Though a study does not need to include all of these strategies to be trustworthy, Creswell recommends that “qualitative researchers engage in at least two of them in any given study” (1998, p. 204).

Each of the above statements on trustworthiness is designed to apply broadly across qualitative research, however phenomenology, with its rich and complex basis in philosophical inquiry, is a unique methodology which may not neatly fit the expectations of other qualitative inquiry approaches. Van Manen (2014) explained “It should be clear that phenomenology differs from concept analysis, grounded theory method, and similar qualitative methodologies that make use of coding, labeling, and classifying types of procedures” and “external concepts of validation such as sample size, sampling selection criteria, members’ checking, and empirical generalization” should not be applied to phenomenology as “these are concepts which belong to the languages of different qualitative methodologies” (pp. 347-349). With the understanding that phenomenology has unique challenges related to trustworthiness, I employed four of Creswell’s strategies: clarifying researcher bias, peer review or debriefing, member checking, and rich and thick description.

Clarifying Researcher Subjectivity

The influence of a researcher’s presuppositions and biases is a central concern in phenomenology and is the purpose behind processes such as the *Epoché* and bracketing (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2014; Vagle, 2014; van Manen, 1990). While I reject that truly

bracketing my own feelings away is possible, I attempted to remain open to the participants' views through the process of bridling (Vagle, et al., 2009; Vagle, 2014). The bridling process asked me to be skeptical of myself in design, data, and assertions (Vagle, et al., 2009, p. 362). Throughout the study, I maintained memos that examined my feelings related to the data generated, methodological concerns, and results. It was often a question of "am I doing this right?" which is central to the bridling process (p. 361). I was cognizant of the potential for bias throughout every stage of the study and attempted to be reflective, reflexive and analytical in my approach to the data.

Both Moustakas (1994) and van Manen (1990) state that the researcher must explicate his or her own perception of a phenomenon before understanding the perceptions of others. I have had meaningful experiences competing in high school bands as both a director and student and have summarized them as a brief lived experience description (van Manen, 2014) in chapter 1. This description served as a reflexive base where I could acknowledge how my previous experiences may be related to or have influenced the findings presented. I acknowledge that my personal experiences as a teacher and student may have shaped how I perceived the experiences that participants shared with me. Additionally, my current work as a teacher educator may have influenced how I experienced the data that were generated. As a teacher educator I often found myself immediately considering how the participant data related to the curricula which I teach as a part of my work.

Peer Review

Throughout this study I used discussions and exchanges with knowledgeable colleagues, teachers, mentors, and peers. I explored methodological concerns with peers with significant knowledge of phenomenology, I shared drafts of phenomenological texts with

teachers and mentors, and I engaged in frequent reflexive discussions with knowledgeable colleagues. Each of these interactions assisted me in clarifying my method, remaining open to the experiences of the participants, and presenting the data in an honest and accurate manner which is true to the phenomenological foundation of the study.

Member Checking

The individual phenomenological texts were both a data generation and trustworthiness element of the study. Creswell (2007) described member checking as a process in which “the researcher solicits participants’ views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations” (p. 251). Throughout the process of constructing and editing the individual texts, participants had the opportunity to clarify, correct, or elaborate upon any inaccuracies. Participants had ongoing access to the individual phenomenological texts, which had been shared with them via Google Docs. I emailed participants throughout the process to encourage their involvement with the texts and asked them specifically to correct “anything that may misrepresent how you truly feel or how you experienced competition.” Since the individual phenomenological texts were used as the foundation for all findings presented, the member checking that took place during the data generation phase remained intact throughout the analysis.

Rich, Thick Description

Through thick description I have attempted to share participants’ experiences in a manner where the reader can interpret the context and circumstances in which they took place (Geertz, 1973). Creswell (2007) explained that thick description “allows readers to make decisions regarding transferability because the writer describes in detail the participants or setting under study” (p. 252). I have attempted to provide detailed descriptions of the

participants' experiences throughout the findings and when possible used meaningful excerpts of the participants' own words. While I feel that my choice to portray the phenomenon using quotations and specific participant experiences goes against the phenomenological process of linguistic transformation (van Manen, 1990, p. 96) I felt it was important that the reader experience the data through the participants' words rather than solely through my voice.

Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Boards at both Arizona State University and the State University of New York – College at Potsdam. Each institution granted the study exempt status. I provided each participant with a description of the conditions for participating in this project at the beginning of our first interview and in the original email I sent them in accordance with recommendations from Institutional Review Boards. Participants were not asked to sign an agreement to participate, per the policies of the review boards, however they were informed at each interview that their choice to participate in the interviews was seen as consent to participate in the study.

I have attempted to ensure the confidentiality of the participants by assigning pseudonyms and altering any identifying information that might be present in this study. This has included the use of regions in place of specific states and towns when describing locations as well as the use of generalized locations such as professional football stadiums instead of mentioning specific facilities.

Timeline

This study was conducted from August, 2013 through October, 2016. The dissertation proposal was written during the 2013-2014 academic year and was defended in

April, 2014. I applied for and received Institutional Review Board approval through the Arizona State University Office of Research Integrity shortly after the defense. Participant selection began in July, 2014 and data generation began in that same month.

I began work at the State University of New York-College at Potsdam in September, 2014 which required that I cease data generation until the SUNY-Potsdam Institutional Review Board had also approved the study. I applied for IRB approval on September 20, 2014 and was approved to continue data generation on January 7, 2015. After the break in data generation I scheduled interviews and constructed individual phenomenological texts through July, 2015 at which time data generation ended. Transcriptions of data and initial analyses took place throughout the process of data generation. Analysis of the individual phenomenological texts took place between August and December of 2015 when initial drafts of findings were written. Curricular analysis and additional writing continued through the summer of 2016. The dissertation was defended on October 26, 2016.

CHAPTER 4

BEING IN COMPETITION

This study is an examination of the phenomenon of competition focusing on events such as contests and festivals where bands are rated, ranked, and otherwise evaluated. A more complete discussion of how competition functions is included in chapter 1, but I have briefly summarized some of the key concepts that inform how competition was defined in this study. Two distinct categories of competitions exist: structural and intentional (Kohn, 1992, p. 6). A structural contest is one in which there is a scarcity of success to be attained. This might be the case in music contests that rank performers as only one competitor can earn the top ranking. In contrast, an intentional contest is one in which there is not a scarcity of success, but there is an interest in performing better than others. This classification would encompass events in which bands perform for ratings. There is no constraint on how many bands can receive a top rating, however, there is an intention among the competitors to do better and earn higher ratings than others. Each of these formats are present in modern band competitions. While variations exist as to whether bands are competing in structural or intentional types of contests, the goal is similar in each, to do better in comparison to other groups. This study is an exploration of being in competition including how participants prepare for contests, engage in the events, and react to the results which they achieve.

Phenomenological Perspective

The influence of competition extended beyond the formal events in which bands participated. During interviews, participants described instances of being in competition that took place well before and after their competitive performances. This makes defining the phenomenon challenging because a person may experience competition most acutely before

or after a formal competitive experience. For many the phenomenon permeated the experience of being in band and did not adhere to a schedule of events with a definite start and finish time.

I have studied competition from an ontological perspective, meaning that the phenomenon was not something that people brought into their world. Instead, it was something they found themselves in the world with. Vagle (2014) explains how this ontological view is constructed:

Phenomena are not directed from subjects out into the world. They come into being and in language as humans relate with things and one another, again, “in” the world. When one crafts Heideggerian phenomenological research one is studying the in-ness of intended meaning (p. 39).

The following findings are based on the idea of “in-ness” and reflective of when participants found themselves in competition. Being in competition was much more expansive than the experience of attending and participating in band competitions, it was more the process of preparing for the events and interacting with the results afterwards.

The phenomenon was difficult to define temporally as preparations and reactions to competitive experiences occurred at unpredictable times. I equate this to how runners might perceive the experience of completing a marathon. The actual day of the race is important, but they also had to train for an extended period of time. They may have felt like they were in a marathon from the moment they signed up for the race. Similarly, as the participants discussed the lasting effects of their competitive experiences, I recalled my own journey through a minor surgical procedure on my knee. While I was officially in surgery for just two hours, the experience of that surgery lasted long after as I completed physical therapy and adjusted continually to my newly repaired joint. To this day, I still will look at the scar on my knee and feel the experience again. In effect, at times I feel like I am still in surgery.

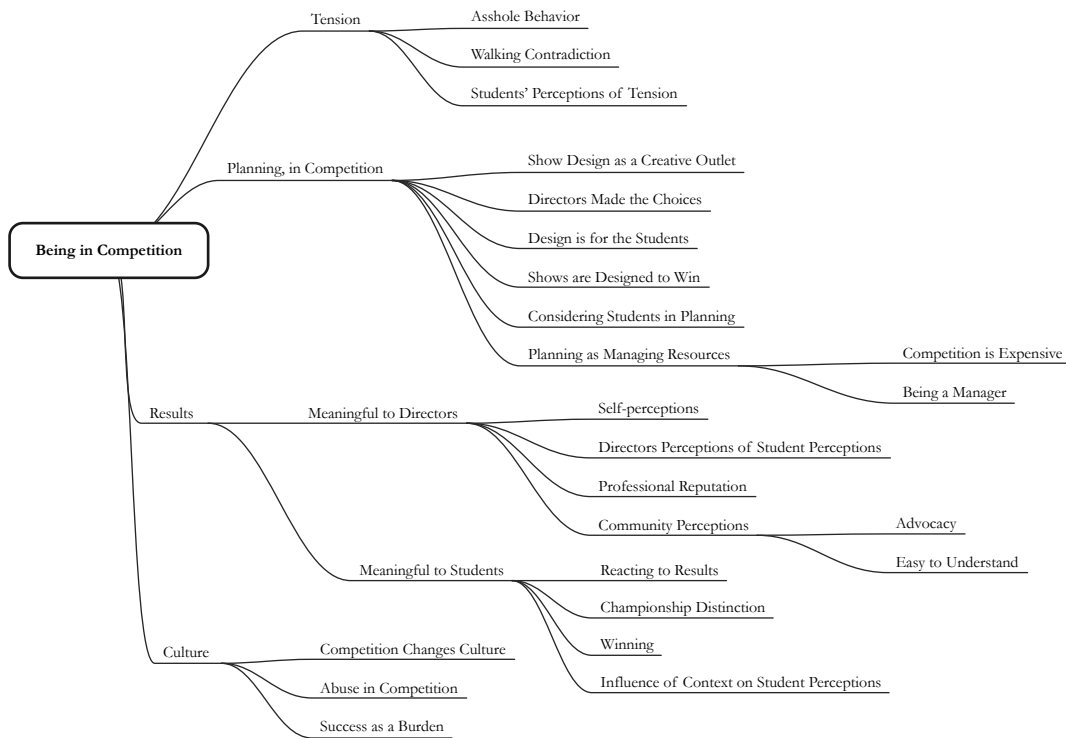
The two examples I offered come with distinct physical experiences, however, I argue that the mental experiences of being in a marathon or in surgery may be just as impactful. Runners completing a marathon may experience frustration, nervousness, or doubt as they prepare for the race, and similarly, I recall feelings of nervousness prior to my medical procedure as well as relief and frustration as I went through the recovery process. The in-ness of the phenomenon was and is a part of life beyond the event itself. In effect, both the runner and I find ourselves in the world with the marathon or the operation for a time period that is difficult to define.

Organization of Findings

The findings that follow are organized thematically around ways in which the participants found themselves in competition. The first theme, tension, explains the mixed feelings and meanings that the phenomenon brought to participants. No participant felt universally positive or negative about competing. The second theme, planning and preparing, discusses how participants made specific choices in how they planned musical experiences and prepared students for competitive events. The planning process included 1) the selection of repertoire, 2) acquisition of instructional resources, 3) assembling and managing a staff, and 4) selecting which events a group might attend. The third theme, dealing with results, discusses the aftermath of competing. Part of being in competition was recognizing the results a group earns and dealing with the potential ramifications of the outcomes. In this theme participants discussed how the results impacted their work inside and outside the classroom. In the classroom, challenges included establishing credibility as a teacher, motivating students, and fostering a healthy attitude towards competition. Outside the classroom, ramifications included impacts upon band directors' professional reputation and

the notoriety of programs within schools and communities. Finally, the fourth theme, culture, discusses how being in competition pervades the overall educational environment within a band or band program. Participants discussed how introducing competition fomented changes in the overall dynamic of an ensemble and how participating in a group with an established tradition of competitive success communicated expectations. Table 1 provides an overview of key themes that emerged through this study.

Figure 1. Primary Themes and Subthemes Discussed in this Chapter



Each theme is supported by multiple examples of participants' life experiences. The particular experiences should be viewed as examples of what it may be like to be in competition. I encourage readers to view the participants' experiences as part of the phenomenon rather than as 12 contrasting cases. As Vagle (2014) explained:

The phenomenologist is not studying the individual but is studying how a particular phenomenon manifests and appears in the lifeworld. Particular individual humans might help the phenomenologist gain important access to all sorts of important manifestations and appearances of the phenomenon, but the “unit of analysis” in phenomenology is the phenomenon, not the individual. (p. 23)

Van Manen (1991) explained “the point of phenomenological research is to borrow other people’s experiences” (p. 62) as a means to better understand the phenomenon itself. I urge readers to imagine how these experiences reveal the meanings of the phenomenon and how the experiences may manifest themselves in a similar manner if you found yourself in competition.

Tension

Music educators have engaged in a protracted debate concerning competition’s place in music education for decades (Miller, 1994; Rohrer, 2002). As I began interacting with participants I suspected that I would encounter people entrenched on one side or the other of the issue and that some of the participants’ experiences would rehash arguments from the historical discussion. I was quite surprised to find that, with the exception of Christopher, no person viewed competition as a universally positive or negative part of their musical experiences. Participants’ views of the phenomenon were much more nuanced.

The ongoing debate about competition highlights a tension that is felt within the music education profession. In this case, tension refers to conflicting feelings with differing implications, some of which may be contradictory. Despite band contests being commonplace for over a century, discord about the efficacy, value, and use of contests in music curricula persists. I believe that this tension was palpable within the experiences of the participants. It may be the case that being in competition also includes the burden of being in tension.

Participants never used the word tension to describe their feelings; however, they expressed tension as they shared their experiences. In interviews, participants frequently offered contradictory feelings about the phenomenon such as that they were proud of winning a contest and simultaneously indifferent about results. Participants demonstrated an ideological and philosophical tension as they felt compelled to qualify their feelings and explain that while they were competing, they were not competitive. For example, as Roger described his early experiences competing as a high school band student, he shared that “I hate to say it, but some of the good moments were getting awards.” Roger was proud of his band’s accomplishments, but felt uneasy expressing that pride. He was cautious in how he spoke about awards and almost apologetic in bringing up that he enjoyed receiving them. The manner in which Roger spoke of trophies is emblematic of being in tension; it was acceptable to compete and pursue the awards as long as he did not enjoy winning them.

During interviews, several participants referred to “that director that is too into competition.” They implied that this overly-competitive director is ubiquitous and that we all know some teacher that uses competition “in the wrong way.” Throughout interviews participants would compare themselves to this overly-competitive mythic figure and explain how they were using competition in a healthy manner. Participants recognized a danger in over-emphasizing competition so they felt compelled to explain how they were competing in a healthy manner. Michaela and James each offered an example of how their being in tension influenced how they worked with students.

Asshole Behavior

Michaela approached competing skeptically. She did not compete as a high school student and had negative experiences with people who had. As a music student she

encountered classmates who participated in competitions and lamented that they tended to display “asshole behavior” when discussing their competitive accomplishments. Michaela wanted to approach competition very carefully and acknowledged as she took her group to their first festival that “I didn’t have any experience with the psychological effects of scores on a band.” She had to learn how students would react and how she might help students react appropriately. Her experiences as a student gave her pause about the potential consequences of competing, yet she felt that it would be a valuable musical experience for the students. While being in competition, Michaela was in tension as she evaluated the efficacy of the competitive experiences for her students and worried about the potential “asshole behavior” that might result.

James was the product of a competitive high school band program, participated in a drum and bugle corps and believed strongly in the value of band competitions. While he did not articulate the same apprehensions about competing as Michaela, James was aware of the danger of students’ reacting poorly to a competitive result. For example, James described the shock of his students’ exuberant reaction to their first contest victory:

Some of those kids have won before. But the first time it happened, some of the kids were crying. I’m like “What?!?!” Yes, it’s been a long journey and there were one or two seniors who shed a couple of tears, but is it weird to say that because I was competitively successful in high school, to me I didn’t really understand how they would react that way? If you have freshman who are like blubbering their eyes out, I’m like “Really? Are you kidding me?” Just because they’re freshmen they don’t really know the emotion thing. Maybe when they’re seniors, I can understand a little bit of emotion because it was their first time. I don’t want them to be emotionless, but I want them to be classy. I don’t want people to say, “Oh, [James’ school]” Band, those assholes.” I don’t want that at all. You can enjoy it and be happy, but don’t be jerks about it.

For James the win was both celebratory and problematic. It was great to win, but not to react in a manner that was arrogant or inappropriate. James was in tension as he interacted

with the results and the students' undesirable reactions. The contest outcome was positive, but the influence on the students was not.

James' tension was not confined to the students' reactions; he had to manage his own behavior as well. At a later contest, James reacted to results in a manner which he now regrets. He approached the contest results in tension. James was concerned that competitive success would lead to complacency and that students would not be compelled to work at the same level after the victory. James described his conflicted feelings as he listened to the results:

This is a really important moment for us, but we can't let this mark what we do. We have to keep growing and keep getting better. I was thinking that we can't let them [the students] think that they're so good that they don't have to work anymore.

James reacted strongly. He refused to let himself enjoy the victory and made sure that the students knew that their achievement would not change what he expected of them. James was blunt about his reaction to the victory as he explained, "I was an asshole. I was not nice. I didn't handle myself with the class that I normally try to have." He could not enjoy the victory because he was concerned that winning would have a negative impact on his band. As James was in competition he was also in tension as he wanted to win, but feared the behavior that victory produced in him and his students.

Walking Contradiction

Andrea described herself as a "walking contradiction." Like James, she felt conflicted with how she and her students interpreted contest results. She wished contest results were not meaningful to her, but they were. She wanted competitive success and simultaneously wanted to not care about it. Andrea offered an example of her tension as she would force herself not to look at scores and comment sheets immediately after a competition:

We're on the bus and we're riding home and I'm like "Oh my gosh, I don't know if they pulled a I." I was like boy, we had some intonation stuff. I'm right back to that. I'm adjudicating, I'm critiquing. Even the angel and the bad guy on the shoulder are like "come on now, you don't need to be like that. You know they played well." I didn't need to look at the scores and I really tried not to over the weekend. I try not to pull them out because I don't want it to taint or change how I feel about how they played. It's so funny because it's the exact spiel I give my kids: Don't let the number change or qualify how you felt about the moment, don't let it ruin it, don't let it take away however it was, good or bad. And yet, I struggle with it too.

For Andrea, the desire for positive results was a source of internal conflict that she attempted to hide from her students. She recognized that the results could taint the students' experience, but felt hypocritical telling them not to care about the results when she had the same struggle. Andrea reiterated that the results could have the potential to alter her perception of the students' performance. "If I'm not careful, and I don't say this to the students, if I look at the score sheets too soon, it'll affect how I look at the performance, and I don't want that."

As Andrea competed, she knew the scores were going to be meaningful, but had to be careful that they are not too meaningful. She simultaneously wanted the scores to represent contradictory parts of the experience. The scores were central to competing, but she wanted them to be incidental. Andrea wanted students to compete and be successful, but not let the results influence their perceptions of the experience. Most importantly, Andrea wanted the results to mean very little to her, even though she knew they would dominate her thoughts following the contest.

Students' Perceptions of Tension

Tom's experiences as a student illustrate that students may perceive the tension felt by directors. Tom's high school band was nationally renowned and remarkably successful in competitions, yet competition was presented in a contradictory manner to students. Tom's

directors overtly downplayed the importance of competitive results, yet the band spent a great deal of its time competing. Tom explained that directors consistently avoided emphasizing competitive success: “the mantra was never really about winning, in the back of your mind you knew you still wanted to, and you could tell the directors wanted to as well, although they never emphasized winning.” Tom looked back on those statements incredulously. He sensed that the directors wanted to win, but felt they could not say that to the students.

Even the national marching band competitions presented a conflicted view of their events to Tom. He illustrated the conflicted sentiment as he described the awards ceremony at the conclusion of the national championship marching contest:

You would hear [over the public address system] “you’re all winners in life, go forward and break ranks,” that was like the line that the guy said at the end of everything and you’re supposed to go and intermingle with the other bands and make new friends and appreciate life. The last thing I wanted to do was look at somebody from [another school] and say “man, you did a nice job.” I just wanted to get the hell onto the bus. I just thought it was very phony and overly optimistic that this was all about being winners in life. That we’re supposed to be friends with these other people.

Tom felt like the contest was sharing a contradictory message. The dénouement of the event was that all the bands were to interact and celebrate their shared love of music, even though that directly contradicted all of the efforts they made to become the champion. Contest organizers wanted everyone to believe that the event was not about celebrating a champion, even though one had just been named. Tom had just finished competing in one of the most well-known marching band competitions in the United States and was told it was all about “making friends and appreciating life.” Up to that point, Tom had not felt that he was working to make friends and appreciate life, he was working to win. To now be told that the contest was about celebrating everyone as “winners in life” seemed comical to him.

As Tom reflected on his experiences he felt manipulated by his directors and the competitions. The conflicting messages from his directors and the contests left him unsure of how to make sense of his competitive experiences. He enjoyed competing, but resented that he was always told that competitive success was not the goal, even though he perceived that it was. His directors' tension coupled with the conflicting messages shared through the contest obfuscated the intent of the experience for Tom.

Summary

For these participants, being in competition meant being in tension. No one competed without concern. James and Michaela worked to manage the students' reactions to competitions, Andrea worked to control her contradictory feelings, and Tom felt manipulated by mixed messages presented by his directors and the contests. No participant competed with a clear feeling that the activity was universally good and positive for them and their students, yet each chose to compete. Tension was not to be resolved, rather it was accepted. Tension was a part of being in competition.

Planning, in competition

For many of the participants, the process of planning a competitive show was as much a part of competing as going to the contests. Planning for a competitive marching season often began months before the first scheduled contest and the most significant task in the planning process was the design of the show to be performed. Participants relished the opportunity to develop a marching show. They saw it as a creative outlet and engaged in it with a joy and pride that was not seen anywhere else within the phenomenon. Competition directly influenced the design choices made by the participants; they were in competition as they planned. The following section focuses on participants' experiences with planning in

competition. Related themes include: show design as a creative outlet; show design influenced by a desire to win; and managerial aspects of planning.

Show Design as a Creative Outlet

Show design was an opportunity for participants to be creative. Through the design process, directors shaped the musical experiences of their students. In comparison to concert band contests, this level of creativity and autonomy was unique to the marching band experience. Where concert band contests often required repertoire to be chosen from a curated list of pieces, marching band contests had no such lists. Additionally, marching band shows included a visual component that was missing from concert bands. Where concert band contests were adjudicated based upon established repertoire performed on a stage in a standard manner, marching band competitions were more open to innovation. In the process of show design, directors may have had the opportunity to arrange music, write formations, develop choreography, and when a band's financial resources permitted, collaborate with designers and professional consultants. The design process was complex, creative, challenging, and rewarding.

Custom marching shows were not required, but had become *de rigueur* in many competitive circles. Bands who were unable to, or choose not to design a show, could purchase commercially published arrangements and formations. However, these materials often still required editing to fit the exact number of performers in a particular band. Each of the participants could have chosen to use published materials, but all felt strongly about designing a custom show. The process was a year-round endeavor as several participants began formulating ideas for the next season's show as soon as the current season concluded.

They were in competition continuously even though their marching bands only performed in the fall.

Sharing the show with students was a rewarding part of the design process. One of Roger's goals through show design was to expose his students to "classical stuff" and repertoire which they might not encounter every day. He recalled a particularly rewarding experience he had collaborating with an arranger to develop a piece which combined a concert band work his students had performed with themes from Dvorak's *New World Symphony*. Roger recalled the students' reactions to first hearing the piece:

The first time I heard it and then I looked at the score and I was like, "Oh Shit!" Honest to god, when the kids realized what it was, it was like them opening up a present on Christmas Day.

Roger took great pride in bringing the arrangement to the students and felt rewarded by their reaction. The opportunity to design a competitive marching show facilitated this creative outlet for Roger. Had he not been competing, he likely would not have been developing custom arrangements for the students.

Jeff was the most demonstrative about his love of show design. For Jeff, design was essential to competing and one of the most rewarding parts of his job. He discussed the joy he felt from seeing the material he designed materialize on the field:

The first time we did the closer, I was like "oh my god this is exactly how I imagined it. All the musical things I put in there are what I wanted for it." That was a cool feeling and there were a lot of special rehearsal moments where I was like "oh my, you're doing the thing that I wrote."

Jeff felt rewarded throughout the season as his designs were implemented. He took great ownership over the design of the show and looked to the competitions as opportunities for the students to perform, but also as a means for him to get critical feedback about his creative work.

Competitions provided a venue for his Jeff's creative work and he saw the judges as critics of his efforts. Jeff explained that his students' roles in the competitive process were largely to implement and execute what he had developed. His job in teaching was to help the students carry out their roles and to get to the point where, as Jeff stated, "the students are doing what is asked of them." Once the students were performing their roles correctly, the focus of the feedback could shift to the artistic design of the show, Jeff's work. He explained this feeling based on feedback from a recent contest:

I guess I was looking for more design critique and how we were unfolding events in the show. It turned more into an ensemble and visual analysis. Like our feet aren't together or we're not starting and stopping at the right times. I'm like "ok, but what about us running across the field with the giant logo of all the elements [the theme of the show]? How can we make that better?"

Jeff recognized that until the students were executing the show at a high level, he was unlikely to get the feedback he sought.

As Jeff was in competition, his priority was to develop as a designer, not as a teacher. As he discussed his students' performance capabilities, he explained: "my teaching looks good when the judges' comments are about design and not execution." Jeff's design became more evident to judges as the students' performance abilities improved. Jeff's focus in competition was on realizing *his* creative goals as a designer through teaching students. As Jeff competed, he prioritized his creative contribution.

Like Jeff, James was heavily invested in the design process. Show design for James was a collaborative process involving many of his friends and members of the band's instructional staff. James worked hard to design a show theme that would be compelling for the students and also engaged him creatively. James particularly enjoyed collaborating with his staff, so it was interesting to hear him express frustration with a recent decision to turn

over the show design responsibilities to a staff member. James was comfortable sharing the design responsibilities, but was surprised how the decision influenced his approach to teaching the show:

It was the first year that the concept wasn't mine. I let the assistant director take more of the lead on the designing. That was probably one of the first inherent difficulties. If the director doesn't know exactly what's going on, there is a challenge. I was trying to do more of an administrative role and let the creative and the design role happen elsewhere. So when I came out to do stuff [teach and rehearse the group], things were being handled differently than I would like. I couldn't really help much because it wasn't my show.

James underestimated how invested he was in the students performing his work. The band still competed and was successful, but James felt less involved. For James, competing was a creative outlet, and by changing his role to be more managerial and administrative, he robbed himself of that reward. Teaching a show that was developed by someone else fundamentally changed the way he competed. Being in competition was different for James because the materials that were being performed were not his creation.

Directors made the choices. The show design process afforded directors a great deal of control. Through design, directors made choices related to the style of show performed, repertoire included, difficulty of music, and overall aesthetic. Competition provided them with the opportunity to strongly influence the materials their students would perform and the curriculum that they experienced.

Directors' choices were often influenced by their prior competitive experiences. Jeff, James, and Christopher in particular discussed how their high school and drum corps experiences influenced their design choices. For example, Christopher described his preferences in show design as leaning towards a "serious show" much like what he did in high school and drum corps. Similarly, Jeff and James each described their preference of

shows as being “artistic and competitive.” Being in competition afforded them the autonomy to design shows that reflected their personal preferences.

Design choices provided an opportunity for directors to make dramatic changes in the types of music and styles of shows their bands performed. As Jeff began his first job, he planned a show that was quite different than what students had performed in previous seasons. Prior to Jeff’s arrival, the band did not compete and performed what Jeff characterized as a “hits of the 80s” style show using stock arrangements and simple visual formations. Jeff would have found this unsatisfying. He wanted to lead a competitive band similar to the groups he had interned with as an undergraduate.

Jeff felt that introducing the band to competition, and the types of shows that competitive bands often perform, would allow him to foment a change in styles. Jeff explained that as the students competed they grew to appreciate his design choices:

[My students like being a stronger competitive band and doing a more Bands of America style shows. Not exactly to that level or caliber but more in that direction than the stock [publisher produced] shows. They [the students] really liked some of the design elements we tried to incorporate, like having a bigger pit. We brought in a synth this year. They really liked those elements.

Jeff knew that a “hits of the 80s” style show would not be competitively viable, but through the expectations brought on by competing, Jeff was able to implement substantial style changes.

Design is for the students. For participants in this study, a consistent aspect of being in competition was planning for students rather than with students. There was an altruistic element to the process. Directors felt that they were showing care and kindness as they took the time to prepare the show. The altruism, however, was balanced by the creative reward and control that design afforded directors. They were making something for their

students, but the product was of the directors' choosing and reflected the directors' tastes and wishes.

Not one participant discussed any student input or consideration in the process of developing their shows. Students were seen as the recipients of the design, rather than as collaborators or participants in the creative process. Directors equated this process to giving the students the design. For example, as Roger expressed his joy in sharing a custom arrangement with his students he described the event as the students "opening a present on Christmas day." Similarly, Andrea recalled that one of the highlights of her academic year was the "reveal" of the following season's marching show. She felt the process motivated students for the upcoming season, but also showed a great deal of care on her part since she went to such great lengths to bring the materials to them. Similarly, James described how his work arranging wind parts was an act of caring:

For the kids, they know that it's all custom. They see that I'm doing it all for them. They see that I care. The fact that I'm taking forty hours to write this kind of music for them. It's something tangible. I can say that I care all I want, but this is showing it.

In each instance the directors were motivated to show students that they cared, but did so through a show that was developed without any student input. In competition students were the recipients of the directors' creative works.

Shows are designed to win. The goal of designing a show in competition was not simply creative or expressive, it was competitive. A successful show should be interesting for the director to develop and students to perform, and more importantly, earn high scores at contests. As marching band contests were decided typically by a panel of judges, pleasing them became a goal of the design process. Shows could be innovative as long as they were also competitive. For example, Jessica explained that as she developed parade routines for

her band, “I’d always center my marching shows around trying to always win.” For Jessica, planning, in competition was not aesthetic, it was competitive.

As a part of her planning process, Jessica learned what had been competitively successful and integrated those elements into her show designs. In a contrasting experience, Gregory shared the frustration of developing a show which he thought was creative, compelling, and challenging for the students, but was not viewed positively by judges. Gregory’s show emphasized movement and students were performing more formations than was typical for bands in his state. Gregory felt his designs were on the cutting edge of the marching band activity, but were not appreciated at his state’s contests. Gregory’s design failed to take into consideration the common design aesthetics of bands of his area.

Most of the schools and the programs in [the state I taught in], they do 35 charts of drill and it’s really simplistic and it even harkens back to late 80s and early 90s material. Almost 20 years out of what I was used to at that time. There was one spot where we stopped and we played out one big chord, but that was it. I was making them run. A lot of people had never seen stuff like that. That’s where it’s [marching band shows] going. They [directors in the state Gregory taught] just don’t know that yet.

Gregory was enthusiastic about his designs, but surprised that they were not understood and appreciated by the band community. Gregory even cited the competition rubric as a resource for why his band should have been rewarded more for what they had performed:

Marching band is about marching and playing. Music is a little more than a third of your score so playing nice, and playing full, and playing open is a thing. Those are things that can happen, but if you’re marching at half speed then there is no technicality that goes into that. There’s not any points given for difficulty. They’re not given any leeway and that’s a big issue with the rubric. So, the more technical the material is, playing and marching, you could be a little bit lenient, you could give them an indication that this was more difficult. If you’re standing and playing, you’re going to get that [more] musical show. If you look at the rubrics, the marching portion was important as well. You have groups that just want to stand and play.

Gregory had studied the competition rubrics and had taken them into account when designing the show his students performed. Gregory's view of his show was tarnished because it failed to generate positive contest results. Planning, in competition, as seen in Gregory and Jessica's contrasting experiences, was a process of creating with judges in mind.

Considering Students in Planning. The need to be competitively successful placed a creative constraint on the design process. Not only did directors need to consider how judges might react to their shows, they also had to consider their students' capabilities to perform the show successfully. This was the singular instance in which the students were represented in the creative process. The process was similar to that of a tailor designing a bespoke suit for a customer, the tailor's creative process is constrained by the physical characteristics of the person who will be wearing the suit. The tailor endeavors not just to produce a great suit, but to make a suit that looks great on a particular person. The same held true for the design process of competitive shows. The goal was not just to make a great marching show, it was to make a show that would be great when performed by a particular band.

Planning, in competition asked directors to seriously consider their groups' capabilities and implement a show that would accentuate their band's strengths and disguise its weaknesses. Having a show that was customized to the capabilities and characteristics of an ensemble was the most pragmatic and practical advantage of designing a custom show. For example, when I asked James why he did not just simply purchase published arrangements for his band, he was emphatic in his answer:

For me, I would drive myself nuts, I would go bonkers, I would go ape-shit if I had to do that [use a published arrangement]. The year that we did the Cirque du Soleil show, two of them were the arrangements from [a major publisher]. I didn't feel like I could really do much with them. Not that they weren't well written or provided

effect moments, it was just that they weren't for my band. It wasn't custom. I know the strengths and weaknesses of my performers. I know that I have a strong saxophone section and I know that I have a trumpet player that can play high B, Bbs, and Cs. I know that I have a mellophone player that is marching drum corps. So I know that part will be able to cut through. I know that my tuba players are not bad, so I can give them more than just donuts [whole notes].

James saw the opportunity to make the show fit his group's strengths and weaknesses as essential. Much like tailored clothing may make a person look better, the customized show made his band look and sound better. The bespoke design allowed the show to be that much more competitively viable. James was not just creating to make his band look better, he was designing because it would help them win.

As Jeff planned and designed in competition, he recognized that his design choices would put his band at a competitive advantage. For example, Jeff described specific musical features that he would add to arrangements that would not be available in published music:

We've purposefully written in some things to be flashy. You know there's always a brass and a woodwind feature. And you know there's always a part where everyone parks and you do a sixteenth note run. You don't get that in stock music. So I can park them on the 50, give this to the clarinets, put it in Bb major, give it sixteenth notes up and down. I know my clarinets can do that and I know that other bands in our class are not going to do that.

In this instance, his design acumen benefited his band competitively. Jeff's knowledge of design and the capabilities of his band allowed him to create musical material that highlighted his group's strengths in comparison to other ensembles. For Jeff, design skills and arranging talent were abilities that he cherished in competition. These skills were creatively rewarding and he perceived a clear impact on competitive scores.

Planning and designing in competition was a multi-faceted and complex process. Planning a competitive show was a valuable creative outlet, but was accomplished with significant constraints. Competition facilitated and shaped the creative product that directors

produced. I argue, that if it were not for the expectation and perceived competitive advantage of custom marching shows, directors would be less likely to produce them. In this sense, the phenomenon demanded this creative product, but also constrained it.

Planning, in competition was planning to win. As Gregory's cautionary tale of designing a show that was not suitable for his particular area demonstrated, the creative product has to please the judges. Participants considered students' capabilities primarily as assets and constraints to winning. The custom show allowed the band to have the best chance possible to be viewed positively in the competitions because it worked to highlight assets and mask weaknesses within bands. Designing a show in competition was then very much like tailoring a bespoke suit, except rather than pleasing the person who is wearing the suit, the goal was to impress a panel of judges who would evaluate it.

Planning as Managing Resources

While the show design process was exhaustive, it was but one aspect of the planning process. Bands must travel to competitions which requires the coordination of transportation, meals, and supplies. The director is not just a teacher or designer in these instances, but also a travel coordinator, administrator, and manager. Participants' administrative responsibilities included planning and organizing travel for large groups of students, managing the availability of staff members, organizing rehearsals to allow for staff members to work with students, and managing the daily operations of programs that in some instances included hundreds of students. For many of the participants, this managerial role was one of the most difficult parts of their work.

Competition is expensive. Each teacher discussed a connection between resources and competitive success. They used every resource available to them and longed for more.

Participants all would have liked newer equipment, additional instructors, or better travel accommodations, but were constrained by their means. The expense of competing could be seen most acutely in smaller marching programs. Roger, who taught in a rural community, explained the significant resources needed to participate in contests:

Costs associated would be a drill writer for four or five hundred dollars. My friend... wrote the show for \$500. Plus, the rights to get some of the music arranged is a factor. Paying a colorguard instructor, paying a percussion instructor. The additional cost of band competition: registration fees, paying for the bus, which I found out this year was \$1.80 a mile. I kind of had to have some strong words [with the district]. They didn't let me know that they had increased the price 17 cents per mile. Other additional costs were we used to do a trip to [the coast] for one of the competitions down there. [We had to pay for] hotel, food, rehearsal space, and the bus driver. We spent almost \$3500 on that trip.

For Roger's band of 17 students, the costs were substantial. If the size of his band doubled, the costs per student would be less, but still extraordinary. As Roger was in competition he was worried about more than just his students' success. He had to carefully choose competitions, hire staff, and plan travel while considering the financial means of his students, program, and school.

Roger's concerns related most to travel and show design costs. For other participants, instructional staff was the most expensive, but necessary, cost of competing. James believed that hiring a staff was one of the largest and most important expenses associated with competing. He described how he evaluated costs associated with equipment and staffing:

In the end it comes down to the kids and the staffing. In the end, if you roll out 17 props and 4 synthesizers and a \$16,000 rosewood marimba, if your kids can't play and your teachers can't teach, you're still not going to fit. I've seen kids go out with props bought right off of drum corps. But if you can't do the show you can't do the show. Does money help? Yes! Would I rather hire someone for \$3500 to be my battery percussion tech for the entire year? Of course I would. I don't have that money lying around. I'm in the conundrum for the future that if I have \$7000 for staffing, do I get 4 staff members who are really great or do I get 8 who are alright?

For James, staff were more important than equipment and he was confronted with the difficult decision of how to best use his personnel budget. These decisions were administrative, but also competitive. James saw his decisions as influencing competitive outcomes. He was making budgetary and managerial decisions to achieve competitive ends.

Being a manager. Hiring staff was but one of many challenges that participants faced in working with this group of people. Both James and Jeff felt strongly about the value of an instructional staff, but each felt that managing the staff presented additional demands on them in competition. As young teachers, they were new to being in a supervisory or managerial position and coordinating multiple instructors made the process of planning rehearsals more complex. Jeff explained some challenges he felt in transitioning from a staff member to a director who led rehearsals with staff:

This year I was dealing a lot with putting together a new staff and like the drum instructor could only be there certain days and the days I need them to be there would be the days that he couldn't. My guard instructor was gone some and she was new this year. It's so difficult. Because I loved being a tech and I think I'm a really strong tech and being so far removed and being in the box [the press box of the stadium where he can view the entire field, but is quite a distance away from the band members]. I can't fix the things that I could fix as a tech quickly without having to stop rehearsal. As a tech I could just tell a kid to fix something. But running rehearsal there were details that I let go because I couldn't stop the entire band to fix one tiny thing. I haven't mastered how to do that yet and I didn't have my staff there all the time.

At the time of this study, Jeff's planning process included managing the various staff members, coordinating schedules, and transitioning to being the head of the organization. Being in competition for Jeff meant using his resources successfully: knowing what staff were available for each rehearsal, providing time for sectional work, recognizing when to stop rehearsal for an issue, and when to delegate to a staff member.

James was confident in his ability to manage resources. He believed that the staff were his most important asset and he managed a group of 10 instructors. He looked back to his experiences with drum and bugle corps, which typically have instructional staffs of 20 or more people, and modeled what he saw there:

I'm the figurehead. I'm the leader. I put people in place to help them and open up the ideas of being successful. It's weird to say it's kind of a drum corps philosophy, because they bring so many staff members to provide the individualized attention. It's no longer me stumbling when I don't know. I have a doctoral student that knows things. He teaches them and that becomes part of what they do. It becomes part of their schema. It becomes part of what they can do. Having so many people, it helps.

James felt it was beneficial to work with staff members with expertise in areas he was comparatively inexperienced. He saw great value in students working with specific teachers for drumline, woodwinds, brass, colorguard, and marching. He was comfortable letting each of the staff members be the experts and he saw his role as one of being a manager and facilitator. As James was in competition he was planning around the assets that his staff provided. His planning process was a managerial one. Since he viewed the instructional staff as essential to the band's competitive success, the way he planned and managed the resources was part of competing.

For James and Jeff to compete successfully, they viewed the staff as an essential tool, which influences how they do their job in competition. James and Jeff found themselves in managerial and administrative tasks as they competed. They were not just teachers in these situations, but leaders of a team of instructors. They had to coordinate staff members' schedules, provide time for them to work with students, and facilitate rehearsals in a manner that integrated the staff appropriately. As Jeff and James planned in competition, the administrative tasks were of equal importance to their pedagogical work.

Summary

Planning, in competition was a creative task with a competitive intent. Participants enthusiastically approached marching show design and the creative outlet it provided them, but did so with an understanding of the competitive demands on their work. Their creations were not simply pieces of art, they were carefully calculated products designed to generate the maximum competitive reward. They considered the rubrics used by judges in the competitions, how their shows would compare to those of other schools, and how they might highlight their students' capabilities and mask weaknesses as they crafted their show. Throughout the process, the creative task was to generate a winning show.

The design process was largely unilateral with directors choosing to collaborate with select staff members and professional designers. Design took place away from the students who were seen as the recipients of the materials. Directors viewed the shows as gifts they provided the students, however they never allowed students to participate in the design process.

Finally, beyond planning and developing a marching show, competition added a number of logistical and administrative facets to directors' jobs. Competition was expensive with costs related to travel, show development, and salaries for added instructional staff. The directors' jobs became increasingly focused on administration, as the added staff provided a number of planning challenges. Their planning process became one of aligning schedules, facilitating sectionals, and delegating tasks.

Planning, in competition was planning to win. Each of the tasks and concerns that participants described had a direct perceived connection to competitive success. A well-designed, custom show would produce higher scores for the bands. The better the show, the

more positive the results for the directors and students. Similarly, the resources used in competition had to be managed effectively. Instructional staff were one of the largest costs for the bands, but were seen as having the greatest impact on the scores. A director's ability to manage the staff efficiently directly influenced the band's competitive results.

Results

Every competitive event includes some type of outcome or result for the competitors. In band competitions the results can be presented in a number of ways such as rankings, where bands learn how they specifically fared compared to other groups, or ratings such as superior or excellent in which the bands gain an understanding of how they performed on an established rubric. The term results refers to any evaluation, label, or competitive outcome that is attained through a competitive event. Results are often announced or awarded in public ceremonies and even shared via local newspapers or school announcements. The impact of results lasted far longer than the moments in which they were announced. The results in many ways defined the experience for those that competed. Findings are organized to highlight how directors and students found results meaningful.

Meaningful to Directors

Results were meaningful because they influenced how directors felt they were perceived by others. Competitions were public evaluations of band performances and every director I spoke with took the results seriously. The results related significantly to both internal and external perceptions of how the directors did their jobs. From the internal standpoint, many viewed the results as a reflection of their competence as music educators. Externally, the public nature of the results influenced how the directors felt they were perceived by others. Directors perceived a connection between competitive results and their

professional reputations and how their band programs were viewed in the community. As these directors were in competition, the results presented multiple consequences: they influenced how they felt about their own work, shaped their professional reputations, and influenced how the community viewed their work.

Self-Perceptions. For participants, being in competition could be personal. The evaluation informed how they perceived themselves as teachers. Each time they competed they were informing their own feelings of efficacy and adequacy. In each directors' experiences, they took responsibility for the ratings. As they continued to accrue ratings, being in competition became about their work and their self-perceptions of their work. Much like the coach of an athletic team, directors produced a win and loss record through their accumulation of rankings and ratings. Roger made this connection explicit as he borrowed a quote from the professional football coach, Bill Parcells, who said: "You are what your record says you are." Similarly, Jeff commented that when his band received superior ratings it showed "that I am doing good teaching [*viz*]." For Roger and Jeff, being in competition was the process of building your self-confidence through a competitive record.

Each contest had the potential to influence a director's self-confidence and self-perception. For example, Gregory discussed how he would feel nervous as he watched his band perform:

You just watch. You become fully engaged in the fact that we need to start practicing this and rehearsing this more. Everything that you've been talking about starts happening and it all just collides together. There's good times and there's bad times. You see all of that in those minutes. [You ask yourself] Is everything I am doing going to make this successful?

The contest caused Gregory to question his own abilities. He talked about the group's success, but felt that it was his job to make the band successful. The group's competitive

falters presented a challenge which Gregory was unsure he could surmount. His self-perception in competition was directly linked to his ability to achieve a desirable competitive outcome with his band.

Similarly, Mark viewed competitions as evaluative of his teaching. He explained that the students' performances at contests were the result of his work and the results should be interpreted as reflecting Mark's abilities:

I absolutely believe that the rating is a reflection on my teaching. Because anything they do is because it's what I've told them to do and what I've taught. So if they get a low marking in something it's not their fault. It's not something that they did wrong. It's something that I didn't teach. Or it's something that I didn't teach effectively enough.

For Mark, the students were simply doing what was asked of them, so the rating they received was indicative of the work he had done. He took the results seriously as in his view, they reflected on *his* performance more than that of the students. Mark took responsibility for the ratings and feedback that his bands received at contests. Any comment made by a judge spoke directly to Mark's teaching. A positive remark was a credit to his teaching and a negative comment was an area in which Mark needed to improve.

Directors' perceptions of student perceptions in competition. Competitions influenced how directors felt they were perceived by their students. Many of the directors, especially those that were early in their careers or new to their schools, felt a need to establish their credibility with the students. Directors felt that students would equate competitive success with competent leadership. As the directors were in competition, part of how they established themselves was through results.

Christopher exemplified a director's competitive record establishing his competence. Over the course of the study, Christopher transitioned between two schools. He was a

young educator, but had an impressive competitive record. Christopher had never earned a rating lower than a superior at a festival, a significant feat. While Christopher was reluctant to emphasize his competitive success, he admitted, “had I been last year’s teacher, fresh out of college, I probably would have had to prove a little bit more.” Christopher’s competitive record eased his transition to a new position.

Christopher was not alone. As many of the directors competed, they recognized that the results would impact students’ perceptions of their teaching. For example, Jessica was a young director who replaced a legendary figure. Her school’s previous director had led the band for decades and his son was an administrator at the school. Jessica perceived a number of challenges as she began her work: she was an outsider, a young and inexperienced teacher, and a woman. She felt each of these characteristics factored into students’ reluctance to embrace her teaching. As Jessica and her band competed, she hoped that competitive success would help her earn her students’ respect.

Jessica explained that she brought a new style of marching to her group and the competitive success they experienced ameliorated students’ concerns about the change in leadership. Jessica explained: “It sort of drove the competitive edge in them a little further and they became more accepting of this style of marching I was throwing at them.” The new style yielded better contest results than the band had earned prior to her tenure. Jessica felt reassured as she commented, “having these trophies that say I must know what I’m doing, it helped out.” As Jessica competed, the meaning of the results had several facets: 1) they established her competence to the community, 2) they influenced her self-perceptions, 3) they validated the style changes she had made, and 4) as a new, young, and female band

director, she felt the trophies proved that no one should be concerned about her gender, age, and amount of experience.

Like Jessica, Jeff was a young educator and wanted students to take him seriously. Jeff was confident in his abilities to lead, but frustrated that students did not always heed his feedback. As Jeff competed, he took advantage of opportunities to present students with comments from judges that echoed what he had taught the band:

It was really validating to see the judges reacting to the exact same things that I knew are our deficiencies. They would say “horn angles this,” and I would be like [to the students] “oh my gosh, I was saying the same thing.” So it was really validating as an instructor and having that moment. I was like “look, other people notice it too, you need to pay attention.”

The feedback carried two meanings for Jeff. As he found the feedback validating, Jeff demonstrated that the comments influenced how he perceived his work. Similarly, as Jeff used the feedback as a teaching tool, he reminded students that the judges’ comments echoed feedback he had provided them before the contest. As with Jessica, the results presented an opportunity for Jeff to establish himself with his students.

Michaela’s reluctance to compete stands out among the participants. Michaela was very clear that she did not view the competitions as an indication of her competence as she was quite confident in her abilities. However, she was surprised that establishing herself with students required competitive success. Michaela explained that when her band earned a gold rating, the students approached band and Michaela’s teaching differently:

As soon as they got a gold it was kind of a turning point and change in culture for my whole band. They had been through a whole bunch of different teachers. So there needed to be a re-establishment of what was going to happen here.

The gold rating was a turning point for Michaela and her students. The competitive success meant that Michaela was accepted by her students as a competent leader. She did not

anticipate this result, but she recognized that being in competition was how she proved herself to the students.

Participants perceived a direct connection between the results they earned in competitions and their credibility in their teaching positions. The competition impacted them long after the results were announced. Directors perceived that students would attribute their competitive successes or failures directly to their teachers. Results, in the form of rankings, ratings, or other awards were not just an evaluation of a particular performance by a band, but an environment in which the directors proved themselves to the students.

Professional reputation. For many of the directors, competing was a process of being evaluated in a public forum that was visible to other members of their profession and their communities. Directors perceived a connection between results and their professional reputations. They wanted to be successful in competitions partly because the competitions could influence their ability to maintain or further their careers.

Results offered an efficient means of discussing performances. Rather than delving into the qualitative aspects of a band performance such as a group's musicality, expression, or balance and blend, results offered a simple descriptor. The clarity of message present in results was powerful. Through results, directors could communicate how a group was rated and in many instances, how a group compared to similar groups from other schools. A rating could be understood by persons with no musical knowledge. Any member of the public could understand a group performing better than others or a group receiving a low rating. This simplicity and efficiency made results particularly powerful. Because they were so easily communicated and interpreted, the potential impacts on a director's professional reputation could be substantial.

Andrea competed with an awareness of how the results shaped the opinions of others. When Andrea was in competition she felt that she was proving herself to her colleagues. She perceived a direct connection between competitive results and her professional reputation. She explained that her personal disposition has always been to be a “people-pleaser” and she wanted to impress other band directors with her group’s contest performances. Andrea described her feelings as she first brought a band to competitive performance:

I was definitely feeling nervous about it because it’s your peers and colleagues for the first time, and we know that they make judgment calls on how you’re doing, on how your band sounds and performs.

Over a decade later, even as an established director, Andrea continued to worry about how other music educators perceived her work:

Every year I feel like I have something to prove. We’re going to go in and we have to play well or they [other music educators] are going to be like “man, what is up with her? What is she doing because they sound awful? What is her deal?” Every year I feel the same way and it’s twelve years later and I still have some of that.

Despite Andrea’s significant record of success, she believed that the competitive performances impacted her professional reputation. This was a cyclical concern, which did not subside as she gained experience or established a successful competitive record. For Andrea, being in competition was a process of continually proving herself to others.

Whereas Andrea’s experiences showed the perspective of an established teacher, Jeff discussed how competitive results were perceived by an early-career teacher looking to craft a reputation in the field. As we discussed ratings, Jeff described his aspiration to be “that hot shot band director that got straight I’s his first year. He wanted to be viewed as a rising star in the profession and felt success at competitions would make him stand out. As Jeff

competed he felt that he was being evaluated and that the evaluation would inform his reputation among other music educators.

Unfortunately, Jeff did not experience the immediate success that he desired. In Jeff's first year teaching, his band's first competitive rating was a III, or a "good" rating. Jeff felt anything but good about earning this distinction. He described this rating as a scarlet letter he would wear throughout his career and provided some guidance as to how ratings were interpreted by other music educators:

The culture has become superior. Anything less than a superior is not excellent. It's sort of, if you don't get a I [a superior], then I don't know. Why'd you show up? Really its if you get a IV or a V you should have stayed home, a III is pretty bad, a II is supposed to be excellent, supposed to be good, but they feel like a consolation prize. They feel like second.

For Jeff, the good rating was tragic. He lamented that ratings were publicly available and that his band's III could potentially haunt him:

It's very easy [to see results of contests]. You can go back and click through and see that you got a III your first year of teaching. Not that it's a bad thing, not that it's something I'm haunted by that will never go away. It's something you don't want. It's your permanent record. You know, you can see and you can go back and reflect on it. It can be a positive or negative thing. It's one of those things that you don't want out there. I don't want any III's out there. Actually we have concert and marching assessment run by the state organization and we actually did get a III in marching assessment this year. I bring it up because that was very difficult to deal with. But now, I'm ok with it. Yeah. [My] first marching score was a III, but that's fine.

Jeff was coming to grips with receiving a low rating. As a young teacher he was aware of the stigma attached to ratings. He was disappointed that instead of being that young director who was immediately successful in contests, he was a director who earned a III. Jeff's experiences reflect a coping process. He was concerned about what the rating meant for him personally, but was more worried about the public perception of the rating. As Jeff desperately wanted to build a reputation as a successful director, he viewed his early ratings

as obstacles to be overcome. Jeff now competes feeling the burden of his initial ratings. He not only has to be successful in contests, he now has to be successful enough to erase the impact of his initial contest scores.

Adam, who like Jeff, was an early-career teacher, was keenly aware of the way ratings were viewed by other music educators. During his intern and student teaching experiences Adam had the opportunity to interact with some of the most well-respected directors in his state. When they would discuss competition, Adam was told that competent directors should be able to get their bands to a certain level of performance. Adam explained:

If we got a good or a fair, based on what I've been told by people in the community, and among band directors, if you get a fair or a good it's more a reflection on you, rather than the ability of the students.

Adam began his career with the expectation that he was demonstrating his competence through contests. If he had done his job well, students should earn at least an excellent rating and a lower rating would be cause for concern. As Adam was in competition, he was also competing to prove himself to others by meeting ratings expectations.

Adam, Jeff, and Andrea each discussed a connection between competition and their reputations, but they did not offer any examples of how it had specifically impacted their careers. Mark, however, offered a concrete example of how he perceived competition influenced his potential for career advancement. Mark started his career in a rural community near the larger city in which he grew up. He wanted to pursue teaching opportunities in the larger school district and felt competition contributed to his ability to secure employment:

My first year, I'm a new teacher and I had this idea that I'm only going to be here [at my current school] for two or three years and then I really want to get a job at a big school. I want to move up to a 3 or 4A [classification], one of those bigger high schools. So, I had this notion in the back of my head that this [contest performance]

is also a job interview for all the other local band directors and band programs. Even to this day, I still have this thought in my head that “Ross Oldham is watching me.” He is kind of the godfather of the high school band directors around here. He’s the arts administrator for a large school district and even if he’s not the one hiring, most directors still come to him with questions and seeking advice on hiring.

For Mark, competing had significant stakes. He perceived the competition as a job interview. Any number of people that may potentially hire Mark in the future could be in the audience at the competition. If he wanted to advance professionally, the performance would be a way to establish himself, or potentially discredit himself as a viable candidate for another teaching position. As Mark was in competition he felt he was influencing his future career opportunities.

The contrasting experiences that I have discussed in this section revolve around the same central idea: competition influenced how directors were viewed within the profession. Andrea, even after a decade of teaching had “something to prove” when she competed, Jeff saw every rating as an entry on his “permanent record,” Adam knew that he needed to reach a certain rating to demonstrate his competence, and Mark saw competition as a job interview that will impact his professional advancement. Being in competition was a process of crafting a professional reputation.

Community perceptions. Just as directors perceived a relationship between competitive results and their professional reputations, they also felt a connection between results and how the community viewed their programs. For many participants, competing represented an opportunity to build a reputation for their program and garner the community’s support.

Advocacy. James felt that competition influenced how his program was perceived in the school community. James’s school had recently hired a new administrator and James

explained: “bringing a little hardware home for a new principal is always a nice thing.” James wanted the new principal to value his work and recognized that a trophy would be a clear message of his program’s stature. As James competed, he attempted to achieve results that would curry favor with decision-makers in his school administration.

Jessica’s experiences illustrate how contest results can influence community perceptions. The community had not noticed Jessica’s band until they had won an out-of-state parade competition. The local newspaper published an article about their success and there was an immediate reaction from the community. Jessica explained that people were congratulating her for her work and that her administration was thrilled about the positive publicity. In a similar manner, Mark described a noticeable shift in how his band was perceived following one of his student’s acceptance into an all-state honor ensemble:

The first time I got a kid from the program into All-State the community was like “that’s pretty cool.” They took notice of something besides pep band. I was like, what would happen if they made it to state in solo and ensemble where they are not just competing against kids from single A schools? What happens if they won state? I was hoping that we maybe would because it would also force our school district to send them to state and to bring up the point that we are not really adequately funded by our district. The more kids I can get going to things like state, it raises the awareness of our program at the district level and I can say “we need more, we need more, we need more.” I’ve got kids going to state, All-State, but we don’t have the means to sustain it without more money.

In this instance, Mark used competitive success as an advocacy tool for his program. He needed success to bring attention to the program so he could advocate for support.

Competition brought his program to the attention of the community.

Easy to understand. The public nature of competitive results was a significant part of competing. As James, Jessica, and Mark’s stories each illustrate, success at competitions became an advocacy tool. The clarity of competitive results in the form of a rating, ranking, or number allowed directors to make a compelling argument about their bands’ success.

They did not have to explain any musical jargon or discuss any particular elements of a performance. Success at competitions was easy to explain and simple to understand. Jeff explained how he valued the ease with which contest results could be shared and understood:

I want to come back to my community and say that we got first place at something. They can see growth, but they don't, but a first place trophy or an excellent or a superior [rating] resonates with them more.

Jeff recognized the ability of a positive result to galvanize community support around his band. The rating was a much clearer statement of the quality of the performance than an audience member's perception of a concert. Michaela elaborated on this idea as she returned from a concert band festival with a superior rating:

I felt really proud and I knew it was some sort of rating that anybody could understand. When I tell parents that, they don't need the breakdown of balance, blend, etc... They don't need to hear that my trumpeter sounds awesome. They don't need to know the technical stuff, the band geekery. When I tell them that we got a gold rating, it's like telling them we won sectionals, or we won state [in reference to accomplishments athletic teams might have]. So, all of a sudden it felt like I had some résumé builder or something. You know, it's a trophy, you can put this on the wall and it is a very clear accomplishment.

The contest results were so clearly understood by the community and school administration that Michaela was able to use them to advocate effectively for her program. As these directors competed, they recognized that results are easily communicated. When results were positive, it was easy to share the good news; however, when a band did not fare well at an event, directors had to spin the outcome to ameliorate negative perceptions.

Roger frequently dealt with negative contest results. He led a small band set in a rural school and an unsupportive administrator. Roger was engaged in a protracted debate with his principal about the bands continuing participation in marching contests. The principal was concerned that the students were "embarrassing the school" through their contest

performances. Roger felt compelled to advocate for his band, but the band's last place finish at every contest made for a challenging argument. Still, Roger found ways to positively portray the last place results. For example, Roger shared an instance where following a weekend marching band contest, he looked up results of neighboring schools who attended other contests and shared how his band fared in comparison. At a faculty meeting Roger told his colleagues: "y'all, I don't know if this means anything to you, but your [marching band] scored higher than [rival 1] and [rival 2] at the contests this weekend." He had to qualify his boasts with the fact that the groups attended different events, but still felt the results, as long as they were spun in a particular manner, were a means to celebrate his students' work.

To this point I have discussed how directors used results such as contest ratings, rankings, and awards to build support for their groups. In many instances, directors actively used contest results as an advocacy tool for their programs. For example, advocacy considerations influenced the contests directors chose to attend. Christopher described what he called "sand-bagging" where directors would select a specific contest based on the other schools that would be present at the event. This was a sort of competitive calculus in which directors could surmise how their band would finish based on the other bands in attendance and the judging panel that was employed. Christopher felt these directors were gaming the system to help themselves and their bands look better and admitted that the process was largely effective.

Similarly, Jeff considered the advocacy potential of awards offered at contests during his planning process. Some contests offered special designations or titles through their

events and Jeff factored the public relations value of the awards as he selected contests. Jeff offered his decision to not participate in his state marching band contest as an example:

We didn't go to state assessment this year because I knew we weren't going to get a I and the only reason to go is to get a I. But I would like to return in a few years if I feel like we're at that level. They have a designation called Honor Band of [the state] where if you're marching band receives a I and your top concert band receives a I then you earn the title of Honor Band of [the state]. I mean, it's still good comments and all that stuff. That's, in my mind the only reason to go to state assessment versus another competition on the same weekend.

Jeff's community would celebrate the band earning the Honor Band of [his state] distinction, but since he felt it was unlikely that his band would do so, Jeff chose to attend a different contest. The advocacy potential of the special distinction was Jeff's primary reason for attending the state assessment. He could get feedback from judges at any contest, but only the state assessment could offer the special designation with unique advocacy potential. Advocating for their programs was a part of being in competition for Jeff. Each competitive decision was considered based upon its potential for advocacy.

Participants discussed community perceptions as something they shaped through competitions, rather than their professional reputations, which were shaped by the competitions. This is a small, but significant distinction. Directors were quite aware of how results could be used to influence community perceptions of their programs and proactively advocated for their groups. However, when it came to their professional reputations, directors were reactive. No participants chose a competition because of how it would influence their reputation; rather, their choices were always made prioritizing the band program's standing.

Meaningful to Students

Directors expressed great concern with how students dealt with and interpreted results. Like directors, students took results from contests very seriously and even personally. Their reactions existed on a continuum from jubilation to devastation. As participants recalled their own experiences as high school students, they showed the lasting meaning of results. Students' reactions to results were an important aspect of being in competition.

Reacting to results. James had a number of interactions with students regarding their reactions to contest results. While I detailed some of these reactions in the section discussing tension, James' early experiences offer an additional perspective of how students learn to compete and interpret results. James described his students' reactions to a low rating received at the first contest the band attended during his tenure:

They came in last, but they were closer than I thought they were going to be. They were like a point away. They said that we lost and I was like: "Ok, does that matter? Look at the score. You've never done this before. That should be motivation. What can we do this week?" If they're [the competition] getting 2 points better this week, what can we do to be 3 points better? Some of them, that lit a fire, but after the first year, I lost a couple of kids because they didn't want to buy into it. You know what? "Bye!" [he would say to them]

The students were new to competing and the initial reaction to a poor result was difficult for some of them. James attempted to position the results as an opportunity to improve, and that resonated with some, but others chose to leave the program. Though students had strong reactions to results, their attrition and mixed reactions did not dissuade James. He felt it was part of his job to help students learn how to interpret and react to results.

Like James, Roger had experiences in which students reacted negatively to results. Throughout the competitive season Roger took specific efforts to help students contextualize results and find positive attributes of their competitive outcomes. Roger would

highlight specific adjudicator statements and underscore the veracity of those comments by explaining the reputations of the adjudicators to the students. He recalled celebrating a complimentary tape with his students by telling them: “Y’all should feel proud of yourselves because of these scores and who these judges were.” In this strategy, Roger encouraged students to think more about the specific feedback they received and less about the actual scores and ratings.

Roger took similar steps to de-emphasize scores in relation to other groups by encouraging students to consider the overall trend of their band’s scores: “I don’t care if we get first place, I don’t care if we get last place. I would rather take last place in my class with a rating of excellent than first place in my class with a rating of good because the score is higher.” Roger wanted students looking more to overall score and continuous improvement on the rating scale as opposed to being concerned with their standing in relation to other bands. Competing was a process of continually contextualizing scores and directing students towards particular facets of results. Roger made protracted efforts to help students interpret results positively. Without these efforts, Roger believed their experience might have been quite different.

Scores and rankings are just one element of feedback that contests provide bands. Band competitions also frequently include recorded comments from judges which directors may choose to share with students. Judges’ comments are especially powerful to students and their reactions can be particularly strong if an adjudicator makes a specific comment about them. Adam recalled an instance when he was an assistant with a competitive band and a student reacted strongly to an adjudicator’s comment:

This past season I was teaching and we got a comment that the clarinets were really sharp. I had a student that had been in all-state all three years of high school and was

most likely going to be again come up and say “I don’t know what I’m doing wrong. Am I that bad a clarinet player?”

The student was devastated. She took what the adjudicator likely intended as an innocuous comment and saw it as a criticism on her musical competence. She turned to Adam for comfort. Dealing with the adjudicator’s comment was a significant part of the clarinetist’s experience and an important part of Adam’s work was helping her understand the results.

Michaela’s students reacted to ratings and feedback strongly. She shared the story of her band’s first festival experience and how she viewed the experience differently than her students:

The first year at [a state organized competition] I took a really small group and I was trying to prepare them for the worst. Because they were so small that we never would have gotten a balanced sound. We didn’t get the “Thank you for participating” F card, but we got bronze that year. The biggest thing for me was getting feedback on what I wasn’t hearing. So, I loved that and I knew that I was going to hear stuff from the adjudicators on that. The biggest surprise was the reaction of the kids and how, as soon as someone gave them a gold, silver, or bronze rating, they attributed that to themselves. They weren’t very happy with the bronze.

The bronze rating was meaningful to the students. They took the rating seriously and attributed it specifically to their actions. The students felt like they had failed. For Michaela, the experience was about feedback, but for the students, the experience centered around the rating they would earn.

Michaela helped the students contextualize the results and explained that the band did not get the lowest rating possible. Still, the students felt the bronze rating was not a positive result. A year passed before the students attended another competitive event, and the outcome was quite different. The band earned a gold rating and the students were thrilled. They found the gold rating validating. As Michaela explained, “it’s not about lining the walls with trophies, it’s about getting the kids to believe in themselves. All of a sudden I

was able to say ‘see, someone else said that you’re good!’” Just as they felt the bronze rating labeled them as a poor band, the gold rating labeled them as a good one. Being in competition for the students, as was interpreted by directors such as Michaela and James, was about earning the rating and the rating greatly influenced their self-perceptions.

Championship distinction. The impact of ratings in labeling bands and students was a critical component of being in competition. Students valued being in a superior, or gold-rated ensemble, however other distinctions were available through band competitions. In some states, bands could vie for state championships and these events were particularly meaningful to participants. Gregory, Adam, and Roger each vividly recalled state championship competitions as high school students and each was enormously proud of their band’s accomplishments.

Gregory’s experience perhaps best demonstrates the agony and joy of winning and losing in a state championship. In Gregory’s home state, the state marching contest required ensembles to qualify by placing among the top bands in their local and regional contests. The championship was held at the largest football stadium in the state that was also home to the local National Football League franchise. Gregory discussed the feeling of pride he felt as a high school, that his band performed for three consecutive years at the state championship marching contest:

Out of 200 bands, you’re in the top 40 that go to state. Thousands of people have been competing, you’re one of those hundreds still left. You’re still competing. I think it’s definitely walking outside the [NFL Stadium] and having that milk. That’s the end! It’s the middle/end of October and they’re handing you chilled milk because the local farmers supported music. Every time you walk out you have your milk and you get to take that and you bask in your glory. It didn’t matter if you got tenth at state, you made it to state. It was the culmination of the hard work you did to get up to that point. It was all worth it. You put those hours and dedicated months of your life to this. You accomplished something with a group of people who you became very intimate with. You want to validate all the competitive spirit

you've done. You could say that you didn't just march on the [NFL Stadium] floor once or twice, but I marched on it three times.

The feeling of accomplishment was fueled by the qualification process. The setting of the event, a professional football stadium, trip to the big city, and elite status that the band achieved through successful qualifying performances made the experience special to Gregory. Being in the state championship validated Gregory's efforts, but also labeled him and his band as state-championship-finalists. In fact, his band was a state finalist for three consecutive years, a significant feat. Being in competition for Gregory represented an opportunity to earn notoriety. Gregory identified with his band's competitive record long after he graduated, he was a state-championship-finalist.

Winning. Alan offered a unique perspective on what students may find meaningful in competition. Alan never worked as a music educator and all of his experiences were through his time as a high school percussionist. Alan specifically valued competitions because they provided him an opportunity to compare his performance to that of other students and defeat them.

In Alan's high school, success was determined through contest results. Simply getting a rating was not sufficient for Alan; he needed to know how he rated, and more importantly, how that rating compared to other bands' performances. To Alan's dissatisfaction, the contest structure in his state was a "non-competitive, ratings-only" festival format where bands would receive an evaluative rating, but no rankings. This structure frustrated Alan:

I remember feeling jilted [at not receiving ranked results]. How am I supposed to know how we did against the other schools if we don't get that distinction? They should have just given everybody a participation medal and let everyone walk off the field. [The superior rating] did not give us an accurate enough picture of who was the

best. Sure, four bands got a superior. But who is the best of those four? It leaves you empty inside.

For Alan, being in competition was about proving his abilities in comparison to other bands. Not knowing how he and his band fared against other bands was unfulfilling.

The lack of rankings impacted the way Alan approached band. He explained that each week he and his bandmates would look at the feedback from the judges and use the comments as a blueprint for the upcoming week's rehearsals. The feedback was valuable to Alan particularly because he felt that addressing the judges' concerns would help his band surpass other ensembles. Alan's motivation was to win, and the feedback provided through the competitions was seen as a means to pursue future victory.

In addition to his state's "non-competitive" festivals, Alan discussed that his band competed twice each season in a neighboring state that offered specific scores and rankings. This format assuaged some of Alan's concerns with his state's contests by providing the students with a sort of pre-test/post-test competitive structure. At the beginning of the season they would compete out-of-state, receive a numeric score and see how they compared to other bands. At the end of the season they would attend a similar event and measure their growth in comparison to the earlier contest. This second out-of-state performance was the most important of the semester. It defined the band's success. Alan explained that he was interested in one thing at the final out-of-state contest, "how many points did we pick up from the beginning to the end?" The change in score gave Alan the feedback he needed to determine if his efforts throughout the season were effective. For Alan, this event was the culminating experience of the season, more important than final performance at his school's stadium or his home state marching championship. For Alan, competition was a comparative activity. He could determine his success by the degree to

which his band improved numerically and surpassed other schools. Any personal feelings Alan had about a performance were superseded by the contest ratings. Even if he initially felt a performance was outstanding, he would not know for sure until he saw the scores. For Alan, being in competition was about the numbers and the ranking.

Influence of Context on Student Perceptions. The labeling effect of results was particularly acute for students and they often would view the results without considering the contexts in which they competed. Context can include a number of elements such as the setting of a school in a rural or urban community, a band's competitive history or tradition, and the students' competitive experiences and expectations. Context influenced how students and directors competed. Directors had to take specific steps to help students understand their context in relation to competition, particularly in regards to results.

School setting. School setting significantly influences band programs. Directors discussed a prevailing feeling that competitions were biased in favor of large bands set in large population centers. As Jessica explained:

They think that the higher the numbers [of students enrolled in band], the better the group is. Truth be told, that's a lot of the same mentality of anywhere, but you can achieve a good sound with a small band.

Competitions are structured to favor large ensembles. For example, in a marching band setting, bands with a large number of students can play with great volume, and have versatility in the formations they perform. In a non-marching setting, directors of smaller programs frequently have to perform with an incomplete instrumentation leaving out important components of musical works. Participants who taught in rural settings or with small band enrollments felt the size of their groups created a bias that could negatively

influence their students. These directors chose to help students interpret their school setting within the perceived bias of the competitions.

Mark particularly felt that his teaching context created challenges that were not experienced by larger band programs. He explained that he works to define success based on the context in which he and his students compete:

[Success] really depends on where you are. Every place can be successful as long as your idea of success fits in with what you have to work with. You have to establish success based on what you have. I don't think that my school is going to be on the level with [schools from the nearby large city]. Measured by their standards of success, they are always going to measure their standards of success by a) numbers [of students enrolled in band], b) quality of music and difficulty of music. They can stratify their entire program based on numbers to get that success to build upon itself. We have to define success differently at our level. Success for us is getting kids from sixth grade into high school. Battling a single elective for three years and fend off all other comers to get them to ninth grade. Getting them to read music after sixth grade because a lot of the kids won't get the support at home that a lot of the [larger school] kids did or have parents that read or understand music. Our successes are largely going to be probably not as far along as theirs, but they are huge steps for a lot of these kids individually.

For Mark, being in competition was uniquely defining success for his students and managing their competitive expectations. He wanted them to compete with an understanding of their context and how that context presented challenges for them in the structure of band contests. He was working to help students appreciate the accomplishments of other groups without diminishing their own achievements.

Contests presented a number of challenges for Mark. Small bands may receive feedback presented as a set of deficiencies over which students have no control. For example, as they competed, judges would focus on elements such as the ensembles limited instrumentation or small enrollment rather than receiving constructive feedback based upon their actual performance. Mark recalled a recent performance in which his band's incomplete instrumentation became a dominant facet of their experience:

We'll go there [to the festival] and it is what it is. We have an incomplete concert band, we don't have any bassoons and my oboe player is trying to decide if he is more valuable on oboe or tuba. So he's been helping out the tuba player and has hardly played any oboe so far. My jazz band, we're kind of a hodgepodge. I don't have a real drummer. I have a Chinese foreign exchange student who walked in and started playing the drums and I was like "Hey, you can keep a beat."

The instrumentation became the focus of the adjudicator's comments, which frustrated Mark as he explained, "I knew we didn't have a drummer, my students knew we didn't have a drummer. I wish the judge could have talked about what they [the students] did right and what they needed to improve on that they can control." Being in competition for Mark then meant mitigating the impact of the judge's comments with his students. It was not the students' fault that the band lacked a drummer, however their competitive experience emphasized this characteristic.

Like Mark, Jessica was concerned that her band's context would prevent students from having a positive experience. Jessica's group had an incomplete instrumentation and low enrollment. Jessica was weighing whether or not her band would compete and described her thought process as she weighed the possible outcomes:

I do not have to take them, but I want to give them that experience [of going to festival]. Being with other bands and seeing what they could be like. In previous years they've all gone to contest every single year, but this is the smallest that the band has ever been. I still want to give them the experience that they are still able to succeed at music contest. Yeah, I'm a little afraid that the judges are not going to take into consideration the size of my band, but I'm still going to make sure that the quality is as high as I can get it.

Jessica's concerns about the judge's perceptions of the small ensemble and resulting reactions from the students made her call into question the value of the competitive experience. Like Mark, she competed fearing that adjudicators would recognize more what her band did not have, rather than the assets they brought to the stage.

Helping students understand the results required Mark to compare and contrast his students' context with that of larger band programs. Mark discussed characteristics of larger band programs with his students and specifically how these characteristics might influence competitive outcomes:

[I told them] it's not about them [the ensembles from larger schools] being that good, it's about the system that's in place that allows them to be that good. You have to understand the components that are in place. It's a larger school, they have more kids to draw from, probably more money, more private lessons, better instruments, three or four groups that they have to work their way up to get to that level.

Mark attempted to assuage the students' negative reactions by explaining all the assets of the larger programs. It was important for Mark to define what success would mean for his group so they could approach the competitive experience with the appropriate perspective. Adam engaged in a similar process as he discussed preparing his students for their first competitions. Adam reminded them how their context would influence the scores:

I know some of them already understand the ratings system because they've come from other places or they've come from other programs and moved out here. So I'm honest with them and say: based off of our size, here is where we get placed, here's where it breaks out, you get rated, here are the ratings, here's what they mean.

Adam and Mark's teaching contexts required them to define competitive success uniquely for their students. They recognized the potential negative impact that the results could have on their students and realized that their context magnified the problem. Being in competition for each of them meant being aware of their context and interpreting success for their students.

Participants described instances where students interpreted results independently from a teacher's assistance. Mark shared the story of his first marching competition as a high school student in which his band won first place in its division but was a hollow victory. Mark attended a high school with a large student population but a fledgling marching

program. The contest grouped participating bands into divisions based on competitive experience and ensemble size. Mark's band was small and had little experience marching so they competed in the same division as bands from rural communities. Mark recalled that he had looked forward to the contest until he found out who his competition was:

It was nerve-wracking until I found out that we were competing in the novice division, as a first time program, and we competed against Regaltown, that was the other group. As hokey as I think our show was, I knew even then that we were probably going to win that one competition, simply based on the presentation of the two groups on the field. We had uniforms and we marched on. They came on in t-shirts and jeans. It was a band t-shirt, but they didn't have a full instrumentation. They just walked on and set up in their first set. I remember actually kind of being disappointed that we won. It was like this wasn't a competition.

Winning the novice division was not rewarding. Mark was from a large high school in a major city and had the experience of defeating a group from a rural community which had very different resources available. Mark could not celebrate defeating Regaltown because he recognized the different contexts.

Mark and his bandmates watched groups from other divisions perform and the placement of his in the novice division did not prevent him from making comparisons with groups in other divisions:

It was definitely an unfair comparison, but I was absolutely comparing. They had been marching forever. They had a huge tradition of marching. They had ten times the funding we had. They had ten times the tradition we had. They had stability.

The context, again, served as a means of interpretation. Mark recognized that his school did not have the same assets as some of the larger bands. He perceived that these other groups had more financial resources, established directors who had led the programs for a number of years, and an expectation to perform at a certain level. Even though Mark's band had won its division at the contest, Mark recognized how different his context was than the other schools.

Mark's experiences illustrate how a student from a small or fledgling program might confront context through competitive results. This is not confined to small bands, as students from large and competitively successful programs similarly recognize how their contexts influence competitive success. Tom competed as a part of a high school band with a storied tradition of success at national competitions. His high school band had achieved accolades that were unmatched by all but a select few groups in the nation. However, despite the band's storied tradition, Tom felt that his band's limited financial resources placed them at a competitive disadvantage compared to other national-level ensembles. After graduating, Tom recalled attending a national marching band contest to watch his younger siblings compete. He explained that he was "flabbergasted at the sort of flamboyant props that all these big money programs can afford." With that statement he was clear that he did not identify his band as a "big money program." Tom justified his band's results in terms of the financial resources that they had available. His band could not afford the flamboyant props or field decorations and, in Tom's opinion, consequently fared worse at the competition.

Tom explained his school's context further in relation to the results they achieved. As Tom reminisced about his experience competing he talked about the context of his school and of the contests they were involved with:

I still think they were fair [the contests]. I guess I was just more disappointed than anything else that props and flash were emphasized as much as they were and schools who either couldn't afford to adapt to this change financially, or those who chose not to were at a disadvantage because that's where it seemed the judging was headed to. I'm glad though that we didn't adapt to the flash and money big props because I enjoyed focusing on the music and the meaning of the show rather than special effects. And it could very well be that our band just underperformed musically and mechanically compared to other bands which is the reason why we weren't as consistently judged high. Little money, smaller numbers, and modest props may have just been excuses we made for ourselves. The landscape of these competitions was changing more from "performances" to "shows," and I'm glad in the end we stuck to "performing." (quotation marks written by Tom)

Results and context interact at all levels of competition. In this case, Tom is providing an ensemble student's point of view. He recognized context and, particularly, a connection between financial resources and success.

Tom and Mark both recognized context within competition as students; however, this is not the case for all students. This makes Jessica's, Adam's, and Mark's work that much more important. Jeff's recollection of a good rating that felt bad and Mark's sharing of the victory he experienced that did not feel like a win demonstrated that ratings cannot be understood by their face-value alone. Being in competition, then, included interpreting results. As Mark explained, "you have to establish success based on what you have." For Mark, success meant helping students understand their challenges in achieving a complete instrumentation. For Jessica, success meant wondering if judges could look beyond the small enrollment of her band in adjudication. For Tom, success had to be defined in comparison to other schools with a budget to purchase elaborate props and field coverings. Participants acknowledged context throughout being in competition.

Summary

Results in the form of ratings, rankings, or other contest awards were the most powerful element of being in competition. Every participant wanted to earn positive ratings and be competitively successful, yet the influence of results went beyond their competitive motivations. Results influenced perceptions, both how competitors perceived themselves and how they felt they were perceived by others.

For directors, the connection between results and perceptions was at the forefront of the experience. They viewed competition as influencing how they were seen in and outside of the classroom. Young directors or directors new to a school felt especially that

competitive success proved their competence to students. Outside the classroom, directors connected competitive results to their professional reputation and how they were viewed by other music educators. Each contest result contributed to their competitive record, which established their success within the profession. Beyond reputation, some perceived results as influencing their opportunities for job advancement, mobility, and retention.

Directors recognized the advocacy potential of competitive results. They perceived a connection between community perceptions and the results they achieved in contests. Results were easily communicated and understood among community members. Directors advocated for their groups by using the notoriety gained through competitive results to advocate for additional support, highlight needs of their program, and build relationships with school administrators and stakeholders.

Student reactions to results were powerful and personal. Directors acted specifically to manage student reactions to results in the cases of positive and negative competitive outcomes. Participants shared examples where students reacted inappropriately to positive results by celebrating obnoxiously or displaying “asshole behavior.” They had concerns that students may become complacent with success and lose their motivation. Additionally, participants feared the same with negative results as they attempted to mitigate the negative motivational impacts that a poor rating might have on students.

Students valued winning and in particular the opportunity to pursue distinctions of being elite. For many participants, competing in their state’s marching band championship events was among the highlights of their high school careers. The chance to compete at a major venue and be a part of an elite group of bands was particularly seductive. When participants failed to live up to past success, the hurt was real and long-lasting,

demonstrating how the achievement of competitive success can quickly become a burden on directors and students to remain successful.

Competition had a motivational impact for some students, but the structure of the competition mattered. Results offered a means of comparing groups and that comparison was extremely important to students like Alan. Results were not just scores to strive for; they were an opportunity to compete with and defeat other groups. Students could see results as a means to measure themselves against other bands and worked to improve as a means to beat them.

Finally, a group's context dramatically influenced how participants and students experienced competition. The ease of communicating results had the potential to diminish the unique assets and challenges experienced by participants. In every context, directors had to work to help students interpret results based upon their unique assets. This was particularly the case rural and low enrollment programs. As Mark explained "success has to be defined based on where you are."

Culture

Several participants referenced "culture" when discussing competition. Culture, as it is used here, refers to the expectations, conventions, and customs of the people within each band. Culture was influenced by a number of elements including the teacher's expectations, the ensemble's past competitive experiences, and perhaps most importantly, the students' expectations of each other. For many of the directors, competition served as a means of shaping their band's culture, while for students the culture defined a great deal of their experiences. Directors felt that competition had the potential to motivate students,

encourage students to expect more from one another, and to take their musical studies more seriously.

Competition Changes Culture

James was one of the most vocal participants about how competition played a role in establishing a culture within his group. He viewed competitive success as a characteristic of a well taught and healthy band. By directing students towards competitive victories, James believed they would develop a healthy work ethic and have higher expectations for each other. This belief was largely based on James' high school experiences.

As a high school student, James was part of a successful band program and grew accustomed to the expectations that came with success. As he began his teaching career, he was immediately frustrated that the same expectations had not been instilled in his students. James wanted to build a culture of excellence within the program. For James this meant establishing a state of *tabula rasa*, where he needed to erase the band's history of accomplishments by removing any trophies or banners from the school's past competitions:

I looked at [the students] and I actually took down a lot of the old awards from the 90s and said "ok, and?" I kept them of course. But I said, "we can't live in the past!" I'm about moving forward and respecting the past. They [the past awards] were sitting behind me in the teaching space. They were right behind my head. Why are we proud of these old awards?

James looked to new competitions as a means to create a new band culture. James felt that the blank walls in the classroom would encourage students to work to redecorate the room with their accomplishments. The result would hopefully be a room in which students could celebrate their victories while understanding that they were part of a group that was successful and had high standards.

James explained how competition was the medium he chose to communicate expectations. It was a stimulus he employed intentionally to influence the band's culture:

It's [competition] definitely improved the quality of the ensemble. [Some people believe] the important thing was to not go and change everything, but I disagree with that. If it needs to be changed then it needs to be changed. It was a culture of apathy and that good enough was good enough. Same old [name of school], same old shit. I said "Why? Why are you allowing yourselves to be like that? Why put yourselves in a situation where you aren't being as good as you can be?" There was no pride. The spirit was low, they just sort of did what they wanted.

James found the band's existing culture unsatisfactory and used competitions to foment change. It was James's belief that when students were in competition, they would have a drive and desire to be successful that was not present prior.

As the band improved, James's use of competition expanded. James rewarded success by entering the band in competitions at large venues such as professional and college football stadiums to motivate students further. He explained the progression:

At the beginning it was: let's get them into this competitive vein, let's change the culture, and let's change what this is about. Now it's what experiences can I give these kids now that they're able to appreciate those experiences. At the beginning if I would have brought them to [major college stadium] they would have crashed and burned. You have to kind of tier the experiences that they go through.

James carefully selected competitions based on their motivational potential and felt he had succeeded in reshaping the band's culture. James perceived a cultural shift from pervasive apathy to an environment in which students were striving to perform well on increasingly grander stages.

In addition to carefully selecting competitions, James also embedded messages to his students within the shows they performed. These messages communicated James's perception of the band's culture in a sort of subliminal commentary. James explained some of the themes:

My first year we did a Cirque de Soleil show because I had walked into a circus. The second year we did the flying show: music from *Up*, *One Day I'll Fly Away*, and that. As we're on the upswing, we're starting to go up, we're improving and growing. Last year was the machine, the mechanical show. Building the machine. Continuing to grow further. This year we're doing a show called *Total Eclipse* where we enter the darkness and then the light emerges at the end. So it will be year 4 and we're kind of rising from the ashes that we had before. It's little messages that not all of the kids really get. By the time their juniors and seniors I'll point it out to them.

For James, these carefully chosen messages provided students with his perspective on the entire organization. The shows were performed at each contest so as the students shared the musical materials with audiences and judges they were also sharing James's commentary on their band's culture. The establishment of a competitive culture was not just embedded in the students' band experiences, it was a part of the materials they performed.

As James and I discussed the progression of his ensemble and his efforts to influence the band's culture, I asked him to speculate about what winning might mean to him and the students. James felt that a competitive victory would be evidence that he had successfully shifted the group's culture:

By some act of higher things we end up winning that cup. I have no idea what it would actually mean. I can say hollow words, "we're finally here, we've arrived, look at this, all the hard work pays off." If we are so fortunate to be in that situation, it would be a testament that the students have made the change.

For James and his students, being in competition was a drive for victory, but not for the sake of winning, more so because winning was a characteristic of a band with a healthy culture.

Adam's experience, in many ways, replicates James's use of competition. Adam attended a high school with a very successful marching program. His class was among the first in the school's history to succeed at state marching contests and the band had been a perennial top performer since. As Adam began working as a field instructor or "tech" at local high schools, students inquired about his high school experiences. When they learned

where Adam went to school they would ask him to explain what made his high school band so successful:

The kids would always ask me: “Well, [your school] is always winning, you went there, what did they do differently?” I would tell them: “Here’s when they’re practicing.” They added up all the hours and it was maybe 20 minutes difference. I was like “they’re not practicing more than you,” and they asked then “what’s the difference?” I was like, “well during their stretching block you won’t see people talking or not doing the same thing.” If you were to go to [my high school] and watch them stretch, everyone is doing the exact same thing. Everyone is in the zone for marching band right now. It’s maybe 6 am, but for the next hour everyone is 100% focused and committed, whether or not they want to be. That seems to have been the thing, that it was the group that is doing this for the group. As opposed to it being 12 people trying to pull the other 100. I tried to explain that to them over the course of the year.

Adam differentiated his high school band from the one he was working by describing the different culture in which he performed. For Adam, competition created and maintained high expectations in his band.

Abuse in Competition

Gregory and Christopher each described challenging cultures in which they competed as high school students. Both felt that their bands’ culture was determined by the director and influenced by competitive results. For example, Gregory’s director was seen as an institution within the town. His director had taught for several decades in the same small community and Gregory felt people were willing to excuse the director’s unorthodox teaching strategies because the band had been successful competitively. Gregory described how his director’s actions influenced the band’s culture:

The guy I had as my teacher, I’m going to be perfectly blunt, he was an asshole. He was what you would consider old school. He didn’t care. If you didn’t do what he told you to, he would pitch a fit. There had been a culture that had grown up in that area. The highest we had ever gotten at state was back in the 80s. That’s what he built his reputation on. They went and were very competitive. He was hard and cruel and ruthless. He was demeaning at times to students, but, in all seriousness, that was the life in the 60s and 70s. The band directors got away with whatever they wanted

to. It was regimented. Your first year they just beat the hell out of you. As a first year person coming in, it felt like boot camp. Everything was yes sir, no sir. You did not talk back to the people above you because you were doing push-ups [if you did].

So that's how we grew up. It was so ingrained in the system that I was in that the people that owned the houses off the other side of the creek were band directors and our practice field was on this side road against the creek. The people across the way would have all of the old band people there and they would have a big bon fire and then when [the director] would start cursing us out, they would start cheering him on: "Yeah, go get 'em! Drill it into them!" It was like the movie Varsity Blues with [the director], except it wasn't football, it was marching band.

Gregory attributed his strong negative feelings to his high school band director and the abusive teaching style. For Gregory, being in competition brought mixed meanings. He was proud of the success that his band achieved, but resented the culture within which it occurred.

Despite his mixed feelings, Gregory valued the joy of competitive success above his desires for a healthy learning culture. In the summer between Gregory's junior and senior years of high school the band director retired. A new director was hired and cultivated a different culture, which Gregory felt was a mistake:

We got a new guy in there, and he was competitive on the state level and his style was very different. The problem was how he approached everything. It was very counter-intuitive to how someone who is coming into a 35 to 40-year reign of terror would come in. He tried to change a lot of things off the bat. Which, if the program was in the crapper, could be a good thing. If your program is deteriorating underneath you, then a new person coming in and making changes is a good thing. There's also a bad way to do it.

Gregory would have preferred the former director's leadership for his senior year. Despite competing in what could be viewed as a toxic learning environment, Gregory placed more value on winning. The competitive success was an end that justified the means, even though Gregory perceived the means as abusive. Competition facilitated and validated the culture in

which Gregory learned. For Gregory, if the culture was going to change, it had to do so in a manner that still produced competitive results.

Christopher also had interactions with a challenging director, but unlike Gregory, the competitive success Christopher's band experienced did not excuse the way the band operated and the way he was treated.

We were very competitive. We would do maybe four or five marching shows a year and we would do our concert band season which was all rating festivals. He [Christopher's band director] was very competitive. He could be a tyrant at times. He demanded a lot from us. We came from a really good area of the city and a lot of our students were on lessons. He took competition to a different level. He expected more from us. You know, he would yell at us if we didn't get a certain caption award. He'd go "you guys were better than that. There's no way that you will ever lose to that school again if I have to put my life on it." He was just really mean at times.

I have mixed opinions about my high school experience. I liked going to a competition every Saturday or every other Saturday. I liked hearing judge feedback and meeting other students and hearing what they thought about our program. But I didn't like the whole rehearsal aspect leading up to competition. It was mainly because of the staffing and the ways that they would treat us on the field. It was always about the competition, but never about the students.

Christopher clearly enjoyed competing at the events themselves, but left his high school experience with a great deal of anger towards his experiences. Christopher attributed the negative experiences to his band's director and instructional staff. Christopher considered no longer participating in music after high school, but when he left for college he was relieved to find a university band program that embraced the style of show that he liked, but operated with a culture in which he felt comfortable and safe. For Christopher, being in competition in high school meant a feeling that he described as "being in jail because we're on this field and we can't do anything else and we're subject to this brutal language and the way he talked to us," yet in college he was able to thrive in a healthier musical atmosphere.

Interestingly, Christopher has embraced competitions in his teaching career and been very successful. However, he does not use competitive results to motivate students.

Christopher explained that he has used his former band director as a model of how he will not teach: “I’m not the kind of person that’s going to take it [competition] to the level where I’m demeaning everyone else around me. Some people take competition a little bit too far.”

Christopher has worked to instill a balanced approach to competition so his students will be motivated to work hard but do so in a safe and comfortable environment.

Success as a Burden

As James demonstrated how the introduction of competition might alter the culture of a group that was not competitively successful, Christopher and Gregory’s experiences highlight the potential for abuse. In contrast, Tom provided the perspective of competing as a member of a group with an established successful competitive culture. Tom’s band had achieved competitive notoriety far beyond what Christopher, Gregory or James had ever experienced, and the need to remain successful placed a great deal of stress on students in Tom’s band. Tom’s experiences demonstrated how success can also be a burden.

Tom recalled his early experiences in band and how the expectations of the group were immediately apparent to him:

You had to do a three day, mini-freshman band camp where they taught you how to put your left foot first and walk on your heels and that kind of stuff, but after those three days, you were responsible for being in the right place at the right time, and you were responsible for memorizing your music. It was about taking personal responsibility for yourself from day one and knowing what you needed to know because so many others were depending on me being where I was.

Tom valued the responsibility that he learned as a part of the band and saw that it was an expectation that was consistent throughout the ensemble.

Students in Tom's band approached their performances with a serious disposition that was cultivated by their directors. Tom described the burden of the band's expectations as he shared an instance where he was running late for rehearsal:

I remember hyperventilating in the car as a freshman or sophomore because I was going to be late to rehearsal, because you knew at times, if someone came in late and tried to just sneak in unnoticed, from the press box he [the director] would stop rehearsal, call you out, and make you feel about 2 inches tall. There was such an inordinate feeling of responsibility or fear that at some point it became detrimental.

Tom had seen how other tardy students were treated and feared that he would suffer similarly. For Tom, part of competing was this obligation to the group and fear of publicly letting down his directors and peers.

Tradition influenced the expectations that Tom perceived. He felt an obligation to the legacy of the band. As he competed, Tom considered how his class would compare to prior classes. He explained how as the competitive season concluded in his senior year, he considered his class's legacy:

Legacy was definitely on my mind, and you wanted to be remembered as a class after you left. Going through four years, you'd always hear about certain shows or what those classes were like or achieved. But even then it wasn't about winning, because the director routinely brought up a show, I think he referred to it as the [name of the show] that was probably one of the best musical performances by any of the classes yet they didn't win Grand Nationals. Or one year, there was a torrential downpour right before and during State Finals performance that amid terrible playing and field conditions, it was one of their most solid performances of the year. The directors would routinely bring up stories like that, and in the back of your mind you hoped you would be a "remember-able" or inspirational class or have that kind of performance at some point, whether or not you actually won in the end.

Competition served as a means of defining his class and showing what they contributed to the group. Competitive results were the currency that was valued and the sole means of establishing a legacy. As Tom competed, he felt the burden of his band's storied history and the need for his class to live up to the band's reputation.

Tom's directors and the band's alumni used tradition and legacy as motivational tools. Tom recalled that alumni were particularly vocal in emphasizing competitive results:

It was cool to be in a program that had that much respect in the community but it was also that much more of a let-down when you didn't win. So I didn't win. Nobody has won [the national championship] since [several years ago]. We've been in the finals since the 80s or something, but I mean my senior year we placed 11th out of the 12 finalists. In some ways, they're [alumni] like "your class sucked." People took it really seriously when you compared yourself against a different senior class.

The culture established through the band's competitive history was a burden for Tom and his classmates. This burden was generated by continued success. Without the history of competitive success, the culture of the group may have been dramatically different and concerns such as tradition and legacy may not have been a part of Tom's band experience.

Adam, too, felt the burden of competitive success. Competition changed his band's culture dramatically. While Adam was in high school, his band won their first ever championship. This was a point of pride for Adam, but also became a burden as he explained: "Now that you've got first, tomorrow's got to be better because you want to stay in first." The feeling of striving for success was replaced with a need to preserve the cherished championship position. Adam desperately wanted to continue the band's competitive success and this produced a great deal of anxiety and stress for him in the following years. The victory that he and his bandmates had worked so hard to achieve ended up dominating his band experience in subsequent years. However, the fear of not winning replaced the desire to win.

The burden of success is still present in Adam's high school band after his graduation. His younger siblings also performed in the band and their experiences were similar. Adam explained that the band's continued success had created additional pressure for students. He recalled his brother's band earning second place at the state championship

and the disappointment that followed. Adam recalled how the band's failure to repeat as state champions particularly upset his mother and a number of other band parents. The burden of success permeated Adam's band program well after he had graduated. Students continue to feel the weight of the expectations of their families, community, and each other as they are in competition.

Throughout the experiences of James, Tom, Gregory, and Christopher the influence of competition on culture was evident. Whereas James used competition as a tool to establish expectations other participants provided examples of possible outcomes. Competition was seen as an influential and defining force in each of these bands' cultures. Had Tom's band not had a legacy of success, he may not have worried about how his class contributed to the history of the program. Had Gregory's high school band director not been competitively successful, perhaps the community would have rejected his reprehensible teaching tactics. If Christopher's director had not achieved success in competitions, perhaps Christopher would not have felt like he was "in jail" on the football field. For each of these participants, being in competition took place within a culture focused on competitive success. The culture defined their competitive experiences while competition also worked to influence their bands' cultures.

Summary

Competition was a key element in the culture of each participant's band. Competition created expectations and a desire to achieve results within groups and was seen as a valuable tool based on this potential. Directors chose to compete partly because of the influence it would have on their bands' cultures. They wished to instill high expectations and a positive learning environment, but this was not always the case. Some participants

described abusive and toxic environments in which they competed. Despite the abusive cultures, participants still chose to compete and some even felt that competitive success made the poor treatment worthwhile. Finally, prolonged competitive success often produced an environment with high expectations, but those expectations also added stress to the students' experiences. Students worked to prolong their band's legacy and made sure they lived up to the expectations established by the group. Participants found the environment motivational, but stressful.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed this study's first research question: what is it like to be in competition? This first research question is answered by each of the themes that emerged through this study, which contribute to an image of the phenomenon of being in competition. Themes included tension, planning in competition, results, and culture. Being in competition often meant being in tension. Participants competed with concern for potential deleterious competitive influences on them and their students. Competition could make students complacent, arrogant, or cause them to exhibit "asshole behavior." Being in competition meant confronting the tension between the perceived benefits and challenges of the phenomenon.

Participants were in competition long before and after the actual competitive events took place. The planning process in competition, particularly in regards to custom marching band shows, was exciting, creative, and engaging for directors. Planning in competitive marching bands often began months before the contests and the process was extensive, sometimes involving members of a band's instructional staff, professional arrangers, drill writers, and choreographers. Planning took place away from students who were seen as the

recipients of the designs, but never collaborators in the design process. Directors endeavored to design shows that fit students' unique capabilities and masked musical weaknesses. This was the sole consideration afforded to students through the process of planning.

In competition, planning meant planning to win. Designing a custom show was a creative and competitive endeavor. Directors valued the creative outlet, but were constrained by the need to be competitively successful. The goal of design was to produce a show that would be rewarded with high scores and lauded by adjudicators. As directors designed shows, they did so with the judges' tastes in mind. The competitions fomented the need for the custom shows and simultaneously served as the means of evaluating the creative work.

Competitive results were the most influential aspect of the phenomenon. Results in the form of rankings, ratings, and other awards had particular power because of the public nature of the contests and how easily results were understood by students, parents, administrators, and other stakeholders. Results influenced both directors and students in meaningful ways. Directors perceived a connection between results and their professional reputations, how their band was viewed in the community, and their ability to advance professionally. For the directors, being in competition included demonstrating their competence to other music educators, community members, potential employers, students, and themselves. For students, results had a labeling effect. They took results seriously and were motivated to earn competitive accolades. The rating was central to the competitive experience for students and they particularly valued the opportunity to compare their achievements to students from other schools.

Competitors' context was an important lens for interpreting results. While ratings and rankings were easily understood, they had different meanings depending on the unique assets and challenges of specific ensembles. For directors from rural areas, or who had bands with low enrollment, the challenge was significant. They perceived significant disadvantages in competitions and had to work specifically to mitigate potential negative reactions from their students. Evaluations could focus on perceived deficiencies such as incomplete instrumentation or low enrollment.

Finally, being in competition permeated bands' cultures and defined high school band experiences. Competition was used as a motivational tool that would increase students' efforts, raise expectations, and produce greater musical achievement. However, the culture created through competing also presented challenges. A small number of participants described toxic musical environments which were dominated by competitively successful directors whose behaviors were excused because of the results they produced. Even in bands with sterling reputations and established competitive records, the culture could be challenging as repeated success burdened students and directors to continue to achieve similar competitive accolades.

Competition in high school bands was an immersive phenomenon. It influenced the cultures of bands, persisted long before and after the events took place, and influenced how people viewed themselves, their bands, and how they felt they were viewed by others. The phenomenon influenced decisions that were made throughout the year. Shows were designed, repertoire was selected, results were reacted to, and musical motivations were influenced. For many participants, being in competition was the dominant experience of being in band.

All of these experiences took place as part of planned educational activities. These experiences are part of the curriculum the participants taught and learned through. The following chapter discusses the curricular facets of the phenomenon of competition and how it influences and frames high school band curricula.

CHAPTER 5

UNDERSTANDING COMPETITION THROUGH CURRICULUM

This chapter presents findings related to this study's second research question: how does competition influence or frame curricular decisions for high school bands? These findings are the product of a curricular analysis of the phenomenological data generated through participant interviews. Schubert (1986) advocated for the use of phenomenological data in curriculum inquiry stating that it "provides a perspective on ways to describe and portray lived experience and the deeper meanings that lie behind it" (p. 310). Schubert recommended that phenomenological studies be included as a robust component of curricular inquiry and recognized the manner in which phenomenological data could inform practical inquiry as it was developed by Schwab (1970/1973) in particular.

High school band competition is a curricular phenomenon. Findings suggest that being in competition involved specific curricular decisions, instructional practices, and educational epistemologies. As participants were in competition, their experiences took place as a part of formal educational offerings. Examining the findings through a curricular lens offers insight into how band is taught and the influences competition has on teachers and students.

I employed practical inquiry, a term coined by Joseph Schwab (1970/1973), as a means of examining curricular characteristics of the data. Practical inquiry uses Schwab's (1970/1973) commonplaces of education as an analytical heuristic. Schwab believed that "defensible educational thought must take account of four commonplaces of equal rank: the learner, the teacher, the milieu, and the subject matter" (1973, p. 508-509). By considering each of the commonplaces, and most importantly, the manner in which the commonplaces

interacted (Schubert, 1986), I offer an image of the curriculum that was present through the participants' experiences.

I constructed this chapter using a theoretical framework consisting of four interacting elements. First, Schwab's (1970/1973) commonplaces were used to organize data around the curricular areas of the teacher, learner, subject matter, and milieu. Additional components of the framework were embedded within the specific curricular areas. Within the commonplace of the teacher I used a framework developed by Fentstermacher and Soltis (2009) in their book *Approaches to Teaching*, which discusses the manner in which teachers carry out their work using three contrasting approaches: the executive, facilitator, and liberationist. Next, within the commonplace of the learner, I employed components of a framework established by O'Neill and Senyshyn (2011) that examines how views of learners are specifically related to established learning theories. In particular, I applied the view of the student as a skilled performer, which has roots in behaviorist learning theory. Finally, I examined the data through a Deweyan lens incorporating principles of John Dewey's philosophy related to each of the commonplaces. In this context, Dewey (1902; 1909; 1910; 1938/1997) offers a means of understanding competition as it relates to progressive educational values and practices.

Findings are organized in relation to Schwab's (1970, 1973) commonplaces of education. Within each section, the curricular facets of participants' experiences are presented, concluding with a discussion of the findings through a Deweyan lens. Finally, the chapter summary includes a synthesis of the findings and directly answers the study's second research question.

Understanding Competition through Curriculum: The Teacher

The majority of data generated in this study were offered from the perspective of in-service band directors. Their experiences spoke directly to the work of teachers in competition in two ways: 1) participants shared examples of how they taught within curricula which emphasize competition; and 2) participants shared experiences of how they were taught and competed as high school students themselves. While participants' teaching practices varied, all described teaching in a manner consistent with an executive approach. Fenstermacher and Soltis (2009) explained that the executive-oriented teacher is a "manager of complex classroom processes" (p. 5) and this managerial orientation is common in modern teaching practices. Participants controlled and influenced every facet of the educational and competitive experience. Evidence of the executive approach could be seen in how directors confronted tension, students' reactions to results, the selection and design of musical materials, and the use of competitive results for advocacy purposes. The executive orientation permeated the curricula and, for many of the participants, was a dominant aspect of their band experiences.

Band Directors Teach in Public

The dominance of the executive approach to teaching is evident throughout the participants' experiences, however, it is important to note that there are components of leading a competitive band program that may attract a person with an executive orientation. Additionally, the manner in which teachers are evaluated and perceived in competitive events may additionally foment the executive approach. For example, the public aspect of band competitions can portray directors as the public faces of their groups. Contest and

festival results were published in newspapers; accessible online; and known to parents, administrators, and community members. Participants perceived that the public viewed their work through the lens of their bands' competitive success. The manner in which contests reflected personally on directors may have promoted the executive traits of control and responsibility for the outcomes. Participants may have felt compelled to be proactive and demonstrative in their teaching because their personal reputations were influenced by the competitive outcomes.

The Executive at Work

Educators operating from the executive-orientation see the classroom as a place of complexity that requires them to provide order. Fenstermacher and Soltis (2009) explain that executives:

make decisions about what people will do, when they will do it, how long it is likely to take, what standard of performance will be attained, and what happens if these standards are not met. (p. 12)

Executives are results oriented. In the case of band competitions, the contest outcomes in the form of ratings, rankings, or awards provided directors with a clear metric by which to assess their work. Examples of this orientation could be seen in Roger's experiences as he explained that "you are what your record says you are" and Jeff's discussion of the "superior culture" that existed in his area. Each of them approached competing with a clear vision of the results they wished to achieve and both discussed using results from contests as formative feedback on their teaching. Participants often implemented adjudicators' recommendations with the hope of improving their band's competitive results.

Managing Learners

Teachers influenced every element of students' experiences in band. Their intervention was particularly clear in regards to students' reactions to contest results. Directors valued the potential motivational influences that the contests could provide, but were concerned that competitions could negatively influence students' attitudes toward band or their efforts in the music classroom. They felt tension about the experiences students would have and responded to that tension by attempting to manage students' feelings regarding their competitive experiences.

Participants managed student expectations deliberately. They developed specific strategies to influence band members and implemented them as they saw fit. For example, Andrea immediately encouraged students to reflect on performances before results were announced. James guided students to react appropriately to positive outcomes and Mark helped students contextualize results based upon their school's rural setting. Directors recognized the influence that competition might have on students. Participants' executive-orientations led them to treat the students' reactions as a classroom process requiring management.

Managing Subject Matter

Directors took an active role in the selection and creation of subject matter. They perceived a direct connection between subject matter decisions and competitive outcomes and approached this part of their job seriously. Executive-oriented teachers were motivated to manage resources to achieve goals. Subject matter materials such as custom show designs, repertoire, or other musical materials were all elements to be organized and controlled.

Participants' management of subject matter was most visible in the marching band show design process. Several participants relished the opportunity to design a show and often went about the process unilaterally. For example, Jeff viewed his design as the central focus of the marching season. He carefully selected a show theme, crafted arrangements, and hired professional drill writers and choreographers to assist as needed. Jeff managed every element of the design and did so completely removed from the students. Students were only privy to the design when it was time for them to begin preparing for performances. When the band competed, Jeff was particularly invested in the outcomes because the results were based in part on the materials which he created.

Similarly, James tightly managed the shows he developed. He embedded subliminal messages to the students within the show designs and spent a great deal of time crafting the arrangements they would perform. James revealed the hidden messages selectively to students as a means of sharing his view of how the group was progressing. James's need to control the subject matter was most evident in the aftermath of his decision to share design responsibilities with his assistant director. He later lamented that his decision made him feel less engaged with the students' performances and less invested in the performances.

Other participants shared James's need to control subject matter decisions. While not every director specifically arranged their band's music or designed the band's formations, each was in careful control of hiring and managing those who performed those services. In instances where other professionals were contracted to develop materials, it was the director who hired them and communicated the design needs of the group. Like an executive managing a project, directors closely managed the work of any outside vendors they

employed. Even though the work was being completed by hired professionals, the directors were still very much in control.

Managing the Environment

Directors exerted a great deal of control over the educational environment in which they taught. They were particularly concerned with the ambiance of their bands. Ambiance relates to what Schubert (1986) might describe as the psychosocial atmosphere of an educational environment. This includes facets such as the “*esprit de corps* of a group of teachers and learners” or the “social, cultural, and psychological aspects of the learning situation” (p. 295). When discussing environmental facets of their bands, participants most often used the term culture, and competitions were a major influence on bands’ cultures. Directors judiciously introduced and emphasized competition to produce changes in the psychosocial atmosphere, ambiance, or culture of their groups.

The way in which directors used and prioritized competition significantly influenced the educational environment. Competition was seen as a catalyst for establishing high expectations. James, in particular, described competitive success as being emblematic of establishing a positive learning environment. He explained that contest victories would be “a testament that we had made the change,” referring to shifts in the group’s culture. Competition was a core element in James’s learning environment and he carefully calculated and managed how students competed. Competition was yet another facet to be managed by the executive-oriented director. James would carefully select what contests to attend, what venues the students might visit, and hope to achieve specific results with his decisions. He carefully manipulated the culture of his band; competition was one of his primary means of influence.

For several participants, the educational environment was influenced significantly by the actions, mannerisms, and disposition of their teachers. While most of the participants described positive memories of their high school band experiences, Gregory and Christopher each described troubling and abusive elements of their time in band. In both instances, they attributed the toxic environment to specific teachers. They found their directors demanding and overly-focused on competitive results. Their directors' behaviors defined the learning environment, further illustrating the teacher's powerful influence in these educational situations.

Gregory's and Christopher's experiences were unique among the participants. The more common orientation was one of caution and tension. In fact, participants would more often influence the environment through contradictory messages about competition than through any type of aggressive teacher behaviors or questionable teaching practices. For example, Tom described being in a competitive band in which his directors often told the group that winning was not important, yet Tom felt the directors cared a great deal about the band's competitive success. Roger told students that contest scores did not matter, yet he could recall past results down to the tenth of a point and James would encourage students to be proud of their victories, but admonish them for overly-exuberant celebrations. Directors' messages to students were contradictory. However, these contradictions further demonstrate the degree of control that directors attempted to exert. In each instance, the opposing message was designed to control or influence students. James wanted his students to remain motivated and celebrate appropriately, Tom's directors wanted to prevent students from being overly-invested in contest results, and Roger attempted to diminish the disappointment of the band's low ratings.

Summary: Commonplace of the Teacher

Participants in this study overwhelmingly expressed an executive-orientation. The executive approach may align with the demands of leading a competitive high school band because the size of the groups and extensive instructional resources demand administrative attention. However, the teachers' control went far beyond managing resources. Participants actively managed learners' behaviors, reactions, and exposure to competition. They tightly controlled the subject matter that was introduced to students and worked unilaterally in the development of learning materials. Finally, directors acted specifically to control and influence the learning environment. Competition was a tool to establish a culture of high-expectations, yet it also had the potential to create unhealthy learning environments. Directors' concerns about the potential negative influence of competition caused them to intervene in the environment in contradictory ways ranging from contextualizing negative results to telling students that competitive success was unimportant while emphasizing the specific results that had been achieved.

Applying a Deweyan Lens to the Commonplace of the Teacher

The vision of teaching that Dewey promotes is one in which the teacher acts as an equal in the learning environment to guide and direct students in the pursuit of their curiosities. As Dewey (1938/1997) explained, students and teachers need to be seen as a part of a single social group, not as a resource to be managed:

When pupils were a class rather than a social group, the teacher acted largely from the outside, not as a director of process of exchange in which all had a share. When education is based upon experience and educative experience is seen to be a social process, the situation changes radically. The teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on that of leader of group activities. (p. 38)

Dewey's words could serve as a powerful contrast to the executive approach to teaching that dominated these curricula emphasizing competition.

Directors acted as an external influence on students throughout the curriculum, but particularly in regards to how results were viewed and interpreted. Teachers were motivated to achieve results and viewed the results as evaluative of their work. The teachers were not discussing competition as something they did with their students, but more so were describing events where they were evaluated based upon what they could train students to perform. Jeff and Matt each described their students as “doing what is asked of them,” which demonstrated the significant control teachers exerted in these curricula. The learning environment was not a social process in which the students had autonomy in their musical actions. In each of these situations, the teacher discounted the students' desires or interests by tightly controlling the learning experience. Where Dewey (1938/1997) emphasized a collaborative relationship between the teacher and student, the participants' experiences portray directors acting unilaterally within the classroom with little consideration of the students' wishes.

Teachers in competitive scenarios often took responsibility for the competitive results in an effort to shield students from feeling responsible for the ratings or rankings their bands earned. As Mark explained, when students “get a low marking in something, it's not their fault. It's not something they did wrong. It's something I didn't teach.” However, as the teachers attempted to protect their students, they may not have acted in the students' best interests. They were preventing students from taking ownership of their growth. As Dewey explained, “growth is not something that is done to them [students], it is something they do” (1916, p. 48). From Dewey's perspective students should feel in control of and

responsible for their learning. By diminishing the students' responsibility for their performances, participants were negating the students' role in the classroom.

Dewey believed that teachers should integrate subject matter that builds upon students' existing curiosities in an effort to "keep alive the sacred spark of wonder and fan the flame that already glows" (1908, p. 208). This requires teachers to carefully consider subject matter decisions based upon students' existing curiosities and interests. The process was the opposite in these curricula as teachers made the subject matter decisions and delivered the materials to the students.

Directors described subject matter decisions as an altruistic venture in which they developed materials to be given to students. James discussed how he showed care for his students in show design, Andrea described the "reveal" of the show for the students in the spring, and Roger even compared an arrangement to a "Christmas present" opened by the students. This process does not respect the "spark of wonder" to which Dewey (1908) referred. It was a process done for students, but with little consideration of their desires and interests. Subject matter was perceived as a present, but the students had little say in what they were given. Participants viewed students as a group *for* which materials were developed rather than a group *with* whom curriculum could be constructed.

Dewey advocated for education that was heavily based in experience. Competition was a key experience within the participants' curricula and directors took an active role in managing the characteristics of competitive experiences. As Dewey (1938/1997) explained, an important job of teachers is to manage students' experiences:

The greater maturity of experience which should belong to the adult as educator are put to him in a position to evaluate each experience of the young in a way in which the one having the less mature experience cannot do. It is then the business of the educator to see in what direction is heading." (p. 22)

The series of competitions represented the teachers' role in directing students' experiences. Directors carefully considered the contests they entered. For example, as James gradually included performances at major venues such as large college and professional football stadiums, he chose contests based on the designations his band might earn. Similarly, several participants discussed vivid memories associated with state marching band championships and the thrill they experienced as they worked to be crowned the best band in their state. Each experience was considered and selected specifically by the teachers. Special designations were offered through contests to motivate students and recognize achievements. State championship contests offered a series of events that directors could incentivize their bands to work towards. In each instance, directors carefully chose the incentives and accolades that their bands would pursue, controlling students' motivations.

There are clear contrasts between Dewey's recommendations for teachers and the manner in which participants taught and were taught. Teachers in these curricula operated apart from students. They developed and selected subject matter with little consideration of the students' curiosities and interests; took responsibility for the students' performances, diminishing students' learning as acts of following instructions; and carefully managed students' motivation through selecting specific contests and accolades to pursue. Throughout the curricula, the teachers acted as members of an external social class rather than being embedded with the students in a collaborative learning environment. Not one participant engaged in Dewey's recommendations to learn about their students and act based on what they discovered in the context of competitive-oriented curricula. Students' roles were to receive the subject matter that was delivered to them, act in accordance with their directors' instructions, and pursue the accolades selected by their instructors.

Understanding Competition through Curriculum: The Learner

To understand curriculum, it is important to see how the learner is represented and viewed in curriculum decisions. Schwab (1973) recognized the learner as the “beneficiary of the curricular operation” (p. 502) and emphasized that students should have a voice in curricular decisions. Learners’ perspectives were represented within the data in several ways. Two participants’ sole experiences with competition took place from the perspective of the learner as they had never worked as music educators. Additionally, the participants who had experienced competition as directors also frequently discussed their personal experiences as high school students.

To better understand the commonplace of students in relation to competition, I applied a framework developed by O’Neill and Senyshyn (2011) that pairs views of music students with learning theories. While the framework offers three contrasting views, findings demonstrate a single dominant view of the learner in competition: the skilled performer. This view is heavily rooted in behaviorist teaching methods and emphasizes the development of performing skill, a specific set of expectations, and a dependence on the teacher for learning to occur.

Emphasis on Skill

The primary goal for students in competition was to perform repertoire successfully. Contest results were based in students’ ability to demonstrate the skills necessary to perform the selected repertoire. Contests evaluated only the skills that students developed in regards to the performance viewed by adjudicators. Contests provided no greater insight into the students’ musical learnings beyond skill development. Consequently, as directors made subject matter decisions, their lone concern regarding students was how their skills related to

the technical demands of the potential repertoire. The curriculum was designed with the intent to match students' capabilities with demands of musical works. For example, in the marching band show design process, repertoire was considered based upon the affordances and constraints presented by the students' skillsets. Affordances might include particularly strong instrumentalists such as an advanced saxophonist who might be featured as a soloist or a brass section's ability to play particularly well in tune. Constraints would represent musical elements that might be avoided such as music emphasizing the extended range of the trumpet if the band did not have a strong performer on that instrument, or works that might feature the trombone section when the band had few low brass players. For example, James described the strength of his tuba section allowing him to write more challenging bass lines and Jeff explained that his woodwinds had the facility to play scalar runs effectively. In each instance, student assets related to skill, rather than their curricular needs as learners, were the basis for subject matter decisions.

In curricula that included competition, rehearsals emphasized drill and repetition. Students' skills were considered in the planning process and specific drills would be implemented in rehearsals to address students' deficiencies. Participants' emphasis on skill prioritized a singular instructional model, the teacher-centered rehearsal in which students followed directors' instructions and guidance through the repertoire being performed. In fact, the only variation in instruction was the use of sectionals in addition to full ensemble rehearsals. Sectionals offered the opportunity for directors, or members of their bands' instructional staff, to work with a subset of the band and focus on instrument-specific skill development. The emphasis on skill made the use of other instructional models unlikely.

Directors were unlikely to solicit student opinions or facilitate class discussions because their focus was the efficient development of skill through drill and repetition.

The emphasis on skill development could be seen clearly in contest rubrics. These rubrics frequently provided scores for musical skills such as intonation, rhythmic accuracy, balance and blend, and tone. The scores and feedback provided by adjudicators emphasized students' development of skill as it was delineated on the contest rubrics. For example, the band curriculum Alan, as a student, experienced relied on contest scores and adjudicator feedback. Alan's directors would implement adjudicator recommendations directly into their rehearsal plans. If a judge commented on intonation, then tuning exercises would be added to that week's rehearsals. If a judge commented on the snare drummers' use of the same stickings, then the percussion instructor would address sticking directly with the students. The competitions had a lasting curricular influence. Each adjudicator tape had the potential to delineate weeks of instruction. However, the tapes only addressed what was observable through the performance, and therefore performance was the only musical learning that was discussed. Given that the competitions emphasized students' skill, directors' focus on adjudicator feedback resulted in curriculum centered on students' development of performance technique.

Expectations of the Learner

Viewing the learner as a skilled performer established participants' expectations of students. O'Neill and Senyshyn (2011) explain that when skills are prioritized, learners are expected to be:

- (a) compliant and capable of following direct instructions to achieve a specified outcome, (b) a novice in need of training or direct instruction to develop the necessary skills for achieving a successful performance, and (c) an accurate producer

of written notation. (p. 20)

Each expectation was represented in the participants' experiences. While the topic of written notation was never specifically addressed, traditional staff notation was the lone manner in which musical materials were shared with students. In the following section I will discuss how these curricula emphasized compliance and direct instruction.

Compliant and capable of following instruction. The learner as skilled performer was asked to act passively and react compliantly in reaction to directors' instructions in these curricula. Participants described performances as examples of students doing what they had been told to do, emphasizing that students' performances were the result of the directors' or staff members' instruction. For example, Jeff described his teaching goals in competition as getting students to "do what is asked of them" or "perform their roles correctly." The key task for learners in Jeff's curriculum was to develop the necessary skills to perform the subject matter Jeff had selected. Similarly, Mark explained the role of direct instruction in his teaching as he reduced students' performances to "them doing what I told them to do." Participants viewed students' actions as the result of the directors' instruction rather than a product of students' learning. For participants, the learning process was one of students following instructions and developing skills based upon what they were told. The directors were providing the stimulus to which the students supplied the appropriate response. The most successful learners in these examples were those who complied with and followed instructions effectively.

A novice in need of training. Viewing students as skilled performers emphasizes that their learning is dependent on teachers. The learning process is based in transmission of expertise from the teacher to the learner and is akin to the "banking concept of education,"

in which “education becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor” (Freire, 1970, p. 51). From this perspective, students are not responsible for their learning or skill development. The teacher fulfills this role. In curricula including competition, this elevates the teachers’ responsibilities. If students’ learning is dependent on teachers’ work, then teachers are solely responsible for the results, rankings, and distinctions that groups earn. Directors can be seen as responsible for the success, or are blamed for the failures, of their bands.

Directors frequently diminished students’ level of responsibility for the competitive results their bands earned. This occurred in cases of both competitive success and failure. For example, Mark explained that students’ performances were the result of them successfully doing what they have been told:

anything students do is because it’s what I’ve told them to do and what I’ve taught. So if they get a low marking in something it’s not their fault. It’s not something that they did wrong.

In this instance, Mark was attempting to deflect any blame for a poor performance from students. In doing so, Mark emphasized his dominant role in the classroom. He was the expert who made the performance; the students were simply the novice recipients of his instructions. The contest, then, served as a display of the extent to which Mark was successful in transmitting the necessary skills to students.

In contrast to directors claiming responsibility for students’ actions on stage, students viewed themselves as responsible for the level of performance they achieved. Numerous examples existed of students taking results personally and attributing the outcomes directly to their efforts or abilities. For example, Michaela’s students took pride in their accomplishment upon winning a gold rating, James’s students celebrated exuberantly in

recognition of their work, and Gregory drank his chilled milk and “basked in his glory” as he left a state championship performance. These examples reflect students’ investment in results, even if the manner in which they were instructed indicated the opposite.

While I have problematized the view of students as skilled performer, no participant indicated any type of frustration, disappointment, or desire to shift how students were considered in band curricula. This may be a testament to the pervasiveness of how directors view students in this manner throughout much of modern band education. Each of the participants were taught in this manner and it is likely that they expected to be treated in this manner. Had any curriculum included an alternative instructional strategy, prioritized student choice and interests, or emphasized students as collaborators, it would have been a radical departure from what directors and students had grown accustomed to in band instruction. Participants chose to teach as they were taught, it is unsurprising that no one sought alternatives.

Stimulus and Response

O’Neill and Senyshyn (2011) aligned the skilled performer view with a behaviorist orientation to learning. Students were taught in a manner in which directors carefully added elements to the educational environment, including competition, with the goal of generating specific responses from students. In aligning with a behaviorist paradigm, competitions function as stimuli with students’ increased engagement and effort serving as the desired response.

Competition is perhaps the best example of a stimulus in these curricula. For several participants, competition was a tool to motivate students. They felt the addition of the competition, or stimulus, would produce responses in the form of higher expectations from

students, greater engagement in band, and increased levels of practice and effort. Competition offered a motivational force that the directors alone could not provide. Students' response to the stimulus even surprised some of the participants. For example, Michaela commented that she did not anticipate the psychological effects of competition such as her students taking the results personally and viewing the ratings as labels of their abilities. Her students reacted strongly to competition and as the band improved it began to earn positive ratings. Michaela was able to use the results to validate the students' efforts as she explained "see, someone else said you are good." The adjudicators' validation was a more powerful stimulus than Michaela could provide through her own praise of the students.

The motivational impact that competition would have on students was both the most common reason that directors chose to compete and one of their most significant concerns. This tension that directors experienced so commonly related directly to how competition would stimulate students and potentially result in undesirable outcomes. The stimulus of competition was tightly controlled and managed by the directors. They had to manage how students would respond to the stimulus carefully in an attempt to make sure they were incentivizing the correct response. Depending on students' reactions, directors could adjust how they emphasized competitive results and how they motivated students. It was a careful calculus in which directors attempted to influence student behavior and motivation.

Complementary to the Executive Teacher

The executive teacher orientation (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2009) and view of the learner as skilled performer (O'Neill & Senyshyn, 2011) are complementary. The skilled

performer requires management and is dependent on leadership. Executives want to lead and manage. To the executive, the learning environment is filled with complex processes and assets to be manipulated in the pursuit of pre-determined goals. In a competitive curriculum, contest results were goals and the learners were variables to be managed in pursuit of the desired ends.

Applying a Deweyan Lens to the Commonplace of the Learner

Dewey's (1902) view of the learner contrasts with the skilled performer (O'Neill & Senyshyn, 2011) view articulated by many of the participants. Dewey viewed the learner as a key influence on curriculum: "the child is the starting point, the center, and the end" (1902, p. 9). Contrary to viewing the learner based upon the skills that they bring to the classroom, Dewey advocated for the consideration of the learner's curiosities, interests, and musical tastes. Participants discussed few instances in which they engaged in this manner.

Educators subscribing to Dewey's perspectives would take particular issue with directors' expectations of learners in curricula emphasizing competition. Dewey (1938/1997) prioritized the influence of the learner in learning situations:

No point in the philosophy of progressive education is sounder than its emphasis upon the importance of the participation of the learner in the formation of the purposes which direct his activities in the learning process, just as there is no defect in traditional education greater than its failure to secure the active cooperation of the pupil in construction of the purposes involved in his studying. (p. 67)

Viewing the learner as the passive recipient of the curriculum embodies the traditional defect that Dewey (1938/1997) derides. Depending on the teacher for learning, prioritizing compliance to instructions, and the lack of agency and autonomy are all antithetical to Dewey's ideals. When Mark and Jeff explained that students were "doing what is asked of

them” they were emphasizing the teacher’s dominance and the students’ compliance. In their classrooms, the learner had no ability to form and direct their activities.

Directors felt responsible for the students’ performances and felt competitions were a reflection of their teaching rather than of what students had learned. The students were simply following instructions, an orientation that would be particularly problematic to Dewey. Directors relied heavily on direct instruction within their teaching. They carefully led rehearsals in which students responded to directions and were rarely provided a degree of autonomy. This situation is similar to Dewey’s (1900) cookbook analogy in which he questioned the efficacy of cooking courses that emphasized following recipes:

“Why do we bother with this? Let’s follow a recipe in a cookbook.” The teacher asked the children where the recipe came from, and the conversation showed that if they simply followed this they would not understand the reasons for what they were doing. (1900, p. 38)

The outcome from these cooking lessons was students demonstrating their abilities to follow instruction but little learning about cooking was evident. If the directors’ instructions are seen as a recipe to successful performance, the same scenario may occur. The students may perform well yet have a shallow understanding of what they accomplished.

Stimulus and Response

Participants used competition as a motivational stimulus throughout the curricula. It was seen as a means to influence students to work harder, be more invested, and take more pride in their musical studies, yet in each instance where it was introduced, directors did so without consulting the students. Motivating students is a common educational concern and Dewey (1900/1943) offered specific advice, as he explaining that “the child is already intensely active, and the question of education is the question of taking hold of his activities” (p. 43). Perhaps the best means of motivating students is to redirect their existing interests

rather than attempting create interest anew. The directors who used competition as a motivational tool introduced a new stimulus to direct students' efforts. While participants may have been taking advantage of students' existing competitive inclinations, in most instances they were introducing competition in a learning environment which had included it prior to their actions. In fact, with few exceptions, the manner in which competitions, musical experiences, and musical repertoire were selected excluded the students' viewpoints. The directors chose to interest students in new stimuli rather than redirect the curiosity that was already present.

Summary: Commonplace of the Learner

Viewing these experiences through a Deweyan lens highlights how curricula including competition encourage teachers to dominate classrooms and support a limited view of the student. Participants' emphasis on skill and expectations of compliance may situate learners as dependent on the teacher. The Deweyan view of the learner prioritizes curiosity and agency, yet the competitive outlook emphasizes the skills that learners must develop to achieve a goal. Perhaps the biggest consequence for competitive curricula then is that the learner is not the "starting point, the center, and the end," (Dewey, 1902, p. 9), as the goals are already established.

Competitions remove the opportunity for learners to decide the ends to which they wish to work. Competitions limit goals by providing a scant array of outcomes such as first, second, and third place; or ratings such as superior and excellent. When learning is directed towards the achievement of these goals, a panoply of other objectives become unavailable. For instance, students may be interested in a particular composer's work, they may enjoy comparing and contrasting their repertoire with another work they are familiar with or they

may be more interested in the historical context of a piece than the technical demands of their particular part. These hypothetical student interests are incomplete, yet represent areas of study that are closed off in curricula emphasizing competitions. I am not arguing that students should study music in each of these ways but rather suggesting that curricula emphasizing competition limit such engagement. A focus on competitive goals leaves few to no opportunities for students to direct their own learning or seek musical understandings that are not directly related to the narrow set of skills assessed in contests.

Understanding Competition through Curriculum: Subject Matter

Competition is a curricular choice that influences a number of subject matter decisions. Schwab explained that subject matter is the “provocative objects and events which serve as catalysts of curricular activity” (1972, p. 509). Competition was a provocative object and the manner in which it promoted interactions among the commonplaces permeated the curricula in which it was included.

Competition as Curriculum

Engaging in competitions was a required component of only one participant’s curriculum, however, all chose to compete. Some participants introduced competition to their programs, while others opted to continue competing in programs with established competitive traditions. The choice to compete was curricular in nature, as the contests represented significant events that students would prepare for and attend. For each music teacher participant, however, the choice to compete was more complex than a binary decision. They had to select where they would compete, which contests they might attend, the potential benefits of different contests, and an array of other variables. Directors had the

power to not only decide if their bands would compete, but also where, how, and what awards and distinctions they might pursue.

Competition choices were influenced by a number of factors such as logistics and the potential awards that could be won. Logistical concerns included travel expenses and other costs associated with attending a competition. For example, Roger listed potential costs for his band to attend a contest including bus rental, meals, hotel accommodations, registration fees, and rehearsal space. As Roger selected competitions, he had to factor all the financial needs associated with participation. His subject matter decisions were constrained by his program's financial resources.

Beyond logistics, participants selected competitions specifically for desired competitive outcomes. Not all competitions were the same, and a contest result could be more meaningful if it was earned at a major event such as a state championship or at a contest that awarded special distinctions. The awards and distinctions available through contests differentiated the events and were effective in attracting bands. For example, Jeff explained that if he participated in his state's marching and concert band championships his group could earn the designation of "honor band of [the state]." In Jeff's opinion, this would be the sole reason for participating in that event. Since he perceived that his band would not earn the ratings needed to achieve the honor band designation, Jeff chose other contests for his students. Beyond the special awards and designations, directors would calculate how their band might fare at events prior to attending and select events where they were likely to earn the best result. These directors wanted to do well at the contests and by carefully considering the bands they would be competing against they could better ensure a positive result for their group.

Competition Influencing Subject Matter

Once the choice to compete had been made, subsequent subject matter decisions were made with competition as a significant consideration. Some contests mandated that specific subject matter be presented such as concert band events that provided required repertoire lists, while other contests, particularly in marching bands, allowed for a great deal of flexibility in the musical materials performed.

Marching band shows may offer the best example of how competition influenced other curricular decisions. Directors perceived a connection between custom-designed materials and higher competitive scores. They valued the opportunity to develop shows for their bands, but also felt it was a requirement to be competitively successful.

The drive for competitive results influenced the decisions made within the design process. As Jessica explained, “I’d always center my marching shows around trying to always win.” Her subject matter choices were focused on achieving a competitive result. Both James and Jeff described similar feelings as they explained how their ability to match arrangements to the musical attributes of their ensembles would result in higher scores for their groups. Their subject matter choices were competitive decisions. Each piece they considered or formation they designed was developed with adjudicators’ opinions in mind. Directors’ decisions were constrained by the drive for results. Participants would not program a piece of music that might be viewed negatively by judges even if they felt it had significant educational merit. The primary focus of the curriculum became pleasing the judges as much as educating students.

What is Included in Subject Matter

The manner in which participants considered subject matter was focused on materials, or specific items that could be procured and brought to students. Subject matter related to nouns, not verbs. Subject matter decisions emphasized what would be taught to students, but participants never described how materials would be taught or to whom the materials were being taught. Curricular materials were narrowly conceived as a set of repertoire to be learned. Participants did not discuss concepts or understandings beyond the skills needed to perform the music. How the material would be taught was already established as participants' instructional practices conformed largely with traditional band teaching methods emphasizing teacher-centered rehearsals in which repertoire was drilled and practiced. Students were of little consideration as they were simply the recipients of the materials. For participants, subject matter in competition referred to the events planned and the musical materials designed or selected. Even a complex marching show could be broken down into a checklist of materials: drill had to be written (or a drill writer hired), rights for arrangements must be purchased, arrangements had to be completed, choreography for colorguard had to be written, and a competitive schedule had to be established. The planning process was one of managing resources and procuring the needed materials, skills closely related to the core competencies of executive-orientated teachers (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2009).

Executive and Skilled Performer Orientations Complementary with Subject Matter in Competitive Curricula

The executive orientation to teaching (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2009) and view of the students as skilled performers compliment how participants developed subject matter in

competitive curricula. That subject matter was narrowly viewed as materials to be purchased or created, fits directly with the executive mindset. Executives align resources with needs. To the teacher as executive, subject matter selection is a process of determining and procuring the materials needed to be competitively successful. Similarly, students were largely absent from the subject matter development process. Students' absence from subject matter deliberations makes sense when they are viewed solely as skilled performers. The executive's job is to deliver the materials to students and then teach them how to perform the selected music. This does not require student involvement. Students are missing from the process until they receive the materials to be performed. They are, like the subject matter, another resource to be used to achieve desired results.

Applying a Deweyan Lens to the Commonplace of Subject Matter

Dewey (1902, 1909, 1916) did not write specifically about music education and would not have specific recommendations as to repertoire for students to perform or skills for students to develop; however, he would have strong recommendations for how subject matter should be considered. Dewey (1938/1997) believed that the learner had to be central in the subject matter decisions as he highlighted that:

no point in the philosophy of progressive education is sounder than its emphasis upon the importance of the participation of the learner in the formation of the purposes which direct his activities in the learning process. (p. 67)

For Dewey, subject matter development ought to be collaborative. The learner is seen as curious, capable, and having specific goals and objectives. The teacher, then, reacts to provide students with the necessary subject matter materials to assist them in achieving their goals.

The manner in which subject matter was developed in these curricula was far from collaborative. Participants viewed students narrowly, considering only their capabilities and skills. Directors developed subject matter away from students and saw them as recipients of the materials rather than as collaborators in the learning task.

Understanding Competition through Curriculum: Milieu

The milieu, or educational environment in competitive curricula should be considered broadly (Schwab, (1973). The milieu includes the physical space in which students learned at school as well as the various venues and locations at which students performed. These competitive bands performed in public and traveled frequently. The environments in which they performed and learned included contest venues, classrooms, and community events.

Schubert (1989) described the educational environment using terms such as ambiance and psychosocial atmosphere. In this sense, the milieu is also characterized by attitudes, feelings, and perceptions that are perceived physically and felt intuitively and socially by students and teachers.

Participants manipulated and controlled the milieu significantly. The choices they made impacted both the ambiance of the learning environment as well as the physical characteristics of the learning space. I have organized these findings into sections related to the physical spaces as well as the psychosocial atmosphere and ambiance in competitive curricula.

Physical Spaces

Bands find themselves in a number of physical spaces as they compete. Contests provide unique environments at which students perform in addition to their rehearsal venues

at school. Participants used major venues such as college and professional football stadiums to motivate and excite students. Venues were an effective tool for motivating students. Both Tom and Gregory remembered the locations at which they competed. For marching bands, events taking place at professional football stadiums were particularly memorable. The stadiums had bright lights, a capacity for thousands of spectators, and video boards that broadcast their shows live as the bands performed. The physical space highlighted the importance of the contest participants attended: a national championship event for Tom and a state championship for Gregory. The upcoming performance at the major venue motivated Tom and Greg as they prepared throughout the season.

Similarly, James described his contest decisions as based heavily in the motivational impact of the venues. James gradually introduced his bands to larger arenas, starting first with a contest at a local college stadium and later a large professional football venue. He felt that the students would perceive that their improvements were being rewarded by larger scale venues for contests. The major contests served as motivational culminating events for the students. Directors' choices of venues were a means of manipulating the educational environments to achieve a motivational end.

Ambiance

Competition influenced the ambiance or psychosocial atmosphere of the learning environment profoundly. Directors felt students would react strongly to competition and used contests as a stimulus for establishing desired expectations. They saw competition as a means to foment cultural changes such as increasing students' expectations of one-another, elevating the students' sense of investment in the band, and increasing the pride students felt

associated with their performances. In many instances, the directors believed that competition was effective in producing the desired cultural changes.

Directors reported that students' attitudes changed as they competed. They were motivated to do well at the contests and in many instances worked to specifically achieve competitive results. James and Michaela each described examples where students felt validated by contest results. The awards that bands received were a valued recognition of the students' efforts. Students' expectations of each other increased as they competed, a result that both Michaela and James wanted to achieve. Evidence of students' increasing expectations was subtle, but meaningful. James discussed that students had become reluctant to miss rehearsals and quickly joined in activities when they had to arrive late. Michaela's students specifically articulated their heightened expectations at student-only meetings which were led by upperclassmen in the ensemble. Similarly, Jeff and Jessica used competition as a means to make stylistic changes in the types of music their bands performed. They worried that students might respond to their proposed repertoire changes negatively and used competitions as a justification for their changes. The students were more open to change because they saw a connection between the changes that Jeff and Jessica made and competitive success. The culture within their bands adapted to expect a different type of repertoire, a show that would be more competitively viable and in line with the directors' stylistic preferences.

However, competition also had the potential to facilitate a challenging environment. Christopher and Gregory described their high school experiences as "brutal" and "abusive." Their high school band directors used extreme teaching tactics such as late night rehearsals, verbal admonishment, and forcing students to do push-ups or other calisthenics if they were

not compliant with instructions. Directors used these tactics to achieve competitive goals. Likewise, James described being ashamed of the manner in which he treated students after winning a contest. His actions were in no way abusive but he recalled that he “did not handle myself with class” and that his attitude pervaded the educational environment. Finally, Adam and Tom each described the continued success of their bands as burdensome. Each had to compete with the stress of upholding their band program’s reputation.

Findings suggest that competition influences the educational environment, but in different ways. For some participants, positive results produced proud students who felt great about their efforts and achievements, whereas for others competition was burdensome and stress-inducing. Competition influenced how students felt and how directors acted, perhaps encouraging behaviors that directors regretted. In each instance, the director was at the center of the environment and, in many examples, was the one who had selected the competitions the bands attended and the ends that students pursued. Competition had a remarkable effect on the environments, but its influence was only possible if introduced and encouraged by the directors who carefully managed every facet of their bands.

Applying a Deweyan Lens to the Commonplace of Milieu

Dewey (1916) emphasized that one of the primary roles played by the teacher is the management of the educational environment. The milieu is crucial in the learning process as Dewey (1916) explained that education “takes place through the intermediary of the environment” (p. 26). For Dewey, like Schwab (1983), the environment is the place where all elements of education interact. In this view, any steps taken to influence the environment have a significant impact on learning.

The manner in which competition influenced the environment would be of concern to educators subscribing to Dewey's philosophy. Competition simultaneously increased students' motivation and decreased their agency in the environment. Rather than being able to direct their learning or make decisions based on their musical interests, students were motivated by the desire to achieve competitive glory. For example, Gregory, who viewed his director as "ruthless," lamented the teacher's retirement because the band failed to achieve the same competitive accolades the following year. For Gregory, the chance to "bask in his glory" at the state championship was well-worth the troubling learning environment. Additionally, participants often used competition as a stimulus to increase motivation; in many instances, students responded in ways that directors desired. Competition was effective as a motivational stimulus. Students increased their practice, expected more from each other, and heeded the teacher's instructions, because they were connected to their pursuit of competitive success.

Dewey used the term objective conditions to describe the facets of a particular educational situation. Objective conditions included elements such as equipment, books, interactions between students, as well as interactions between students and the teacher. Dewey (1938/1997) highlighted particular behaviors of teachers as being influential in the learning environment, isolating "what is done by the educator and the way it is done, not only words spoken but the tone of voice in which they are spoken" (p. 43). The teacher's behavior was a significant part of the objective conditions. Gregory and Christopher provided examples of how directors' behaviors led to troubling objective conditions within their high school competition experiences.

Gregory and Christopher each described high school band experiences that were profoundly negative, yet they participated in band programs that were highly-regarded in their communities and regions. Christopher described his teacher as “abusive” and characterized feeling trapped and imprisoned during rehearsals. Similarly, Gregory discussed his band director as “an asshole” and shared a number of stories in which he described the director’s interactions with students as “hard, cruel, and ruthless.” Gregory characterized the director’s tenure at the school as a “40-year reign of terror.” These behaviors created environments which were described as cruel, abusive, and ruthless; however, both Gregory and Christopher continued to participate in their bands, which were elective offerings, throughout high school.

The examples of Gregory and Christopher reveal how directors might treat students in an extreme fashion but highlight the director’s power to influence the environment. This is exactly what Dewey refers to within objective conditions, though Dewey would never endorse this type of interaction. For Dewey, the goal of the educational environment was to motivate student inquiry and to take advantage of young persons’ natural curiosities. Findings suggest that for the participants in this study, the goal of the environment was not to build curiosity, but rather to control and motivate, a practice antithetical to Dewey’s beliefs. When competitive aims are prioritized, these aims supplant students’ curiosities. The students described by the participants were heavily invested in achieving competitive success. However, this investment, rather than any musical interests or curiosities students might have, became a central component of the educational milieu.

Answering Research Question 2: How Does Competition Influence or Frame Curriculum in High School Bands

The phenomenon of being in competition depicts curriculum-in-action. Each of the participants shared experiences that took place as a part of their formal music education in classes offered as a part of their school's course of study. Participants' curricular experiences related to the four commonplaces: the teacher, learner, subject matter, and milieu (Schwab, 1970), portray how competition influences and frames curriculum. Campbell, Thompson, and Barrett (2010) explain that an examination of the overall interactions among the commonplaces allows for an evaluation of the overall impact or quality of the educational experience (p. 121). Understanding these intersections and their impact on the quality of the educational experience is the focus of this study's second research question: how does competition influence or frame curriculum in high school bands?

Competition was a defining feature of each participants' curriculum. Competition was a part of the subject matter that students experienced and influenced each of the commonplaces. Findings suggest that within the commonplace of the teacher, competition may foment or at least be compatible with an executive approach to teaching. This approach was dominant within the curricula and influenced each of the other commonplaces. Learners were seen as skilled performers who were reliant upon their teachers for learning. Subject matter was selected by the teachers with a focus upon earning competitive success. Finally, the milieu in which learning occurred was heavily managed and controlled by the teachers.

Competition Encourages an Executive Orientation

The demands of competition encouraged teachers to approach their work from an executive-orientation. Executives are managers of classrooms and attempt to manipulate

resources to produce specific results (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2010). In competitive curricula, competitions provided the results for which the directors strove. Their teaching became a process of managing the people and resources in their bands to achieve competitive success. With this orientation, the teacher-as-executive controlled and manipulated each of the other commonplaces to achieve the established goals. The introduction of competition influenced and motivated students. Directors even attempted to manage how students reacted to competitive results. Subject matter was evaluated and selected based on its competitive viability. Directors specifically considered how adjudicators might view particular repertoire choices. Finally, directors heavily controlled the milieu by highlighting and emphasizing competition to differing degrees as a means to influence students' work habits related to band.

The public nature of competitions further established an executive-orientation in competitive curricula. Directors perceived that they were the faces of their organizations and that their bands' performances were a reflection on their work. Directors felt that competitions evaluated them much more than their students. They perceived each result as a reflection of their competence and worried that competitions could influence how they were perceived by students, their school communities, or other music educators. This public evaluation placed particular stress on directors causing them to take results seriously as they felt results dramatically influenced how they were perceived.

The Executive Influence on the Overall Experience

Participants' executive-orientations to teaching dominated these curricula. Teachers had the autonomy and independence to make significant curricular decisions related to every commonplace. Directors controlled the subject matter that was experienced, the

competitions that were attended, and the overall environment in which learning took place. Because of the managerial influence of the executive-oriented educator, the students, subject matter, and milieu were placed into subservient roles to the teacher rather than being considered “of equal rank” (Schwab, 1973, p. 508).

Participants viewed students in these programs as skilled performers. They were novices in need of training and it was the directors’ job to lead them through drills and exercises to build their capabilities to perform the selected repertoire. This view of students promoted compliance and dependence on the teacher (O’Neill & Senyshyn, 2011), which was clear throughout the findings. Directors felt responsible for student performances characterizing them as students “doing what was asked of them.” Students were managed by their teachers throughout the curriculum. The competitive result was the goal and participants taught students the needed skills to achieve the desired outcomes.

Teachers exerted the same level of control over subject matter. The competitions shaped participants’ selections of repertoire and other musical materials as they considered the competitive viability of each decision. Marching contests provided directors with the opportunity to create subject matter for their bands in the form of custom arrangements and formations. Directors acted unilaterally in designing materials. Directors’ subject matter development process took place away from students and involved only themselves and select collaborators. Participants’ only creative constraints were the skills that students had developed and what the directors believed would be competitively successful.

Participants saw the educational environment as an element to be manipulated both physically and psychosocially. Directors carefully controlled the physical spaces in which students learned. They decided how competitive accomplishments were displayed in their

rehearsal rooms and made specific considerations regarding the venues at which students would compete. Directors used venues as a motivational tool by selecting contests, particularly for marching bands, that were in large college or professional football stadiums. They typically used the venues as culminating events, encouraging students to work harder to perform as best they could at these well-known venues. Additionally, directors chose contests based upon the potential rewards for the band. Some specifically attended contests that offered distinctions such as honor band or state champion. In each instance, participants manipulated the environment to motivate students.

Beyond the physical environments, directors used competition as a means to influence their ensembles' ambiance or "culture." Competition was a stimulus that was judiciously administered to foment motivation and higher expectations. Directors felt that the striving for competitive success would inspire students and the results demonstrated that accolades and awards pursued dramatically influenced the environment. Students were motivated to earn competitive accolades and in instances where bands had been consistently successful, the results became an ongoing expectation and a burden on students and directors. The bands expected to be successful and this expectation was deliberately established through the directors' use of competition.

Summary of Application of Deweyan Lens to Commonplaces of Education

Dewey's ideals highlight significant issues with competitive curricula, perhaps none more troubling than the students' removal from curricular decisions. For Dewey, the student is "the starting point, the beginning, and the end" (1902, p. 9), yet throughout these curricula, the student was rarely a consideration. Participants' executive-orientation toward curricula was largely incompatible with Dewey's philosophies.

Dewey viewed the teacher as a part of the social group in the learning environment. The teacher was a “leader of group activities” who collaborated with students to determine the goals and direction of their actions. However, throughout the curricula, the teachers acted in ways that were removed from the students. They managed students, chose subject matter, and manipulated the environment unilaterally. They were not collaborative, but rather authoritarian.

Similarly, the view of the learner as a skilled performer is antithetical to Dewey’s placement of the learner at the center of the educational experience. The skilled performer is a novice in need of training, yet to Dewey, the learner is intensely curious and capable, though in need of direction. Learners may benefit from a teacher who will collaborate with them to assist them in achieving their goals. In these curricula focused on competition, the learner was never consulted in the direction of their learning. They were simply managed by the director.

For Dewey, the specifics of subject matter should be the result of a collaboration between the educator and the student. The teacher’s job is to build on students’ curiosities and interests and to make subject matter decisions based upon this data. The narrow manner in which participants considered students exhibited little of this type of collaboration. The lone consideration of students in subject matter decisions related to matching their skills and weaknesses to appropriate repertoire. Student input or interests were rarely considered as a part of repertoire selection or other subject matter decisions. Where Dewey would advocate for the development of subject with the student, the students in participants’ bands were, instead, the recipients of the subject matter. The materials were brought to them rather than carefully considered with them.

Dewey recognized the educational environment as a vital concern of the educator and felt that the teacher should exert control over the milieu. Dewey described “objective conditions” within the environment including the specific materials that students might engage with, but also the manner in which they are taught, including tone of voice, and overall disposition of the teacher. For Dewey, the educational environment was highly influenced by the teacher. This was the case for these curricula, however the manner of influence was quite different. The Deweyan environment is one in which learners have agency and the teacher leads their learning. The learner is the starting point. However, in these curricula that emphasized competition, participants manipulated the environment to motivate students. Participants’ decisions were not based on student curiosities but rather to incentivize students to work towards the teachers had chosen.

Competition created a new priority in the classroom that diminished the learner’s importance. The director- or teacher-as-executive worked to manage complex processes and achieve results but the results were related more to contests than students’ growth. In each commonplace, the executive-oriented teacher’s dominance contradicted Dewey’s educational tenets. For Dewey, the classroom was not a complex process in need of management, but rather a social environment in which learners and teachers collaborate to direct their learning. In a Deweyan curriculum, the goal is a child’s growth, not a competitive outcome.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined the phenomenon of competition in high school bands. Two research questions guided the study: 1) What is it like to be in competition as a part of a high school band?; and 2) How does competition influence or frame high school band curricula? I employed a phenomenological research design emphasizing the lived experience of competing. The research design was influenced significantly by the work of van Manen (1990, 2014), and Vagle (2014) and produced an interpretive portrayal of the phenomenon. The study included the perspectives of twelve individuals who had experienced the phenomenon of competition as high school students, high school band directors, or both. Data were generated over the course of one year during which participants engaged in interviews and assisted in the creation of individual phenomenological texts based on their experiences (van Manen, 1990, p. 63) which each participant collaboratively edited with me. These documents served as detailed narratives of the participants' individual experiences and were used to generate the study's findings.

Each research question examined the phenomenological data from a different perspective. The first question addressed what it is like to be in competition. The goal of this question was to generate an interpretive text that portrays what the phenomenon is “really like” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 42). This question was answered through participants' experiences as they found themselves in competition. I interpreted data from an ontological perspective, emphasizing that participants did not originate the phenomenon from their actions but rather that their actions were manifestations of the phenomenon that occurred as they were “being-in-the-world” with competition (Vagle, 2014).

I grouped findings related to the first research question into four themes: 1) tension, 2) planning in competition, 3) results, and 4) culture. Participants discussed their experiences with contradictory sentiments indicating they felt tension related to competition. They described both valuing competitive results and simultaneously wishing that they did not care about them. Similarly, they shared concern for how students might be influenced by competition. Competition was a central influence as participants planned instruction. They designed marching shows and selected repertoire with competitive outcomes in mind. Planning was a process completed entirely by the directors with limited student input. Competitive results such as ratings, rankings, and awards were particularly meaningful to participants. They perceived connections between competitive results and their professional reputations, their personal perceptions of competence, and how they and their bands were viewed in their communities. Competitive results were used as an advocacy tool because they were easily communicated and understood by others.

Students reacted strongly to competitive results often viewing them as personal labels. Finally, competition was used as a motivational tool and as a means to influence the culture of band programs. Participants described specific competitive choices they made to encourage students to be more engaged with their band programs and to work harder. In several instances they viewed competition as a defining characteristic of the learning environment with some participants describing abusive teaching practices. Additionally, participants who had been part of bands who had achieved significant competitive success described the burden they felt in maintaining their band's level of achievement.

The second research question examined the data from a curricular perspective. I used Schwab's (1970, 1973) practical inquiry as an analytical heuristic. Schwab believed that

curriculum should be examined as it is lived and put into practice by examining real experiences (1970, p. 633). The phenomenological data I generated served as examples of curriculum-in-action and real life experiences with competition as a curricular element. This examination emphasized the curriculum that was experienced rather than curriculum as it might have been written, what Eisner (2003) referred to as the implicit curriculum.

Participants did not refer to any formal curriculum guides or frameworks, however their competitive decisions shaped the learning experience for their students. Phenomenology provided a view of curriculum which Schubert (1986) believed could “describe and portray lived experience and the deeper meanings that lie behind it” (p. 310). This study’s findings describe the curriculum as it was experienced, which provides insight into educational aims in competition. As Eisner (1998) explained: “Our educational priorities are not expressed by our testimonials or our publicly prepared curriculum syllabi, but in our actions. By our works we are known” (p. 40).

Findings for the second research question describe a highly teacher-centered educational experience with a narrow view of students and subject matter. The executive-orientation (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2009) permeated the curricula as teachers closely managed every facet of the learning experience in the interest of achieving the best possible results. The dominance of the teachers led to a subordination of other curricular areas. The learner, for example, was narrowly viewed as a skilled performer (O’Neill & Senyshyn, 2011) who was reliant on the teacher for growth and whose primary role was to develop the skills needed to successfully perform the chosen repertoire. Subject matter considerations were restricted to repertoire selection. Directors chose subject matter unilaterally, considering only how the technical demands of the literature might correspond to the performers’ strengths

and weaknesses. Finally, the milieu was heavily controlled and managed by the teachers. They made specific efforts to manipulate the physical spaces in which bands rehearsed, chose specific contest venues, and used competition to influence the overall educational ambiance.

The Phenomenon of Being in Competition

Tension

The phenomenon of being in competition was permeated by tension that was most acutely experienced by directors. Directors never specifically expressed positions for or against competition, but many described perceived problems with competing and shared concerns about competition influencing their students deleteriously. The following section discusses the relationship of the theme of tension as a hegemonic influence on band education and how tension manifests itself through contradictory actions and feelings.

A Hegemonic Tension

Music educators have debated competition's place in music education for nearly a century (Dykema, 1923; Miller, 1994; Rohrer, 2005). This study's findings suggest that the debate continues and that the field has yet to come to a consensus regarding competition as a part of music curricula. That band competition has continued and flourished despite consistent reservations about its influences on children indicates how competing is a traditional practice that has become engrained in band curricula. Over 26 years ago, Austin (1990b), lamented that "the profession [music education] clings to the tradition of competition and contests with a single-mindedness that defies logic" (p. 25). Little has changed since Austin's statement. Competition was an accepted part of each director's curriculum and few questioned its place in their teaching. This tacit acceptance of

competition conforms to Allsup's (2010) argument labeling band contests as a hegemonic practice. In explaining how hegemony functions in curricula Allsup commented:

When a situation is obvious, it validates itself. The more obvious and true the situation appears, the more difficult it is to imagine it differently. (p. 218)

For many of the participants in this study, the choice to compete was obvious. Most never considered not competing or engaging in alternatives to competing because competition was a valid and true part of their high school band experiences. Allsup (2010) elaborated on the hegemonic characteristics of band contests providing a number of elements that were common to participants in this study:

- Competitions occur in almost every music discipline; they are an established aspect of the educational landscape.
- No one knows exactly when this tradition started, or why it has become so popular.
- The majority of music teachers participate in competitions; the minority who don't seem odd to the majority that do.
- There are many hardships associated with competitions, not the least of which is time and expense; their pedagogical value is dubious.
- Participants endure the hardships of competing—possibly taking short cuts and making compromises—because they believe it is the right thing to do; some participants win, but many more must lose.
- Normal, commonsensical, and with few “realistic” alternatives, the tradition continues; meanwhile an operational system evolves around the practice, supporting its continuance. (p. 219)

Many participants exemplified Allsup's criteria, detailing hardships they experienced, describing competition's influence on their teaching, and exhibiting little desire for alternatives.

Traditional practices are established and repeated often with little consideration or questioning of their value. To this point, Colwell (2011) explained tradition's influence in shaping high school curricula:

It often comes as a surprise to new teachers that the public's level of interest in the music curriculum is unknown and that our knowledge about what music competencies are expected by the public is unexplored. Local tradition is a powerful influence on the curriculum taught. Bands "support" the school's athletic program, and the jazz band enters multiple competitions and festivals. The secondary choral program may be expected to produce a stunning show or swing choir or cooperate with the theatre department in producing a musical each spring. The orchestra, choir, and small ensembles may participate in regional and state festivals or contests, in addition to quarterly concerts. The curriculum is influenced by tradition. (p. 86)

Traditional expectations have reified the place of competition in band curricula. Despite the validation that comes from continuing the tradition of competition, tension regarding the place or role of competition in band programs remains. Yet, band directors and the field of music education continually fail to confront the concerns that have created the persisting curricular and philosophical tension embodied in competition.

Antinomies

Tension caused participants to advocate antithetical positions such as simultaneously wanting to do well in competitions while not caring about results. These contradictions could be seen as paradoxical, or as Mantie (2012) illustrated, antinomies. Scholars have examined contradictions within band education, and competition could be included in this dialogue. Mantie (2012) documented a number of instances in which the wind band movement has desired conflicting results. For example, he discussed a tension felt in many high school band programs related to ensembles dedicated to the performance of art music (the wind ensemble or symphonic band) and bands dedicated to entertainment (pep and marching bands). The result, according to Mantie, is a contradictory position in which the band is "a schizophrenic creature that suffers a continual crisis of identity, struggling to be simultaneously common and special" (p. 70).

The competitive antimony is most clearly seen in the messages communicated to students through competitions. In Tom's experience at the national marching band contest, moments after crowning a national champion, the contest organizers sent a contradictory message by reminding students that they were all winners. The students were not all winners in the contests, the entire event had been organized to determine a single winning band. Tom felt the message was "phony and overly optimistic." Tom witnessed the contest attempting to represent two contradictory positions. Students were supposed to understand that the event crowned a champion, but was designed to celebrate music and all of their hard work. Tom did not believe it. He was left with a conflicted message that was difficult to understand and that generated more questions. Was the competition about determining a winner, or was it more about celebrating the students' performances? If the contest intended to do both, is that even possible when those two positions are antithetical?

The antimony of competitions can also be seen in the manner in which results were communicated. Where Tom's contest experience provided a ranked scoring of the bands, Alan's contests were less clear. Alan expressed frustration with the state's policy of only rating schools and not providing a ranked set of results. Alan described the feeling of getting results as being "jilted." He could not make sense of the results because they only told him what groups received the same ratings. Alan knew that his band performed better than groups receiving a lower overall rating, but did not know how his band stood amongst the bands that were rated the same. This was a contradictory message for Alan to decipher. The event allowed Alan to know, on a broad scale, which bands performed better and worse than his, but prevented him from knowing exactly how his group fared. If the event was designed to be non-competitive, why offer ratings at all? Yet if the event was designed to be

competitive, why not give the participants in the contest the data they desired? The contest was attempting to make the competitive event less competitive, yet in doing so produced frustration in students like Alan more than it ameliorated any competitive motivations they possessed.

Summary and Implications

Music educators have expressed concerns regarding the use of competition in music curricula for over a century yet it has remained an enduring part of band curricula. Participants' feelings of tension highlight that concerns persist and that the value of competitive practices has yet to be resolved. Competition has become a traditional expectation of band curricula, which can be seen as a hegemonic influence. Expected practices are rarely challenged and this makes change increasingly challenging. Competition can be seen as an antinomy within band education. It is approached carefully with awareness of potential negative effects, yet few consider not competing. The result is that band educators attempt to simultaneously compete and be non-competitive.

The implications of this tension are significant. Perhaps of most concern is that the field continues to engage in a practice whose music educational merit music educators have debated for decades. That so many teachers consistently choose to compete when they worry that it may be harmful to their students presents an ethical concern. Why continue competing if we have such significant concerns? Is continuing this tradition worth the ongoing tension? How might teachers approach their work differently if they did not have to confront their mixed feelings towards competition?

Still, the hegemony of competition makes change increasingly challenging. Young teachers may be reluctant to eschew established practices and experienced teachers may

become indoctrinated into traditional expectations. The need to preserve competitive traditions may come at the expense of the musical education of young people. How would we evaluate competition in band programs if we first wondered about what was best for our students? How might directors work differently if tradition was a resource rather than a requirement? How might innovation be encouraged by allowing more freedom in modern practices?

Competition does not have to be part of the growing list of antinomies which influence modern band programs. By thoughtfully examining competitive practices and encouraging bands to grow and evolve beyond traditional practices, educators do not need to feel contradiction as part of their work. They could approach their students knowing that the activities in which they will engage encourage musical and personal growth and are free of the negative consequences associated with competing. Students perceive our tension and it becomes part of their education. They bear the weight of the traditions as much as teachers do. Perhaps students' experiences might be enriched if they did not have to carry the field's collective competitive baggage.

Planning

Planning in competition was an engaging task for directors that included creative opportunities as well as administrative, logistical, and financial challenges. The following section discusses the creative outlet facilitated by competitions as well as the limits it placed on teachers' creativity.

Creative Outlet and Creative Constraint

Participants relished the process of teaching and seeing their designs come to fruition on the field. For example, Jeff explained the rush he felt when he saw his show being

performed: “oh my, you’re [the band] doing the thing that I wrote!” The marching season became a process of Jeff realizing his creative vision as the band would gradually learn and refine what Jeff had created for them. Competition facilitated this creative opportunity and constrained what the directors created. Unlike concert band contests, which largely discouraged the creative development of subject matter through the use of required repertoire lists (Barnes & McCashin, 2005; Gonzalez, 2007), marching band contests had few restrictions and expectations.

Directors were able to engage meaningfully in the arrangement of musical selections, the design of formations, as well as choreography and other creative tasks. Show design has become an expected competency for directors, as many pedagogical texts designed for use in undergraduate marching band methods courses feature extensive resources on drill writing, arranging, and choreography (Bailey, Cannon, & Payne, 2015; Foster, 1978; Markworth, 2008; Smith, 2012).

Show design skills were seen by participants as influencing competitive results, a connection supported by Hewitt’s (2000) examination of show design practices. Participants were encouraged to create arrangements and write drill because of a perceived connection with results; however, this also influenced their creative choices. Participants’ goals were not simply artistic, they were competitive. Their goal was to produce a show which would be evaluated positively by adjudicators. They could be innovative only within the confines of what judges would appreciate. An innovative show that achieved poor ratings was not seen as a creative work but instead was considered a failure. The creative goal in this situation is quite specific and focused on satisfying an adjudicator. Educational merit, impact on

students, relationship to students' interests, and any number of other considerations are secondary to the primary objective: developing a show that is competitively viable.

Without competitions, participants may not have had the opportunity or felt compelled to design materials for their groups. However, this does not have to be the case. There is an opportunity within band directing to celebrate and encourage educators' creative engagement beyond competition. In fact, if the creative constraint of needing to please a judge were removed, educators would be afforded a great deal more freedom in their creative choices. Without the fear of evaluation from a contest, teachers may be more inclined to create materials that celebrate and represent their communities, integrate types of music rarely experienced within bands, and perhaps collaborate with students. Content creation could become a valuable tool to excite teachers artistically and may make their work more rewarding. However, teachers must be energized to work in this manner without the incentive of a competitive outcome.

Summary and Implications

In designing competitive marching shows, educators were provided a creative outlet that was an exciting and valued part of their jobs. That the creative outlet was so closely tied to competition is problematic. Competitions constrained what was created and significantly shaped what directors produced. However, perhaps the more important finding is that teachers derived job satisfaction by engaging creatively in their work. Our challenge as a field should be to find means of encouraging creative engagement without competition, to foster opportunities for educators to act as curriculum designers where they can creatively influence what and how music is taught without the constraints of appeasing judges or having their works unnecessarily evaluated by others.

Creative pedagogical practices could be fostered and developed through teacher education programs and continuing professional development for in-service teachers. Consider how the experiences and work of the participants might be different if their work was centered on creative pedagogy developed with a broader consideration of their students' needs, curiosities, and interests. Some possible characteristics of pedagogical creativity were discussed by Abramo and Reynolds (2014) who framed creative teaching as a dispositional attribute. They explained that creative pedagogues are:

(a) responsive, flexible, and improvisatory; (b) are comfortable with ambiguity; (c) think metaphorically and juxtapose seemingly incongruent and novel ideas in new and interesting ways; and (d) acknowledge and use fluid and flexible identities. (p. 37)

Each of these characteristics would enhance the practices of band educators and potentially lead to greater job satisfaction. Conversely, each of these elements also could be effectively limited by the influence of competition. Teachers who are flexible and improvisatory may worry that they are not being efficient and preparing their groups diligently for upcoming contests. Ambiguity is challenging in competition as competing bands are motivated to produce predictable and measurable results. New ideas have the potential to be viewed negatively by judges. Flexible identities may include those which are inconsistent with competitive practices and expectations. However, if preservice educators cultivate these dispositions during their undergraduate programs, they may become particularly frustrated by the constraint of competition and how it influences their work. Similarly, in-service teachers may find creating curricula rewarding if encouraged through meaningful professional development.

The substantial expense of competing in marching contests has placed stress on the resources of band programs who attempt to procure the needed materials to compete

successfully. As custom arrangements, drill formations, and cadres of instructional staff become *de rigueur*, band programs of all sizes have attempted to manage typically scant resources to remain competitively viable. The result is that a select group of programs are able to afford to compete and other programs are left struggling to keep up. Competitive success is then closely related to financial resources of groups rather than the musical skills demonstrated on the field (Brewer, 2013; Hewitt, 2000; O'Leary, 2016; Rickels, 2011).

The lack of resources presents particular challenges for small programs and rural ensembles. With a smaller population of students from which to recruit and smaller budgets to manage, these groups are disadvantaged in these events and often judged from a deficit perspective. This creates a serious problem of equity. As the demands to remain competitively viable increase, more groups are put in positions to make difficult decisions about how they spend their resources, potentially allocating far greater portions of their assets to competitive pursuits with little additional educational merit.

Results

The manner in which participants interpreted results of competitions such as ratings, rankings, and other competitive distinctions, had the ability to define a musical experience for the participants. For several participants, competitive results became the focus of their musical efforts. Results influenced how teachers went about their work, how they perceived their own competence, and how they felt they were viewed in their communities, schools, and the profession. The following section discusses the following aspects of competitive results: 1) the question of who is being evaluated, the director or the students and how the public and evaluative nature of band contests may influence teacher development and concerns; 2) the potential use of contest results as a component of teacher evaluation; 3) the

use of competition as an advocacy tool; and 4) competition and its influence on student motivation.

Who is being evaluated?

Regelski (1961) inquired over 50 years ago “Who is being judged in group performance—the group, or the director and his [*sic*] abilities?” (p. 61). The answer to this question has significant implications for how teachers and students compete. If groups are being evaluated, contest results would be indicative of students’ efforts, however, if adjudications are focused on directors, the purpose of the contest becomes more of a summative assessment of teachers’ work (Gonzales, 2007; Hash, 2013a).

Answering Regelski’s (1961) question, this study’s findings suggest that competition is evaluative of teachers rather than of students. Participants perceived each competitive event as an assessment of their teaching. There were numerous examples of this orientation towards results. Roger described the results as part of his professional identity, Adam learned that there was a perception that competent directors in his area should earn at least an excellent rating at festivals, and Mark was explicit that his students’ competitive performances were the result of them following the instructions that he had provided. As each of these directors competed, they did so aware of how the results impacted them personally and professionally. This orientation to results has significant implications on the manner in which instruction takes place and how students are viewed in the learning process. The following sections discuss how the public nature of contests and the evaluations of teachers that take place through them may shift educators’ focus away from students, as well as the significant challenges that these public evaluations of teachers pose for educators.

Public Evaluation and Stress

The public nature of competitions created stress for participants. The potential for contests to produce stress in teachers has been established in the literature (Barnes & McCashin, 2005; Shaw, 2014) and this study corroborates those findings. Additionally, this study highlights the public nature of contests as potentially exacerbating the levels of stress felt by participants.

Contests were not just evaluative of directors, they were public assessments with results in the form of ratings, rankings, and awards that were available to other music educators, administrators, students, and community members. For example, Jeff described his early ambition to be that “hotshot band director who got all I’s his first year.” He discussed the competitions forming his “permanent record” and that his initial ratings were particularly troubling because his scores were published on the internet where anyone could view them. Mark viewed contests as a public job interview which would influence his ability to secure employment in a larger school district. Jessica described contests as a means to gain acceptance as a new teacher in her community. Andrea, even after over a decade of successful teaching, felt like she “had something to prove” every time her band competed. Each example highlights that the public visibility of the results exacerbates the stress perceived by band directors.

Concerns

The public nature of results influenced teachers’ concerns for how they were viewed by others. These concerns can be better understood within the context of concerns theory, an established framework in teacher education. Campbell, Thompson, and Barrett (2010), building on work by Fuller (1969), Fuller and Bown (1975), and Borich (2000), discussed

common concerns that are embedded within teacher development. Concerns inform how teachers go about their work as Campbell, Thompson, and Barrett (2010) explained, “at the heart of concerns theory is a focus on teacher thinking and actions” (p. 29). Fuller (1969) proposed three categories of concerns which she listed as phases: self, task, and impact. Self-concerns relate to how teachers feel about their teaching abilities, as well as how they are perceived by others such as colleagues, students, and administrators. Task concerns are connected to pedagogical knowledge and “focus on the time and logistics of teaching” (Campbell, Thompson, & Barrett, 2010, p. 31). In a band education setting, task concerns may relate to repertoire selection, instrument-specific pedagogy, or other instructional tasks. Finally, impact concerns address student learning. In impact concerns teachers are mindful of what students achieve.

Educators’ concerns influence their teaching. When educators are addressing self-concerns, they are confronting how they are perceived in the classroom. These concerns may cause them to teach in a manner where they focus on their actions rather than students’ work. With task concerns, teachers focus more on content and how to communicate content effectively to students. The course content is prioritized and teachers seek methods of teaching specific materials. Like self-concerns, task-concerns are not focused on the work of the students but rather centered on the specific pedagogical demands of the subject matter. Finally, with impact concerns the teacher’s priority is acting with the students’ best learning interests in mind. While it is possible for competitions to bring concerns of each category to teachers’ minds, the public nature of competitions and relationship to professional reputation are most likely to promote teachers’ self-concerns. If teachers perceive that they are building their reputations and being judged by their peers, community, and others, they

may find it challenging to devote attention and energies to the their students' specific needs.

The manner in which directors interpreted results demonstrated self-concerns within their teaching. For example, Andrea discussed her feeling of “having to prove herself” as she competed, and Jeff shared his perception that the III or “Good” rating that his band earned at their first marching contest was a sort of scarlet letter that he would wear for the rest of his career. Both Jeff and Andrea wanted to craft a positive reputation for themselves and competitions were a public opportunity for their work to be displayed and evaluated by others. Any self-concerns which Andrea or Jeff brought to the classroom were amplified by public competitions.

Fuller (1969) proposed the concerns theory as a series of stages through which teachers would progress. According to Fuller, as teachers developed they should gradually become less concerned with themselves and more concerned with student learning. While subsequent research has shown these stages to be recursive rather than linear (Borich, 2000; Campbell, Thompson & Barrett, 2010), recognizing that competitions may promote self-concerns in teachers has implications for classroom practice. For example, if Jeff and Andrea are concerned with how they are being perceived through competitive experiences, their concerns for student learning may be lessened. If concerns are indeed recursive, the annual cycle of competitions may serve to re-ignite self-concerns as directors compete each year. This cycle would then prevent, or at least delay, teachers from working in a manner that is dedicated and focused on the students in the classroom. This cycle prevents teachers from moving beyond their concerns of competence, reputation, and subject matter mastery, to work towards helping students achieve their unique musical goals.

Alternatively, if band educators did not have to worry about public perceptions of their work each year, they may be more prone to center their work in impact concerns. They would have the ability to make changes and experiment in their teaching to in a manner that is dedicated to their students' specific needs. Rather than directors beginning each year with a need to prove themselves or add to their competitive résumé, they could measure their success by the impact they have on their students which could vary significantly from band to band. The focus could shift away from upcoming evaluation and more onto a broader view of what students learn. While a lack of competition does not guarantee that this alternative orientation will take place, I suggest that the influence of competition inhibits the focus on impact concerns, which in turn prevents teachers from considering students' needs and interests as a priority in curricular decisions.

Teacher Evaluation

Participants viewed contests as influencing their employment and job advancement. While contest results were included as part of only one participant's formal teaching evaluation, any connection between competition results and formal teaching evaluations should be an area of concern for music educators. Miller (1994) suggested competitions were directly connected to job retention as he explained: "Those who consistently receive I's are assured a continuous relationship with the school. Those who have had more than one year of bad ratings start looking for another job" (p. 25). Similarly, Batey (2002) described the impact of ratings as: "It can mean job retention or loss; a successful recruiting year, or no; and validation of a director's skills, or lack thereof" (p. 1). Each author portrays competitions as high stakes assessments with significant impacts for directors. While the literature does not support a direct connection between job retention and contest results

(Barnes & McCashin, 2005), the perceived relationship is troubling at a time when teacher evaluation is of significant concern in music education (Hash, 2013a; Nierman, 2014; Overland, 2014; Shuler, 2012).

Current teacher evaluation trends emphasize data-driven assessment in which teachers are assessed based on student performances on standardized tests (Overland, 2014) among other measures. This poses a challenge for music teachers who do not assess student learning through state-provisioned exams and are now challenged to generate data to inform their evaluations (Overland, 2014; Shuler, 2012). Shuler (2012) explained that music educators should be proactive in determining the data that are included in their evaluations and specifically cautioned that music educators will need to “develop or adopt appropriate measures of student-achievement and use the results to further their professional growth” (p. 10). Hash (2013a) discussed that contests may be a resource for teachers and administrators developing teacher evaluation systems as they provide “a means of assessment of performance-based ensembles, since they—like standardized tests—provide a third-party evaluation consisting of numerical scores that can be used to compare achievement of one ensemble or director to that of another” (p. 164).

Contest results could be added as a component of teacher evaluation practices. This may be a seductive solution for directors and administrators who are unwilling or feel unable to develop alternative measures. Professional organizations such as the National Association for Music Education articulate recommendations for teacher evaluation procedures (NAfME, 2012) and specifically address this application of contest results:

...where the most easily observable outcomes of student learning are customarily measured in a collective manner (e.g., adjudicated ratings of large ensemble performances), [successful teacher evaluation should] limit the use of these data to valid and reliable measures and should form only part of a teacher’s evaluation. (p. 2)

Hash (2013a) echoed this recommendation and further outlined a number of problematic issues with contest scores in teacher evaluation including reliability and validity problems, inappropriate influence of contest sponsors, as well as the lack of data related to individual student learning or growth. Contests only portray a portion of the curriculum that is taught; however, their inclusion in teacher evaluation may encourage a greater emphasis on contests in an effort to “teach to the test.”

Each director participating in this study viewed contests as evaluative of their work, though in an informal capacity. The formal inclusion of contests as a teacher evaluation criterion would only amplify the stress and concern associated with the events. Participants already perceived a connection between contests and the opinions of their students, peers, and community, adding competitions to the rubric for their job evaluations would exacerbate the influence of contests on their work. Additionally, the inclusion of contest results in evaluation could lead to a formalization of contests in the hiring process for teachers. Mark, for example, worried that his contest performances would influence his ability to earn a position in a neighboring school district. If contests were seen as a formal evaluation of teachers’ competence, then future employers could legitimately assess job applicants based on their competitive records. In the following section I discuss some of the problematic elements of using contest results in teacher evaluation, including fairness and equity, as well as grade inflation, and the utility of the existing evaluation scales.

Fairness. If teachers are evaluated based upon their competitive records, the contests will essentially serve as high-stakes teacher assessments. This is problematic given the number of issues related to contest adjudication outlined by researchers such as the development of fair and reliable assessment instruments (Abeles, 1973; Stanley, Brooker &

Gilbert, 2002; Ciorba & Smith, 2009; Latimer, Bergee & Choen, 2010; and Saudners & Holohan, 1997; Smith & Barnes, 2007), the selection and configuration of judging panels (Bergee, 2003, 2007; Bergee & Platt, 2003; Dugger, 1997; Hash, 2013b; King & Burnsed, 2009); training of adjudicators (Fiske, 1975, 1977, 1983; Hewitt & Smith, 2004; Pope & Barnes, 2015) and the influence of nonmusical elements such as directors' reputations (Batey, 2002; Forbes, 1994), on-stage behavior (Wapnick et al., 1998), race (Wapnick, 1997, 1998), and attractiveness (Ryan & Costa-Giombi, 2004). This scholarship articulates how each of these elements can influence contest evaluation. If contests were extended to inform job evaluations, the need to guarantee a fair, reliable, and accurate evaluation would be paramount.

Of significant concern is the manner in which small and rural ensembles are disadvantaged in competitions. Several participants shared concerns regarding their bands' incomplete instrumentations and low enrollments negatively impacting their contest evaluations. For example, Mark described his frustration when a jazz ensemble adjudicator penalized his group for not having a drummer, a factor which Mark felt he could not control. The contest emphasized the lack of a student rather than providing an assessment of the teaching (and learning) that occurred. If enrollment and instrumentation are a part of teachers' evaluations, then educators are effectively being judged based on the absence of students who were not enrolled and whom they did not teach. It begs the question, is it fair that these groups be evaluated based upon what they lack rather than what they did accomplish? Do the instrumentation and enrollment expectations of large ensemble competitions an inequality issue in which not all competitors are evaluated based on the same criteria? This issue is prevalent in rural areas where teachers have smaller populations

of students to recruit from and are most likely to feature groups with incomplete instrumentations. This may discourage teachers from pursuing work in rural areas and exacerbate some of the perceived challenges associated with building a band program in a rural community (Isbell, 2005).

The influence of high stakes pre-service teaching assessments could be a cautionary tale for music educators. The edTPA is an exam required by several states in order to receive a teaching credential (Greenblatt, 2015). Teaching candidates are highly motivated to pass the exam. The edTPA functions as a gatekeeper to those seeking to enter the profession and requires a \$300 fee to take the test. Additionally, the stakes associated with the test have discouraged student-teachers from considering placements in high needs areas such as inner-city or rural schools (Jordan & Hawley, 2016). Jordan and Hawley (2016) explain how “new teachers are scared to teach in these places for fear of not meeting the edTPA’s rubric-style expectations” (p. 2). Band competitions could cause a parallel phenomenon for music educators. Teachers may avoid teaching situations in which they may have a more difficult time achieving positive evaluations.

Given the established connections between competitive success and elements such as enrollment, financial resources, and location in or near a major population center (Brewer, 2013; Dawes, 1989; Goodstein, 1987; O’Leary, 2016; Rickels, 2011; Sullivan, 2003) teachers will most likely seek positions in areas with such advantages. This would further discourage music educators teachers from pursuing work in rural and inner-city band programs. As Jordan and Hawley (2016) explained, “the best teachers are required in the most high-need areas” (p. 2) and the use of contests in evaluation could significantly diminish the potential musical experiences for students in these communities. Without ameliorating the

disadvantages faced by rural and small ensembles (Isbell, 2005; Sullivan, 2003), the profession could further promote teaching in large suburban high schools as the most desirable positions at the expense of schools and students in dire need of capable music instruction.

Grade Inflation and Euphemisms. Throughout the study, participants questioned the true meaning of ratings. They explained that the descriptors and scale for ratings had different meanings than their labels portrayed. Participants suggested that only the highest ratings were acceptable to them; others were seen as indicative of poor teaching. Hash (2013a) explained the most common rating system and corresponding labels:

Most festivals designate five possible ratings and label them as superior (division I), excellent (division II), good or average (division III), fair or below average (division IV, and poor or needs improvement (division V). One would expect that, based on the normal curve, the majority of groups would earn a good/average (division III) rating, with only a few designated as superior (division I) or poor/needs improvement (division V). (p. 165)

The distribution of scores in practice has been anything but normal and participants discussed any rating below excellent as having the potential to damage their reputations. Research examining ratings distributions supports this perception (Boekman, 2002; Brakel, 2006; Hash, 2013b; Meyers, 2012). In each instance, band rating distributions were skewed heavily towards superior and excellent ratings with some examples featuring over half of the ensembles earning the highest rating (Boekman, 2002). The lowest ratings were almost never awarded.

The distribution of scores brings into question the utility of this rating system for teacher evaluation or as a useful metric for understanding the quality of a performance. For example, both Jeff and Adam discussed that earning a III or a “Good” rating was actually quite bad, yet when using a five-level evaluation rubric, it should represent a mediocre

performance. While it may be the case that the quality of performance by students at the festivals Hash (2013a) investigated was at such a high level that the scores were in fact valid representations of their skill, I suspect that adjudicators used only a portion of the scale. For example, the results from Hash's (2013a) examination of band contest results in Virginia indicates that 91.5% of bands received a superior or excellent rating, with 50.6% being superior, 40.9% excellent, 8% good, and 0.5% fair. No band earned a poor rating during the period examined. I believe this data more accurately portrays a bifurcated rating system in which bands are primarily either superior or excellent with the good rating reserved for only the poorest of the performances.

In practice, the system may be more of a litmus test than a five-point rating scale. With so many bands rated in the top two categories, it is difficult to ascertain the performances that were truly exceptional, however, with such a small percentage of bands earning "good" ratings, it is quite easy to see which bands performed the worst. This has produced a dilution of the rating scale in which the level of achievement has been masked by grade inflation, which in turn has produced a stigma around the rarely awarded low ratings. If used in teacher evaluation, this system may lead to a preponderance of positive music teacher evaluations, however, the distribution of scores may be called into question when compared to assessments in other academic areas.

Finally, the field should examine the euphemistic labels attached to ratings. I recognize that labels may be designed to portray bands positively to persons unfamiliar with band contests, but based on participants' perceptions, these labels are inaccurate. Music educators have documented the disconnect between labels and perceptions within the field

for over 50 years. Ivey (1964) offered his interpretation of band contest ratings in a *Music Educators Journal* article:

- I – Wonderful job, glowing success.
- II – Not so hot; maybe a mistake to try.
- III – Ugh! Total failure; give up.
- IV – Suicide!
- V – Never heard of it. (p. 44)

While Ivey's use of the term suicide in this connotation is insensitive and inappropriate, the overall sentiment of this remark is accurate, as Jeff explained his views:

The culture has become superior. Anything less than a superior is not excellent. It's sort of, if you don't get a I [a superior], then I don't know. Why'd you show up? Really its if you get a IV or a V you should have stayed home, a III is pretty bad, a II is supposed to be excellent, supposed to be good, but they feel like a consolation prize. They feel like second.

These labels are ineffective and do not accurately portray how scores are interpreted in the field. Perhaps we should be more honest with ourselves and dispense with the euphemisms. Even a simple five-point scale, with no descriptors would be an improvement. If there is nothing good about a "good" rating, the profession should realize that these ratings are not representing our work in the manner they may have been intended.

As a means of teacher evaluation, these scales have a number of flaws: 1) student achievement is measured through a group assessment with no individualized data; 2) use of the scale neglects any musical learning that is not displayed through the group performance; 3) the scales are used to assign euphemistic labels; and 4) rating inflation has been rampant with the overwhelming preponderance of groups evaluated earning top scores. When combined with issues of equity, fairness, and overall utility, contest scores are inaccurate representations of a teacher's competence and should not be used in connection with evaluation.

Advocacy

In the text, *A History of Music Education in the United States*, Keene (1982) referred to competition as “an easy vehicle for a public relations tour de force” (p. 303). Goolsby (1983) remarked, “few administrators would dare eliminate a winner” (p. 33) as contest results offer a means for programs to portray themselves as successful. In advocacy, directors are attempting to “persuade decision makers that their subject is vitally important and should not be subjected to curricular reductions” (Mark & Madura, 2004, p. 69). By highlighting positive competition results, directors promoted their work to administrators and other stakeholders. Furthermore, contest results could be understood easily by persons with little to no formal musical education. Everyone knows what it means to be a “winner.” Competition results offered an effective, pithy, and easily-understood advocacy tool.

Findings featured numerous examples of participants using contest results for advocacy purposes. For example, James echoed Goolsby’s (1983) sentiment as his school was preparing to welcome a new administrator. James remarked, “bringing a little hardware home for the new principal is always a nice thing.” Jessica credited contest results as assisting her in being accepted as a new teacher by stakeholders in her new community as she commented, “these trophies say that I must know what I am doing.” Similarly, Mark recognized that as his students were successful in all-region and all-state honor ensembles, people began to notice his program more, providing him a platform from which he could advocate for additional resources and support.

The ease with which contest results can be communicated was significant. Results offered a particular utility, which Michaela explained:

When I tell parents that, they don’t need the breakdown of balance, blend, etc... They don’t need to hear that my trumpeter sounds awesome. They don’t need to

know the technical stuff, the band geekery. When I tell them that we got a gold rating, it's like telling them we won sectionals, or we won state [in reference to accomplishments athletic teams might have]. So, all of a sudden it felt like I had some résumé builder or something. You know, it's a trophy, you can put this on the wall and it is a very clear accomplishment.

Michaela did not need to concern others with the qualitative aspects of her band's performance, the result was clear and more powerful to them. Similarly, the trophies on display in Jessica's band room spoke to her competence before anyone ever observed a moment of her teaching. The trophy James presented to his school's new principal sent a clear message before the administrator may have even heard the band play a note. In each case, the directors were proactively using contest results to advocate for their programs.

Directors took the advocacy element of their work seriously and considered potential benefits as they selected contests to attend. Jeff chose events based on the opportunity to earn an "honor band" distinction and Christopher discussed directors in his area selecting contests based on an examination of the competing bands and their group's likelihood of beating them. In both instances, the directors were thinking explicitly about how those results could be shared within their communities and portray their programs positively. In the following section I discuss how the use of results in the form of rankings, ratings, and awards as advocacy generates additional stress for students and teachers, shifts the burden from learning to competitive achievement, and reduces the public's sensitivity to and awareness of the music that is being created by students in these bands.

The advocacy potential of competition results is clear. However, the impact of the results can eventually fade and create an expectation of continued success. The initial value of becoming a successful program transitions to a burden of remaining successful. It effectively reifies the importance of the results, perpetually. A decline in competitive results

could be a public relations disaster. Thurmond (1978) commented:

Once a band is involved in these cavalcades there is not a way out except to win. Directors of those bands that do not place first are under such pressure from students and parents; the situation is quite similar to that of the old-style band contests. (p. 24)

Similarly, Finney (1989) offered an example from competitive theatre programs as a warning. Finney's study highlighted theatre programs who had been successful at competitions. These programs tended to feel pressure to continue succeeding up until the point that the focus became more on winning than on student learning. Jolly (2008) feared the same phenomenon was at work in Texas high school bands as he commented that "music education for the sake of music has been overshadowed in the quest for the UIL gold medal and the sweepstakes trophy" (p. 177). Most recently, Shaw (2014) found that directors' perceived need to live up to the public expectations of a band program was a contributing factor to poor work-life balance leading to higher levels of stress and negatively impacting their wellbeing.

The burden of success was similarly displayed in this study. Tom's stories of competing as a student in a historically successful marching program demonstrated how students may perceive a need to continue a tradition of victory. Tom described an environment in which he considered his class's legacy as a part of his musical learning. The continued success of the program added stress to Tom's participation in band. Adam shared a similar experience as he recalled his high school band's focus shifting from achieving success to maintaining it. The continued success of the program weighed on him throughout his final competitive seasons.

Everyone who competed wished to be successful, but success could become burdensome. When competitive success is a key part of a program's advocacy platform, the

need to maintain success is not just competitive, it is legitimizing. If, advocacy's goal is to "persuade decision makers that their subject is vitally important" (Mark & Madura (2004, p. 69), then the results were the element directors used to demonstrate that importance. Participants crafted a narrative that emphasized the objective of their band programs as the pursuit of competitive accolades rather than the education of young people.

Finally, the ease with which results were communicated was both an asset and a danger. There is no doubt that the universal understandability of competitive results has contributed to their use in advocacy, but this has effectively removed the music from the advocacy message for music programs. When Michaela explained that people do not "need to know the technical stuff, the band geekery" to understand the results, I believe she is articulating an advocacy opportunity. Rather than using results, or at least in addition to using results as advocacy arguments, directors should talk about the qualitative elements of their performances: highlight student performances with musical descriptions, explain musical achievements that can be heard on the stage at concerts, and educate the community and audience to understand better and appreciate more the work of the young musicians on stage. Music educators have an opportunity to adjust our discourse to focus on the young people who perform rather than the evaluations they have completed successfully. In a time when the means of discussing schools is increasingly based in quantitative assessments, the arts and music in particular can encourage conversations around what students do, create, and share with the public.

Music teachers have this unique opportunity because ensembles perform in public. Their work is visible to parents and other stakeholders. Chemistry and language arts teachers do not have this same outlet. If we are inviting parents to hear students perform, we should

also be encouraging musical dialogue around the performances. Furthermore, directors could make effective arguments by accentuating their bands' contributions to community events, parades, athletic games, and other public performances. By highlighting the bands' "social utility" (Humphreys, 1995; Jones, 2008) directors can encourage the public to recognize bands' musical contributions to their communities rather than just competitive success.

Through advocacy, music educators have effectively trained the public to value competitive results rather than appreciate the music created by students. I suggest that the profession has done this to itself for the last century and the habit will be difficult to break. The need for advocacy is as present as ever and each music teacher in this study was proactively engaged in promoting their program. The bigger challenge for the profession now is to make the harder arguments to stakeholders, to emphasize the music that bands create, rather than the scores that they earn.

Student Reactions and Motivation. One of the historic arguments for competition in music education is its motivational impact on students. Proponents have argued that competitions help bands set goals (Buyer, 2005) and provide a means to strive for continued improvement (Gallops, 2005). According to Whitney (1966), playing for a rating inspires students in a uniquely powerful way. Whitney suggests that "playing for comments only, on a festival basis, rarely induces such intense preparatory effort as playing for a rating" (p. 30). Further, Bendell (1983) would add that the benefits are clear regardless of the competitive outcome: "whether leading to a winning or losing performance, preparing for competition adds a stimulus that cannot be found elsewhere in the activities of a group and its individuals" (p. 30). In each of these arguments the same basic purpose is highlighted:

competitions motivate students to work harder. This study demonstrates that motivation served as a key purpose in participants choosing to compete.

If contests are used to motivate and encourage students, then the results of the competition serve as the rewards for their efforts. In both James and Michaela's experiences, students were challenged with early negative results that developed into later success. Each struggled with students' negative reactions to early challenges such as James dealing with students leaving the band program or Michaela discussing how students felt labeled by their rating. However, despite the early struggles, the contests were motivational for the students in both instances. The bands improved significantly and earned far better competitive results.

I believe we can accept the basic premise of the motivation argument as true, competitions motivate students. However, the more critical issue might be a question of how and to what effect were students motivated? Attribution theory offers a means of examining motivation and has been used to discuss competitive outcomes in music education (Asmus, 1985, 1986; Austin, 1988, 1991; Hurley, 1996; Vispoel & Austin, 1995, 1998; Howard & Weerts, 1999; Wood, 1973). Attribution theory explores the extent to which a person recognizes their success or a failure as a result of elements that they control, or as the product of forces over which they have no influence. For example, if students believe that their level of effort was the reason they earned a positive rating at a contest, this would be a positive attribution. On the contrary, if students believe that their rating was the result of the musical talent they inherited from their parents, this would be a negative attribution. Austin, Renwick, and McPherson (2006) explained these attributions related to ability conception, or the level of competence a person feels they have at a specific task. There are two types of

ability conception: fixed or malleable. A student with a fixed ability conception believes that regardless of their effort, they will not be able to influence their ability. A malleable ability conception is the opposite; the student recognizes the connection between effort and improvement. In educational situations, it is preferred that students possess a malleable ability conception in which they recognize that their efforts will aid them in developing knowledge or skill. For example, if a student is learning to play the trumpet and has a malleable ability conception, she may be more likely to continue performing when the inevitable struggles with range or flexibility take place. Because she recognizes a connection between her work and increased ability, she will see the value of practice. A student with a fixed ability conception may see themselves as helpless in the same situation and perhaps stop playing the instrument.

Attributions can shift with age. This study focused on high-school-aged students, who may be particularly prone to negative attributions. Asmus's (1985, 1986) work with elementary and middle school students showed that students tended to shift their attributions from effort-based to ability-based during middle school years. This shift in attributions may make high school directors' work more challenging as their students may have an attributional disposition to assume that their ability levels are fixed. James's early competition experiences demonstrated some of these attributional differences at work. Where James thought the experience would be motivational for his students, he was surprised that for some it "lit a fire," but for others, "they didn't buy into it." James was attempting to convince the students that if they worked harder they would see their competitive results improve. For those that continued, the connection between effort and achievement may have been present, for others, they may not have recognized a connection

between the added work and competitive success. In James's situation, the students with positive attributions and malleable ability conceptions were more likely to continue in the program and be motivated by the competitions. Additionally, James may have been attempting to motivate a group of students, many of whom were pre-disposed to believe that their abilities were fixed.

Michaela had a contrasting experience. She claimed that students felt that they were responsible for their competitive achievements. Michaela described the positive results as validating for students. She explained "it's not about lining the walls with trophies, it's about getting the kids to believe in themselves." In this example, Michaela attempted to relate the students' work to increased achievement hoping that the competitive result would instill a connection between effort and success for the students. If the students began to see the connection, they would be more likely to continue to work hard in music.

Negative competitive results can be particularly harmful to motivation in students and promote negative attributions (Hurley, 1996). Adam confronted the challenge of assisting a student who was shaken by a judge's comment about her intonation. The student told Adam "I don't know what I'm doing wrong. Am I that bad a clarinet player?" The student felt labeled by the judge as a bad clarinetist and was further exasperated because she did not know how to address the problem. In this moment she was more frustrated than motivated. This student displayed symptoms of a fixed ability conception. She did not feel that she was in control of her success. It is a credit to the student that she sought assistance from Adam, given Nicholls's (1984) finding that students with lower perceived ability were more reluctant to seek assistance, perhaps largely because they do not view the assistance as being capable of helping them improve. I suspect that the student who approached Adam

for assistance was not the only one with those feelings. How many other students share similar exasperation and helplessness but never communicate with their teachers? To what extent might these fixed attributions lead to attrition from music programs? How might competition accentuate and amplify negative attributions?

Researchers have found that competition effectively motivates students in a number of educational situations besides attributional concerns (e.g. Ames; 1981; Deci et al., 1981). However, competition has the potential to shift students' motivational aims from musical goals to competitive ones. For example, following a study in which students were given classroom games to play in both competitive and non-competitive situations, researchers warned that competition can shift an activity to become an "instrument for winning rather than an activity which is mastery-oriented and rewarding in its own right," (Deci, et al., 1981, p. 81). This focus on winning may have occurred in participants' experiences in my study.

As a high school student, Alan embodied competitive motivation. He described his entire reason for being in band as being connected to winning. He was intensely interested in his band's standing compared to other groups and worked solely with the desire to improve competitively. Music was a means to compete against others rather than rewarding on its own merit. Similarly, Gregory's experience as a high school student and the state marching band championship highlight the motivational impact of the contest structure. Gregory described the experience of competing in the state championship as an opportunity to "bask in your glory." It was rewarding particularly because it was a competitive achievement and one that Gregory found meaningful. Gregory's motivation in marching band was for competitive glory more than for musical learning. He wanted to "have his milk and bask in

his glory.” This goal was clearly competitive and not musical. The drive for competitive success supplanted the inherent rewards of music making.

Summary and Implications

This study demonstrates how band competitions were evaluative of participants rather than students. Participants perceived connections between contest results and their professional reputations, community opinions of their programs, and personal feelings of competence. The public nature of these evaluations created an environment in which teachers became increasingly focused on how they were perceived through these events rather than their students’ growth. Competition fomented concerns of self-perception rather than educational impact and contributed to how teachers acted.

These perceptions pose a challenging problem as they are clearly connected to the evaluative component of competitions, however, without evaluation, competitions could not take place. Fundamentally, competitions are acts of comparison and comparison requires some sort of measurement and evaluation of a performance. I discuss alternatives more broadly in the implications section later in this chapter but it should be noted here that one solution to this issue is to not compete. With that said, small adjustments in contest administration might ameliorate some of these problems. Contest organizers should consider treating results as confidential and provide bands only with their scores and comments. This step would make it more difficult for directors to compare performances and it could put educators in control of how and where they share competitive outcomes. Only those who attended performances would be able to make any sort of judgment about which bands performed better than others, and even then, that judgment would not be supported by formal results. Further, festivals and contests might encourage broader use of a comments

only entrance option, or better yet, operate the events as clinics in which the only feedback offered are formative comments. This would change the focus of the events from evaluation to education and emphasize the educational role of the adjudicator who would then have to prioritize the feedback provided rather than the scores awarded. These changes would only partially address the issue, as comparison is likely to remain part of the experience. However, they would be positive steps towards reducing the evaluative and comparative emphasis that dominates these events now.

The potential use of contest results as a component of formal teacher evaluation is a pressing danger to the field. The shortcomings of contests and festivals as a means of providing fair, reliable, and unbiased assessments of teachers' competence is well established. Similarly, the utility of existing rating scales is dubious. Grade inflation is rampant in evaluative festivals and the euphemistic labels that are traditionally used do not accurately reflect achievement. Additionally, attributes such as instrumentation and program size influence contest results making positive evaluations of schools from large population centers and with established music programs most likely. This places educators teaching in rural or small programs at an evaluative disadvantage. With their evaluations and career advancement potentially formally connected to contests and festivals, teachers in rural areas and those with small programs may find it increasingly difficult to attract educators. This will further privilege teaching in large, suburban programs dissuading teachers from working in rural areas and small programs.

Band educators should vocally oppose any effort to use contest results in formal job evaluation. They should be prepared to articulate the significant shortcomings of the data generated in contests and festivals: contest rubrics evaluate just a fraction of the overall

curriculum, individual student learning is not assessed, and lingering issues of reliability and fairness persist. Additionally, directors should actively seek alternative data to communicate the efficacy of their teaching. Artifacts of student work, assessments used in the course of instruction, as well as observations by administrators and arts professional would be more appropriate evaluations as they provide the opportunity for students' individual learning to be examined and can recognize the specifics of each teaching situation.

Participants viewed contest results as an understandable and easily communicated advocacy tool. Competition outcomes could be communicated to stakeholders who had little understanding of music and may have not attended a performance. However, the utility of the results was also a limitation. By advocating for their programs through competitive results, participants legitimized competitive success as a primary aim of their programs. Arguments for treating competition as a form of advocacy have additionally conditioned stakeholders to prioritize competitive success at the expense of qualitative aspects of band performances. Educators may be well served to diversify their advocacy arguments to focus on the musical facets of students' performances. By changing advocacy to focus on musical attributes, educators can engage audiences in a manner that emphasizes students' work and encourages stakeholders to interact with concerts and programs meaningfully. Rather than relying on simplistic ratings that compare schools, educators can reorient the conversation to be situational and musical.

Participants used competition to motivate students. Perhaps the most troubling element of the motivational impact of competition is its effectiveness. However, to what ends were students motivated? This is an ongoing debate among music educators (Andrews, 1962; Birge, 1966; Payne, 1997) centering on the question: do competitions motivate

students to achieve success at the contests or to meaningfully engage in musical learning? In addressing competition in general education classes, Deci (1981) asked: “is the activity an instrument for winning rather than an activity which is mastery-oriented and rewarding in its own right” (p. 81)? In the context of band competitions, was musical performance enjoyable in its own right or were students more motivated to win? Alan’s interest was clearly in winning, however; for others the response was more mixed.

The motivational impact of competitions leaves music educators with a difficult question to confront: are we comfortable with students’ goals in music being more competitive than musical? As Buyer (2005) posited, competitions provide students with a culminating event and goal to work towards. However, in many instances students’ goals become success at the culminating event rather than musical learning. How might students’ focus on success at a competition influence their overall attitude towards continued musical engagement?

Competition as a Curricular Phenomenon

This study’s findings demonstrate that the phenomenon of being in competition is one of lived experience and curricular in nature. Before discussing the specific curricular elements and commonplaces of these competitive curricula, I will situate them more broadly within a curricular paradigm, or “set of ideas, values, and rules that governs the conduct of inquiry” (Schubert, 1986, p. 170). I then discuss the facets of competitive band curricula through each of the commonplaces: teacher, learner, subject matter, and milieu.

A Tylerian Approach

The fundamental structure of competitive band curricula is a straightforward process involving three tasks: band directors choose a contest or series of contests in which their

bands will participate; directors select or design the repertoire or other materials that the students will perform at the contests; directors teach the students the materials that they will perform. In this model, the contests are the goals of the curriculum as all other activities are designed to prepare students for the competitive events. This approach to curriculum aligns closely with the Tyler Rationale (1949), a curricular framework that has dominated curricular decisions in the United States for decades (Schubert, 1989; Tanner & Tanner, 1980; Walker & Soltis, 2009) and has an established presence in music education (Leonhard & House, 1959). To this point, Benedict (2010) explained that the Tyler Rationale “permeates all aspects of music education” (p. 150).

The Tyler Rationale (1949) is organized using the following four questions:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. How can learning experiences be selected which are likely to be useful in attaining these objectives?
3. How can learning experiences be organized for effective instruction?
4. How can the effectiveness of learning experiences be evaluated? (pp. v-vi)

Tyler’s approach to curriculum development is linear. An educational goal is determined in the first step, after which educators work backwards from the goal to determine the experiences that students would need to achieve the intended outcome. It is a positivist orientation (Barrett, 2005; Hanley & Montgomery, 2005) which has:

focused narrowly on classroom practice with the teacher implementing a curriculum that experts have developed. Students are at the bottom of the hierarchy. (Hanley & Montgomery, 2005, p. 18)

To better understand the Tylerian and positivist nature of competitive band curricula I respond to each of Tyler’s questions through this study’s findings.

What educational purposes should the school seek to attain? In curricula including competition, achieving a positive score or rating is a fundamental goal. To do so

requires a band to demonstrate their mastery of skills and objectives that are enumerated on the adjudication rubrics and evaluated by a single adjudicator or panel of judges (Barnes & McCashin, 2005; Gonzales, 2007). These rubrics typically focus on behavioral performance objectives relating to musical elements such as intonation, expression, rhythmic accuracy, or tone (e.g. Abeles, 1973; Greene, 2012; Latimer, Bergee, & Cohen, 2010; Saunders & Holahan, 1997). To achieve a positive rating, a director's job is to prepare students to demonstrate the appropriate behaviors at a level which would earn a desired result. The rubrics in effect determine the skills that are of most importance, so the contests set the goals for the curricula. For example, Gregory, Jessica, and James each acknowledged competitive success as a goal within their show design process and made specific decisions related to the rubrics in their curriculum development processes.

How can learning experiences be selected which are likely to be useful in attaining these objectives? Since the contests measure behavioral objectives, the development of skill is prioritized throughout the curriculum. Rehearsals featuring drill and practice type activities were the primary mode of instruction in programs that featured competition. Perhaps participants' biggest subject matter decision was the selection of repertoire, as its technical demands determined the skills that students would need. Educators chose what repertoire they taught and this process involved matching the skill demands of musical selections with the specific strengths and weaknesses of a particular band. Carney (2005) offered a means of examining repertoire selection through two distinct considerations: suitability and quality. Quality concerns related to selecting music of high artistic merit and suitability concerns involved selecting music that matches the capabilities, instrumentation, and unique facets of an ensemble. This study corroborates Carney's finding

that band directors prioritized suitability concerns over quality. For example, as James and Jeff each discussed their reasons for designing custom marching shows, they valued the ability to highlight their students' strengths and mask weaknesses, a task which would be much more challenging if they were not as active in the development of the performance materials.

How can learning experiences be organized for effective instruction? This question builds upon the answers to the previous two. Greene (2012) illustrated the Tylerian model in competitive curricula and the influence of adjudication rubrics on curricular decisions in his discussion of marching show planning:

There are now clear indications of what adjudicators are looking for during their performance. If directors and show designers have developed a show concept that is appealing and effective with proper and relevant musical and visual selections, then it is ultimately up to the performers to execute said music and drill to the best of their training and ability. (p. 219)

Greene highlighted the reductive view of students in show design as being narrowly focused on skill development. In this view, learning opportunities that were not embedded in the development of performance skill were neglected. This might include exploring the historical significance of the repertoire performed, the form and structure of the work, or opportunities to improvise or compose. The narrow swath of content measured by the rubrics places walls around what the students can learn in the context of the band. This third question focuses narrowly on organizing instruction to develop skills needed to successfully perform selected repertoire.

Tyler (1949) listed three considerations related to this question: “continuity, sequence, and integration” (p. 84). Continuity refers to developing needed skills over an extended period of time. In a band setting, continuity might apply to the development of a

sonorous tone quality. Tone quality is often developed through repeated exercises emphasizing tone production and sound quality. To succeed in this objective, music teachers might find it important to engage in continuous instruction and repetitive practice. Sequence refers to the order in which skills are developed. For example, directors may recognize the importance of intonation but make sure that students are playing accurate pitches and rhythms before addressing discrepancies in tuning. Finally, integration is meant to aid the learner in developing a “unified view” of the materials (1949, p. 85). This may be where students recognize that their attention to dynamics results in a more expressive performance.

In this study, participants focused on continuity, a phenomenon also evident in literature related to competitive curricula. Studies examining instrumental music teachers have found a heavy focus on skill development in areas such as rhythmic accuracy, balance and blend, and tone quality (Cavitt, 2003; Goolsby, 1996, 1997, 1999; Juchniewicz, Kelly & Acklin, 2014). Research highlights instruction organized around rehearsal processes which emphasized error-correction (Cavitt, 2003) and the gradual development of skills that would be integrated into the performance of the music. Participants engaged in similar processes. Their rehearsals were based in skill-development, error-correction, and preparation for the upcoming contests.

How can the effectiveness of learning sequences be evaluated? The contests serve as a means of evaluation. Students and bands that demonstrate the appropriate behaviors and achievements are rewarded with positive ratings. While the field has debated a number of means of evaluating performances such as global scores (Fiske, 1976, 1979); criteria-specific rating scales (Brooker & Gilbert, 2002; Latimer, Bergee, & Cohen, 2010; Saunders & Holohan, 1997) and facet-factorial instruments (Abeles, 1973; Cooksey, 1977;

Greene, 2012; Smith & Barnes, 2007), the overall premise has remained the same: group performances that are evaluated by an adjudicator or panel of judges are the means of evaluation. Alan's experiences illustrate this process. Alan's band was focused on improvement as measured through contest scores. Students and directors examined results sheets following each contest to determine the areas that they needed to improve. If a judge commented on the drumline's tempo fluctuations, the group would specifically focus on tempo over the next week. If an adjudicator mentioned inaccurate formations, then the band would rehearse drill much more closely before the next contest. The contests evaluated the performances and indicated the areas needed for growth. To the extent that the contests provided feedback, the directors implemented those recommendations directly into the students' upcoming rehearsals. Evaluation was central to the curriculum as it informed ongoing instruction, particularly within bands that competed multiple times.

Implications of the Tylerian Model. The Tylerian (1949) approach to curriculum development presents a number of problems. The linear process and first steps in determining the goals and aims limits and determines the curricular options. In curricula emphasizing competition, rubrics could be seen as the goals thus making the categories and descriptors listed on them the de facto curriculum. Even though repertoire was varied and students experienced a variety of music, the development of skills needed to perform the music was the lone means of musical engagement. This has led to a restrictive view of curricular development as competitions evaluate only behavioral performance objectives and teachers who are heavily invested in achieving competitive success may be reluctant to include any learning experiences that do not directly relate to elements measured on the rubrics. For example, competitions do not address students' abilities to understand the form

and structure of the music they performed, discuss the historical context or what is being expressed through the music, or ability to speak to what makes (or does not make) the repertoire they performed a quality piece of music. I acknowledge that quality of repertoire (Carney, 2005) was a consideration in these curricula, however it was assessed solely by the teachers. Participants never discussed instances where Students asked to determine the artistic merit of music they performed or make any sort of personal assessment of their enjoyment of the work.

Even these considerations are quite narrow as they are focused solely on understandings gathered through performance. This restricted view of curriculum development combined with the linear nature of the Tylerian approach reduces opportunities for pedagogical creativity, musical engagement outside of skill-based behavioral objectives, and any other musical exploration that might take place.

Perhaps influencing this narrow view of curricula is an equally restrictive view of musicianship. As Barrett (2015) explained, “the curriculum, in whatever institutional form and framing, often privileges some forms of musicianship over others, often according to the norms of the given setting” (p. 167). In these curricula emphasizing competition, performance was featured as the primary way of being musical. While I suspect that many would agree that performance should be a central part of any band curricula, it has been pursued with a sort of tunnel-vision focus that casts other forms of musical engagement or musical intelligence (Reimer, 2003) to the side. Balancing the degree to which bands should emphasize performance skills above all other musical engagements is an ongoing issue for band educators, as Reimer (2003) commented: “those who elect a music specialization want to experience music in a concentrated way through the role in question” (p. 275). To

Reimer's point, students electing to participate in a band will largely expect that their experiences will be dominated by performance activities with their band. However, this expectation does not release band educators from a responsibility to be comprehensive and responsive to their students' curiosities and inclinations.

There is room for more diversity within these curricula and compelling models exist. For example, Barrett (2005) shared the work of Nick White, a band director who dramatically diversified his band curriculum by taking two days of rehearsal each week and dedicating them to activities such as chamber ensembles, music technology, or composition. The performance level of his bands were unaffected and students engaged in more musical roles and experienced a broader view of musical engagement. Similarly, models such as Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance (O'Toole, 2003; Sindberg, 2009) offer a means for expanding engagement with repertoire far beyond performance skills; this approach has similarly been incorporated without negatively impacting performance abilities (Austin, 1998).

If educators are to consider alternative curricular models, their views of musicianship also need to expand. Consider the following questions: how might curricula be different if student-created composition were privileged over the role of the performer? How different might learning environments appear if the music critic was the dominant role? A person who views performance as the primary means of being musical might take issue with curricula centered on these roles; however, the same imbalances they see with the composer and critic privileged in the curriculum are present through the longstanding emphasis on performance. Recognizing multiple musical roles and integrating meaningful engagements beyond

performance in band curricula open opportunities for more comprehensive musical experiences which engage students broadly in being musical.

Summary. I offer the explanation of competitive curricula through the Tyler Rationale (1949) detailed above for two reasons: 1) it demonstrates that these curricula conform to an established and dominant framework of curriculum development (Benedict, 2010; Schubert, 1989; Tanner & Tanner, 1980; Walker & Soltis, 2009); and 2) it highlights how these curricula emphasize skill development and behavioral objectives. These emphases have limited students' opportunities for other types of musical learning. In this study, the contests and their rubrics determined the needed skills and provided the evaluation of learning. The answers to each of Tyler's (1949) questions were interpreted through the needs of competitive success first and foremost before any other consideration.

These findings provide insight into the facets of Schwab's (1973) four educational commonplaces in relation to competition as a curricular phenomenon. For example, is it any wonder that students would be viewed as skilled performers (O'Neill & Senyshyn, 2011) when their entire curriculum was focused on the development of performing skill? Participants' focus on the skills emphasized in the competition rubrics promoted viewing students narrowly by the skills they possessed and needed to develop. Similarly, with the need to select materials that promote the development of skills, is it surprising that suitability concerns (Carney, 2005) might pervade the subject matter decisions that directors undertook? This view of repertoire may prevent students from experiencing amazing works with technical demands that do not align appropriately with the assets of their band. Might the process of developing curricula so reliant on skills that are drilled and practiced through directors' leadership contribute to why the executive-oriented teacher (Fenstermacher &

Soltis, 2010) is dominant in these scenarios?

Finally, while the Tylerian approach to curriculum design remains dominant, it is only one of many ways to develop curriculum (Barrett, 2005; Benedict, 2010; Hanley & Montgomery, 2005; Walker & Soltis, 2009). Benedict (2010) explained that the Tyler Rationale operates as a “deficit model” to curriculum development (p. 152). In this view, students are viewed particularly related to what they cannot do, rather than the musical skills, knowledge, and understandings that they bring to the classroom. Similarly, Barrett (2015) highlighted that curricular emphases might be the product of longstanding beliefs about musicianship that privilege performance above other means of musical engagement.

Approaches to teaching (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2009) and views of students (O’Neill & Senyshyn, 2011) are varied and portray contrasting educational epistemologies. Consider how curricula emphasizing competition might change if the focus shifted away from competitive outcomes, skill development, and behavioral objectives. How might these curricula be different if students’ existing musical understandings were considered and prioritized before the development of skill? How might the experience of performing in a band change if measurable behavioral objectives were not such privileged aims to the neglect of other possible learning opportunities? The words of Elliot Eisner (2002) come to mind in this regard: “Not everything that matters can be measured, and not everything that is measured matters” (p. 178). Though behavioral outcomes are perhaps the most easily measured and evaluated evidence of learning, they are not the most important aspects of students’ education. The manner in which students make sense of their musical experiences, derive personal meaning from performing, connect music to the world around them and the ways musical experiences might inspire students to create meaningful art and music in the

future are all valuable aims, but more difficult to measure. Such aims cannot be evaluated through a group performance as they are not standardized uniform outcomes. Furthermore, these objectives were not prioritized in the types of competitive curricula that participants in this study fostered and were effectively absent from students' experiences. Music education may benefit from an examination of what these measurable behavioral objectives say about how music educators perceive musical learning. How do we define being musical? What do these curricula exclude when they focus narrowly on skill development and learning repertoire? What rich and powerful musical experiences could be included if the contest assessment was not prioritized as a goal?

The Teacher

The influence of the teacher was dominant in competitive curricula. Teachers carefully managed each of the commonplaces. Directors attempted to control how students reacted to contest results, carefully designed and selected the subject matter materials which students encountered, and manipulated the environment to establish a specific culture within their bands. Directors approached their work with the mindset of an executive (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2009).

The dominance of the teachers within these curricula directly impacted all of the other commonplaces. Schwab (1973) advocated for curriculum to be developed with the equal consideration of each curricular area (pp. 508-509) and explained that “coordination, not super-ordination-subordination is the proper relationship of these four commonplaces” (p. 509). He specifically warned that when one commonplace is dominant, the others are forced into a “subordinate role” (p. 509). Schwab offered the example of the learner-centered curriculum which is based solely on the inclinations of the students. He explained

that this focus may exclude important subject matter from the students' experiences. However, as a thought exercise, consider how a completely learner-centered band curriculum might function. Would students select repertoire? What skills and knowledge might they prioritize? What types of repertoire might they bring to the classroom? How differently might the classroom function and appear compared to the predominant, traditional view of band instruction? How would competitions influence their decisions?

This exercise might generate a number of problematic elements. As I consider my responses I ponder how the classroom might appear chaotic or unorganized. The repertoire selected may not suit my tastes or feature any of the music which I view as particularly valuable. I wonder if my experiences as a band member or as a director have prepared me to assist a group of this type. I worry that students will not progress in their capabilities on their instruments or expand their understandings of musical concepts if they are not challenged. While Schwab's (1973) recommendations are not followed in this instance as the commonplaces remain unbalanced, the benefits of this orientation emerge. This student-focused curriculum more closely resembles the facilitative approach to teaching (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2009) and the view of the learners as collaborators (O'Neill & Senyshyn, 2011). Models of teaching from these perspectives are present in band education (Holsberg, 2009; Shively, 2004), yet they are still exceptions to the dominance of the traditional model of band instruction.

Just as the image of the entirely student-focused curriculum may have presented some concerns, consider now how competitive curricula offer an opposite paradigm. The teacher's dominance has subordinated the other commonplaces to the degree that the students' inclinations are not represented. Though an extreme position, these practices are

traditional, established, and to an extent expected. Just as a curriculum emphasizing only students may neglect subject matter goals, the over-emphasis and dominance of the teacher has neglected the student.

In competition as a curricular phenomenon, the teachers' dominance required the other commonplaces to be compatible with the instructional approach. For example, it is impossible to have a situation with an executive-oriented teacher with a constructivist view of learners. These two positions are contradictory. A teacher cannot simultaneously view students as a facet to be managed while also wishing to react and be responsive to their evolving curiosities and inclinations. Control and responsiveness do not occur simultaneously. In these curricula emphasizing competition, the learners, subject matter, and milieu were subordinated to be compatible with the teachers' orientations. The following sections discuss ways in which the teachers influenced curricular design, particularly in regards to subject matter development and the influences of teachers' past experiences as a learner that might shape their curricular choices.

Teachers as Curriculum Makers. Benedict (2010) explained that “whether we realize it or not, all of us have been curriculum makers” (p. 143). This was certainly the case for the director participants in this study. While I do not believe that participants viewed their activities as curriculum design, the amount of autonomy and creativity that teachers experienced in designing their materials constituted curriculum development even if it was not labeled as such. These directors had the opportunity to craft original musical materials performed by their students, particularly in relation to marching band show design. Competitions shaped, influenced, and constrained what participants created but overall the

process was quite independent and engaging for the teachers. In fact, the competitive curricula that participants produced were often highly-customized to the specific bands.

The directors' work as curriculum makers might be viewed in light of the following statement by educator, Alfie Kohn (2016):

From worst to best: Curriculum designed by 1) distant authorities; 2) [teacher]; 3) [teacher], for these [particular] kids; 4) [teacher] WITH these [particular] kids. (Emphasis is in original)

Elements of competitive band curricula represent several levels of Kohn's (2016) rankings. For example, contests provide rules and guidelines for the musical materials that are to be performed. In concert band contests, directors may be required to select repertoire from a curated repertoire list or in some instances play a required piece. These lists are made by distant authorities who, in these curricula, may have narrowed the possible musical materials. Conversely, the marching band curricula allowed directors to design material for their particular bands. The influence of the distant authorities may have remained present though these curricula were designed for a particular group of students. However, students' interests and needs were represented narrowly in the curriculum design process. Participants largely considered students' performing skills only in relation to the technical demands of the repertoire.

In Kohn's (2016) ranking there is only a small difference between the final two curricular models, the preposition. Curriculum designed by the teacher *for* students versus curriculum designed by the teacher *with* students. The contrast between the two could be striking within competitive band curricula. For example, imagine a show design process in which students were intimately involved in the selection of repertoire, the establishment of a theme for the season's show, the manner in which the visual elements represent the musical

materials, and the overall aesthetic of the performance. Students would be required to consider the music broadly, derive the embedded meanings of the work, contextualize the materials into a cohesive theme, and engage in the portrayal of the music through visual formations or choreography. In this approach to developing marching band shows, what was formerly a process of directors bringing materials to students to learn becomes one where students learn through engaging in design. In this curricular paradigm, students would be engaging as choreographers, drill writers, and perhaps composers and arrangers rather than limited to a role of skilled performers.

In the aforementioned type of curricular framework, teachers might consider how students interact meaningfully with music more comprehensively. For example, Reimer (2003, 2004) discussed music as a domain containing a number of “musical intelligences” (Reimer, 2003, p. 199). By providing students an opportunity to act as choreographers and arrangers while involving them in the musicological process of assembling a cohesive thematic program, students encounter some of the intelligences embodied in those activities. They might learn how composers engage with music, the knowledge and expertise brought to music by musicologists and historians, and the interdisciplinary and creative intelligence used by choreographers. In such a curriculum, students’ experiences could expand beyond the skills and knowledge of the performer, providing the potential for them to learn a great deal more about music through performing in band.

A comprehensive band curriculum in which students take on diverse musical roles in the process of developing and performing a marching show is radically different than what was described by participants, and a significant departure from the traditional view of band. Perhaps what is best illustrated in the curricular paradigm exhibited throughout this study, is

the manner in which students are absent from educators' competitive curricular decisions. The aforementioned alternative curricular paradigm could be criticized as having a similar imbalance among the commonplaces by overly-emphasizing the student at the expense of the other curricular areas (Schwab, 1973), but small steps towards this vision could present welcome opportunities for students and new and exciting practices. By inviting students to play more of a role in the design process or at least contribute more to the selection of repertoire, directors could provide students with opportunities to engage more deeply with the music they perform. Small changes could become transformative for students. Students' place in the classroom can grow from performing their part in the band and expand to include their thinking critically about the overall performance in which they are engaged.

The Apprenticeship of Observation. The contest movement has been well established within the American band movement (Austin, 1990a; Keene, 1989) and all but one of the participants in this study had experienced band competition as a high school student. For many of the participants, the decision to compete was heavily influenced by their high school performing experiences. Because they competed, their choice to compete with their students seemed natural.

Lortie (2002) described the influence of past educational experiences on teachers as the "apprenticeship of observation." Lortie recognized that teachers' experiences as students have a profound impact on the way in which they teach. For example, by the time a student enters a teacher-preparation program at a university they will have spent "from 13,000 to 15,000 hours" observing teachers in the classroom (Campbell, Thompson, & Barrett, 2010, p. 35). The participants' high school competitive experiences informed their views of what bands and band directors should do.

The apprenticeship of observation makes pedagogical innovation challenging. The prevailing influence of the apprenticeship is that we tend to teach how we were taught. In this sense, it is unsurprising that these directors would choose to compete. Furthermore, participants' apprenticeship of observation likely influenced how they prepared bands for competitions. It might be the case that the executive approach to teaching is so common among these directors because they were taught by teachers with the same orientation. In fact, when all participants in this study discussed their competitive experiences as students, they described educational environments that were managed closely by their directors. Participants did not seek to change or reform their pedagogical practices. No participant expressed a desire to change from the executive-orientation or wished that their former directors had been less controlling of their experiences in high school band programs. They respected and expected the executive influence in their experiences and similarly expected to teach from that perspective.

Alternative approaches to teaching exist. For example, Fenstermacher and Soltis (2009) offer the facilitator approach as a contrast to the executive approach. The facilitator places a great deal of emphasis on the students as persons" (p. 24). In many ways, the teacher as facilitator is the antithesis of the teacher as executive. Where the executive desires control, the facilitator relinquishes power to the learners. The executive prioritizes subject matter mastery, where the facilitator attempts to build on students' prior experiences in the classroom. There are distinct differences between the approaches and none of the participants indicated desire to bring characteristics of the facilitator to their teaching. I suspect that this is in no small part because none of them had learned from a band director

who taught from the facilitator perspective. They lacked a model on which to base a facilitator-oriented pedagogy.

Pedagogical change is additionally challenging because of how established traditional, teacher-centered methods have become among ensemble directors. Austin (1998) commented how “research indicates that many ensemble directors continue to favor a traditional, performance-focused methodology” (p. 30) and similarly, studies related to teacher practices in competitive curricula (Cavitt, 2003; Goolsby, 1996, 1997, 1999; Juchniewicz, Kelly, & Acklin, 2014) found rehearsal environments dominated by teacher-centered instruction in which efficiency and silence were privileged and talk (both from teachers and students) was diminished.

Efforts to initiate change have yet to make significant inroads because the apprenticeship of observation and established practices are so engrained in how band is taught. For example, Berg and Sindberg (2014) lamented that despite preservice teachers’ introduction to comprehensive musicianship ideas during their undergraduate training, few continued to carry those teaching strategies beyond their student teaching. In particular, they found that many cooperating teachers were teaching with traditional strategies and teacher-candidates were most likely to emulate those ideas and discard what they had learned during their undergraduate studies. Similarly, in a review of studies on comprehensive musicianship Austin (1998) lamented that ensemble directors were unlikely to adopt new methods of teaching despite research supporting comprehensive musicianship as an effective curricular paradigm: “regardless of the manner in which the approach [comprehensive musicianship] was implemented, results were uniformly positive” (p. 28).

Summary and Implications. The dominance of the teacher within competitive curricula should not be a surprise. The traditional teaching strategies that were employed by participants are well-established within the profession. Participants largely chose to teach in the manner in which they were taught, and expressed no desire to alter their teaching strategies. Teachers dominated the curricula and the other curricular commonplaces were subordinate to their influence and control. They acted as curriculum makers and had a great amount of autonomy in what they developed and taught. However, despite the teachers' involvement in curriculum development, students were considered narrowly in the process. The resulting curricula looked at students largely based upon the skills they needed to develop to perform repertoire, but negated the experiences which they brought to the classroom, and excluded them from being active in the direction of their own learning.

The facilitator approach to teaching may be a welcome contrast to the executive orientation that was so dominant; however, little change is likely if music teachers do not desire this type of pedagogy. The contest ratings additionally make any sort of pedagogical change risky as there is a perception that changes may result in lower ratings, which could negatively impact teachers. Even though research examining alternative curricular frameworks such as *Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance* (Austin, 1998) and *Blueprint for Band* (Garofalo, 1976; Garofalo & Whaley, 1979) have found universally positive outcomes without loss of performance skill, any teacher who would choose to alter their curriculum, integrate elements of other teaching approaches, or involve students more meaningfully in the curriculum may feel they are taking a risk. The lack of successful models of alternative curricular approaches in large ensemble settings exacerbates the situation (Berg

& Sindberg, 2014). If we so often teach how we were taught and bands are taught from the executive perspective, it will be difficult to convince teachers to innovate.

Despite the challenges outlined by Austin (1998) and Berg and Sindberg (2014) I believe that change has to be advocated for in teacher education programs. Alternative methods of teaching need to be demonstrated and explored by preservice teachers in real-life situations. Ensemble directors could be a meaningful part of reform efforts.

The apprenticeship of observation continues as preservice teachers work towards their degrees. They spend more time in ensemble rehearsals than they do in music education coursework. University ensemble directors will serve as pedagogical models for preservice teachers, and they should consider how some of their practices might be transferred to younger bands. I am not advocating for university faculty to lead groups in the same manner they would a high school band. I recognize that college ensembles are qualitatively different from those in middle and high school settings. In a college band many of the students may be music majors who are taking courses in theory, history, composition, and other types of musical studies. I do not believe that college groups have the same burden of comprehensiveness as school bands because students have an opportunity to engage in other musical roles away from the group. In high school bands, the ensemble is often the students' only formal means of music education. College band directors should consider how they might address their pedagogical practices and discuss ways in which they might alter them in settings with younger students. They might consider incorporating questioning as a meaningful part of their rehearsals or sharing with students how they might expand their instruction to fit with a comprehensive musicianship model, or align to other curricular

frameworks. Similarly, they might facilitate musical discussions with students, and demonstrate ways of teaching that are closer to the facilitative model.

While music education faculty may not have the same opportunities to model teaching techniques in college ensembles, they can consider the following steps to provide preservice teachers with alternative models of instruction. Particular care should be taken in determining student teaching placements. Teacher-educators should work to identify and champion the efforts of teachers who operate from alternative perspectives and place student teachers with those educators as often as possible. Additionally, undergraduate music education courses might additionally feature case studies of innovative practices such as Nick White (Barrett, 2005). Having these teachers' work highlighted in courses will promote pedagogical innovation and curiosity, and may even be seen as a form of professional recognition. Preservice teachers may wish to become the innovative pedagogues that are someday used as exemplars in undergraduate curricula. More importantly, if preservice teachers see the curriculum they experienced as undergraduates put to work in meaningful ways in the field, they may be more likely to adopt alternative practices and strategies.

Despite the autonomy which directors may have in selecting repertoire and designing marching shows, directors are not particularly encouraged to experiment with their pedagogical approaches. I remain curious as to how the field might become more open to pedagogical innovation and how alternative approaches might be celebrated in the same manner as competitive success.

The Learner

The dominance of the teacher in these competitive curricula required a view of the learner who could be managed, controlled, and in need of instruction. In competition,

participants prioritized skill development as the learners' primary role so they would successfully perform their part in the repertoire. O'Neill and Senyshyn (2011) label this view the "learner as skilled performer" (p. 18), which is heavily rooted in behaviorist learning theory. In this paradigm the learner depends upon the teacher and the curriculum emphasizes students achieving behavioral objectives such as performing a piece of music at a specific tempo or marching successfully to appropriate positions during a performance.

The emphasis on skill should be of little surprise as the Tylerian (1949) approach to curriculum design and focus on behavioral objectives have been a part of music curricula for decades (Benedict, 2007, 2010; Hanley & Montgomery, 2005; Wiggins et al., 2006). In such paradigms, students are dependent on their teacher. As Reimer (2000) commented, "students in such very common situations, it has been argued, can become very proficient at being able to do what they are told, but are left with minimal ability to make musical decisions when left to their own devices" (p. 12). The curricula experienced by participants in this study were consistent with these well-known music education practices. However, alternative views of students and ways of framing knowledge within band curricula are available. The following section explores the learner as a skilled performer by contrasting it with other orientations.

Learner as a Collaborator. As an alternative to the behaviorist view of the learner as a skilled performer, O'Neill & Senyshyn (2011) describe a view of the learner as a collaborator consistent with constructivist learning theory (p. 21). The constructivist approach recognizes the unique understandings and knowledge that students bring to the classroom and emphasizes that learning occurs in a "social context and that all cognitive functioning is embedded in a social world" (O'Neill & Senyshyn, 2011, p. 22). The social world of a constructivist classroom emphasizes collaboration among students, and between

the teachers and the students. As Dewey (1938/1997) espoused, rather than viewing the teacher as a part of a different social group, the teacher may be more, the “leader of group activities,” (p. 138). Above all, in this learning environment the learners are not dependent on the teacher for their growth because they construct meaning individually and multiple perspectives exist (Wiggins, 2014, p. 10).

A collaborative view of the learner would produce stark differences in competitive curricula, with perhaps the biggest difference being the shift from the executive-oriented teacher to that of a facilitator. The executive orientation is incompatible with the view of the learner as a collaborator. A director working from a constructivist orientation would “work side by side with thinking individuals whose ideas matter and are central to the process” (Wiggins, 2014, p. 23). Rather than the learner being a facet of a complex organization requiring management, the learner is a person with whom the teacher collaborates as a part of the social group.

The following brief vignette illustrates how a collaborative and facilitative approach to teaching might function:

The teacher waits for the students to filter into the band room and then starts the new learning unit with a broad, generative, question written on the whiteboard: “how does music convey images of history?” The teacher assigns the students in the band to create a playlist on YouTube or Spotify that include songs reflecting historical periods. The teacher makes the class playlist available to everyone and begins analyzing the students’ contributions. The teacher assembles a selection of pieces that parallels, includes, or shares significant similarities to the students’ selections. A class discussion follows, allowing students to explain their contributions and listen to the reasoning behind their classmates’

selections. Next, the teacher encourages students to compare and contrast the selections they added to the playlist with those that have been chosen for performance. This requires students to examine musical elements such as form, structure, harmony, and melodic shapes as well as potentially differences in genre, time period, and intended audiences. The teacher might provide students with analytical heuristics such as the Facets Model (Barrett McCoy, & Veblen, 1997) or other frameworks to specifically examine the dimensions of the music.

As rehearsals continue, students are asked to aid in the rehearsal process. Whenever the band is stopped during rehearsal, the first action of the director might be to ask a question, such as “what could we do better?” After surveying the responses from the students, the director could then add to and enhance the students’ recommendations.

In this environment, the teacher is the “leader of group activities” in the Deweyan sense, but also facilitating the students’ development. The rehearsals are collaborative as the teacher builds on student responses and recommendations. The repertoire was chosen around a theme, but informed by students’ existing understanding of the relationship of historical events and musical works. The rehearsal process relies on the students’ contributions rather than avoiding them in the name of efficiency. The deficit view of students that can be created in a behaviorist-based curriculum (Benedict, 2010) is replaced with the collaborative view as learners endeavor to take advantage and build upon existing knowledge and experiences.

This view of the learner would have implications beyond the commonplace of the student. With competitive curricula where the learner, subject matter, and milieu center around the executive teacher, developing a contrasting view of the learner would require changes to the relationship between the teacher and the other commonplaces. Subject matter

would have to be developed through the involvement of the students in a manner that honors and extends their inclinations, interests, and curiosities. Similarly, the educational environment would be determined through a collaboration between the teacher and students.

Approaches. The changes created by an alternative view of the student are substantial and would represent significant pedagogical and epistemological changes for many teachers (Shively, 2015). For example, Allsup (2014) commented:

It has been argued that much of secondary ensemble-based music education shares with positivism a data-driven no-excuses epistemology, where contests and competition make no excuses for the particularities of musical experiences and taste, or the varied desires of individuals. (p. 63)

If an educator views learning from the established, traditional epistemology in band education, seeing other ways of teaching may be challenging without the educator adjusting her epistemological view. However, while the traditional approach to band and band curricula remains dominant (Austin, 1998; Reimer, 2000; Shively, 2004, 2015), approaches compatible with the view of the student as a collaborator exist.

Sullivan (2016) explored band curricula and teaching practices through a historical lens and offered differentiated “versions of band” in which one of the primary differences is the degree to which the students are viewed as a collaborative part of the learning endeavor. Offering six contrasting descriptions, she asked directors to consider “Which version of band are you teaching?” (p. 48). Within Sullivan’s framework, the competitive curricula present in this study align with version 1.0:

Teacher-centered, military discipline and strict regulations align with tradition in rehearsal participation by students following the instruction of the teacher to develop musical skills and knowledge. (p. 48)

While military tradition was not a specific facet of the competitive curricula of this study, the rest of the description is apropos. Particularly that the reliance upon the teacher for learning and the teacher-centered nature of the experience being consistent with both the view of the learner as a skilled performer and the executive-oriented teacher. In contrast, Sullivan (2016) offered version 5.0 of band which would be much more consistent with the collaborative view:

As a teacher, you embrace the idea of student-centered learning and encourage your students to help make decisions within rehearsals, and with administrative choice so they feel empowered and a part of a community of artistic decision-makers. You ask deep meaningful questions and challenge their thinking. You assign homework that connects school music to their personal music life. They start learning to assess their musical preferences, their peers, and themselves. You assign projects for students to discover information. (p. 48)

In this view, the learner is at the center of the educational experience and the large ensemble rehearsal process is dramatically transformed.

Shively (2004, 2015) offered specific strategies for ensemble directors who may wish to teach from a constructivist perspective. Emphasizing that the established teaching practices in bands presented an obstacle, Shively suggested that teachers considering changes “have to be able to envision what constructivism might look like, particularly in ensemble settings in which there is such a well-established image of the teacher as conductor” (2015, p. 130). Shively (2004) believed that in a constructivist ensemble, “the shift of the responsibility for learning from the podium to the students” (p. 189). The learners are collaborators with the teacher who aids them in achieving the ensemble’s goals.

Shively (2004) offered a list of twelve teacher characteristics that define a constructivist rehearsal environment. Each illustrates a heightened view of the learner within the classroom:

1. Constructivist teachers encourage and accept student autonomy and initiative.
2. Constructivist teachers use raw data and primary sources, along with manipulative, interactive, and physical materials.
3. When framing tasks, constructivist teachers use cognitive terminology such as “classify,” “analyze,” “predict,” and “create.”
4. Constructivist teachers allow student responses to drive lessons, shift instructional strategies, and alter content.
5. Constructivist teachers inquire about students’ understandings of concepts before sharing their own understandings of those concepts.
6. Constructivist teachers encourage students to engage in dialogue, both with the teacher and with one another.
7. Constructivist teachers encourage student inquiry by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and encouraging students to ask questions of each other.
8. Constructivist teachers seek elaboration of students’ initial responses.
9. Constructivist teachers engage students in experiences that might engender contradictions to their initial hypotheses and then encourage discussion.
10. Constructivist teachers allow wait time after posing questions.
11. Constructivist teachers provide time for students to construct relationships and create metaphors.
12. Constructivist teachers nurture students’ natural curiosity through frequent use of the learning cycle method. (pp. 184-187)

I have included the entire list to illustrate how different this conception of curriculum and the students’ role in the learning process are from the competitive band curricula seen through this study. While the view of the learner as a skilled performer emphasizes compliance and direct instruction (O’Neill & Senyshyn, 2011, p. 20) Shively’s (2004) constructivist framework presents a different relationship between teacher and learner. The student is active rather than passive, inquires and asks rather than being told, draws on the teacher as a resource rather than depends on the teacher for learning, and is encouraged to clarify, deepen, and expand their existing knowledge.

Though a band taught in the context of Shively’s (2004) framework could still engage in competition, doing so might be antithetical to the aims of constructivist learning. In fact, the core structure of contests is in many ways incompatible with a constructivist teaching and learning framework. Contests are comparative events. While this description is

reductive, the core task of contests is to evaluate how well different bands demonstrate the same skills. Regardless of variations in repertoire, the basic element of competitions remains the same; contests compare how well groups perform. Competitions then, encourage bands to emphasize the same musical skills so that they will be compared favorably. The rubrics provide the learning goals.

Conversely, constructivist teachers build goals with students during the learning process. They ask broad generative questions that can be answered in many ways. As Alex Ruthman (Wiggins, Blair, Ruthman, & Shively, 2006) explained: “If we frame instruction around truly open-ended questions, we will not know all the answers before we begin” (p. 89). Competition on the other hand provides the answers a priori. Not only are the goals pre-established, they are created by a distant authority who developed the contest rubrics. Contests encourage teachers to guide learning to a specific outcome, while constructivist teachers celebrate the diversity of learning that can take place. In a constructivist environment, musical learning is related to students’ unique experiences and prior understandings. Achieving the same uniform outcome is not the goal and comparing outcomes is not useful.

Summary. When viewed from the context of constructivist approaches to teaching, the view of the learner as a skilled performer is problematic. Among the most troubling elements of participants’ competitive curricula was the absence of the learner from curricular considerations. Band curricula could be much more inclusive of student needs and interests if they were developed from a constructivist paradigm.

I recognize that the teaching methods that I have highlighted as alternatives to competitive curricula could be seen as shocking or troubling to many directors, and likely to

many of the participants in this study. Participants taught in manners consistent with established practices in band education (Allsup & Benedict, 2009; Austin, 1998; Blocher, 1997; O'Toole, 2003; Sullivan, 2016). Departing from these practices would mark a departure from a paradigm established and reified through nearly a century of competitions, contests, and festivals. However, I believe constructivist teaching practices and comprehensive musicianship pedagogy ought to be advocated to teachers because they represent compelling pedagogical practices that broaden the scope of what is taught in band curricula and provide opportunities for deep and meaningful student engagement (Berg & Sindberg, 2014; O'Toole, 2003; Reimer, 2000; Shively, 2004, 2015; Sindberg, 2012).

Barrett (2015), in a discussion of innovation in music curricula, mobilized the work of Cuban (2013) who documented imperviousness of school curricula to reform efforts. Traditional band practices have displayed similar imperviousness and resilience. I suspect a complete transformation from a traditional, teacher-centered band curriculum to an entirely student-centered constructivist curriculum is unlikely, but slow incremental changes in praxis are possible. For example, in teacher education courses, faculty might encourage students to integrate questions more meaningfully into their teaching practices as a first step. College ensemble directors might consider modeling alternative strategies or discussing how their pedagogy might be altered for younger bands. Similarly, teacher-educators should model alternative practices in any ensembles or demonstrations they lead and encourage pre-service teachers to involve students in musical-decision-making within the classroom. These changes would be subtle but elevate the students' place in the curriculum.

Subject Matter

In this study, competitive curriculum decisions emphasized repertoire selection. Such decisions inform students musical experiences; as Allsup (2010) explained “the decisions a teacher makes about what is included in a course of study (and what is not) form the very heart of class curriculum” (p. 215). To Allsup’s point, participants in this study considered the choice of repertoire to be their most important curricular decision. This, in turn, informed all subsequent curricular decisions. When music educators view students as skilled performers (O’Neill & Senyshyn, 2011) the technical demands of the selected repertoire dictate the skills needed for a successful performance.

The emphasis on repertoire in curriculum development is well established. Noted band conductor and author Frank Battisti (1989) explained that “the primary objective of the band program is the study of high-quality music in a concert ensemble environment” (p. 25). Similarly, Reynolds (2000) authored an article entitled “*Repertoire Is the Curriculum*” (emphasis in original) highlighting the centrality of music selection to the overall curricular framework. Additionally, a number of studies and pedagogical reference texts have attempted to establish a core repertoire of music that is best suited for performance by high school bands (e.g. Dvorak, 1993; Gaines, 1996; Holvik, 1970; Miles, 2000; Ostling, 1978; Wiggins, 2015). Each instance focuses primarily on what students will perform. Once directors select music, they determine the skills that students need to develop and begin rehearsing. This was the dominant process that participants engaged in to develop subject matter throughout the competitive curricula addressed throughout this study.

The focus on repertoire and the skills necessary for the successful performance of selected repertoire limits curricular opportunities and supports the view of the learner as

skilled performer (O'Neill & Senyshyn, 2011) to persist. This view effectively neglects the diverse ways in which students might engage with a musical work. Alternatives might include those described by Tobias (2013), who illustrated musical engagement through activities such as covering, arranging, parody, remediation, sampling, and remixing (p. 32). In each example students engage with a piece of music in a different manner requiring vastly different musical skills. For example, remixing a piece of music might require a student to analyze the piece to determine the various formal elements and curate the specific elements they wish to alter. Making a parody of a piece requires a student to develop the same performance skills required to perform the original, but also to analyze and edit the work to create the parody. Repertoire is still an important element of a curriculum in this framework, but the possibilities for musical engagement are dramatically expanded. The student has the opportunity to engage in multiple musical roles (Reimer, 2003, 2004) and encounter music from more perspectives than that of just the performer.

The prioritization of repertoire selection and the emphasis on the development of performing skill create a narrow view of the subject matter which is available for students to experience. Campbell, Thompson, and Barrett (2010) recommend that music curricula should be examined by the extent to which they are “comprehensive, balanced, sequential, and relevant” (p. 134). For the purposes of examining these competitive curricula in this study, I would like to focus on the first criterion, comprehensiveness. A comprehensive curriculum “is broad enough in scope to provide students with an equally broad range of ways to encounter and experience music” (p. 135). I have chosen to use the 1994 and 2014 national standards for music education as a means to examine comprehensiveness in these curricula. Reimer (2003) discussed the standards as “a useful conceptualization of what a

comprehensive general music education should include” (p. 240). While I believe this comparison will be illustrative of the narrowness of competitive curricula, it is not without significant limitations. The standards are far from a perfect model for comprehensiveness. They have been problematized as a narrowly defined set of behavioral objectives (Benedict, 2007), are inconsistent with recommendations to consider curricula from postmodern perspectives (Barrett, 2005; Hanley & Montgomery, 2005), and there are compelling arguments against firmly defined content standards as a basis for curricular decisions (Barrett, 2015). Yet, even by the admittedly low and problematic bar of comprehensiveness set by the standards, these competitive curricula fail to represent the broad opportunities, roles, and experiences the study of music can afford.

Standards. The 1994 National Standards for Music Education had been in place for over two decades at the time of this study and each participant lived in a state in which these standards had been adopted. The 1994 National Standards for Music Education are organized as nine content standards including: singing, performing, improvising, composing, reading and notating music, listening and analyzing, evaluating performances, understanding relationship between music and disciplines outside the arts, and contextualizing music in culture (MENC, 1994). While I agree with Reimer (2003) who explained, “the performance program... cannot and should not be made to bear the burden of primary responsibility for teaching all the standards” (p. 282), I recognize that the breadth of students’ experiences could be greatly enhanced through including standards beyond those related to performance.

The competitive curricula were heavily focused on the development of performing skill and consequently emphasized performing to an extraordinary degree. While students had experiences in evaluating musical performances and reading notated music, there were

few opportunities in which composing, improvising, arranging, or contextualizing music historically took place. Competitive curricula addressed just three of the nine content standards and dedicated an extraordinary amount of time to just two of them: performing on instruments and reading notation. As Reimer (2004) lamented: “We have succeeded magnificently in Standards 1 and 2, singing and playing, for those students who have elected to pursue these areas. That has been our tradition, our focus, our aspiration, and our glory” (p. 34). The evidence present in the curricula described in this study support that little has changed. The traditional focus of music curricula has persisted despite efforts to broaden musical opportunities and diversify curricula.

The 2014 standards expand the process of performing to include elements that might aid students in better understanding the repertoire they are studying. The 2014 National Core Arts Standards (NCCAS, 2014) frame arts curricula around four artistic processes: performing, responding, creating, and connecting. Each artistic process has a series of anchor standards that illustrate the “general knowledge and skill that teachers expect students to demonstrate throughout their education in the arts” (NCCAS, 2014, p. 12). Bands would naturally focus on the artistic process of performing which includes the anchor standards: select; analyze; interpret; rehearse, evaluate, and refine; and present (Shuler, Norgaard, & Blakeslee, 2014). In this process students would play an active role in the selection of the music that they would perform, analyze the work, and construct an interpretation of how the music should be performed. These understandings would then inform the manner in which the piece was rehearsed and ultimately presented to an audience. What is key in this description is that the standards delineate tasks for students, not teachers. In competitive curricula the artistic process begins with rehearsal. Students are

excluded from the selection of repertoire, they are not asked to analyze the music, and their interpretations are not solicited. The teacher has done this work for them. Additionally, the other three artistic processes—creating, connecting, and responding—are not represented in any meaningful way. Viewed through the 2014 standards, competitive curricula fail in providing a comprehensive view of performing.

The standards raise concerns about the comprehensiveness of the musical experiences for students in competitive curricula; however, it should be noted that the standards were not a guide for any of the directors in this study. In fact, directors did not discuss any sort of curricular framework or formal curriculum that guided their teaching. Instead, they were guided by the contests. Participants based their curricula on the competitive rubrics and assessment tools. Contest rubrics did not require students to contextualize a piece of music, to explain their analysis or interpretation, or to demonstrate competency in any area other than performance skill. The narrow focus of the contests may have fomented an equally narrow conception of curriculum. If a broader musical experience is desired and competition is deemed an essential component of music curricula, then contests should at least expand what is evaluated to include a more comprehensive view of what students learn. Furthermore, teachers might wisely evaluate the influences that frame their curricular decisions.

That these band directors operated without a formal curriculum framework or curricular aims outside of their slate of performances is concerning. If teachers are not engaged in broader decisions about what and why they are teaching the way they do, then it is that much more likely that traditional practices will endure because alternatives are never considered. In the case of these competitive curricula and the great importance that directors

connect with achieving competitive success, it should not be surprising that their curricula would be heavily influenced by contests.

Alternatives. A number of frameworks for band curriculum that could serve as alternatives to competitive curricula. I am continually surprised that many of these models are several decades old, yet have made few inroads into modern praxis. For example, Labuta (1972, 1973) offered a curricular framework that expanded performance objectives to include the study of timbre, form, and historical performance practices. Garofolo (1976) offered a unit-based curriculum in his text *Blueprint for Band* in which students examined music comprehensively. He even conducted a study to determine the efficacy of his method and found no impact on performance ability, and the added benefit that “students taught with the Unit Study Composition approach acquired conceptual knowledge, aural skills, and performance proficiency to a greater degree than students taught with a traditional approach” (Garofolo & Whaley, 1979, p. 142).

A number of recent texts such as Patricia O’Toole’s (2003) *Shaping Sound Musicians*, Laura Sindberg’s (2012) *Just Good Teaching*, as well as the *BandQuest* curriculum (American Composers Forum, n.d.) which uses the Facets Model (Barrett, n.d.; Barrett, McCoy, & Veblen, 1997) “to promote the comprehensive study of a musical work” (Barrett, n.d., p. 2) are frequently used in college methods classes and approach ensemble teaching from a Comprehensive Musicianship Perspective. Similarly, the *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* (Miles, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2009) series offer chapters dedicated to expanding the scope what students learn in band. As Blocher (1997) explained, directors could broaden what they include in band courses by:

teaching not only the performance skills and knowledge that band students need to perform specific music, but also by teaching for understanding “about the music” and music in general. (pp. 5-6)

These alternatives still have a great deal in common with traditional practices. For example, each maintains a focus on repertoire as the means for musical learning. Additionally, these alternatives could be implemented in completely teacher-centered instructional models. Yet, the manner in which they broaden the curriculum is compelling despite the significant shortcomings. Each alternative would dramatically expand traditional band offerings by deepening the manner in which students engage with repertoire, but they do not necessarily offer a greater level of engagement or recognition of the curiosities and desires of the student.

While Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance-influenced curricula can expand the subject matter addressed, one can do so from an entirely teacher-centered approach. This is particularly the case when band curriculum is viewed from a constructivist orientation to ensemble leadership (Shively, 2004, 2015). As Shively (2015) discussed: “we must take care not to confuse championing a more comprehensive and varied approach to music education with championing constructivism” (p. 134). Each approach has its merits, but they are separate. It is possible to have a teacher operating from a constructivist orientation leading an ensemble but with a narrow conception of subject matter. Similarly, it is possible to have a comprehensive music through performance framework in an ensemble that is run in a completely authoritarian manner.

The lack of music educators adopting these methods is confounding. Scholars have found that Comprehensive Musicianship teaching practices have only positive impact on students’ development of performance skill and offer substantial benefits (Austin, 1998;

Garofolo & Whaley, 1979). Yet as O'Toole explained "many directors focus solely on performance skills" (p. xi). As Shively (2015) described, constructivist teaching practices have the potential to "open the door to a range of possibilities for inviting our students to join us in exploring musics and musical ways of being" (p. 135). Each is appealing, yet traditional practices remain dominant. The resilience of traditional practices is remarkable.

Traditional practices may be protected and reified by competitions. The contest movement prioritizes a particular epistemology informing what music teachers think band students should know and do. Contests focus on skill as demonstrated through performance. When contests are the means by which directors create a reputation within the field, secure and maintain employment, and inform perceptions of competency, any change is a considerable risk. Convincing a director to adopt a curriculum that might be based in comprehensive musicianship or other curricular models goes against all that the director likely learned through her apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), but also represents a risk to their reputation, employment, and even self-esteem. Even as participants viewed the opportunity to design shows and build curriculum, they did so with the constraint that what they designed had to be competitively viable. Teachers are likely to be reluctant to innovate beyond the norms and expectations of existing contest structures.

Tradition

Throughout this discussion I have proposed potential changes and highlighted ways of viewing curriculum and teaching practices within band that can serve as alternatives to competition as a curricular phenomenon. A consistent theme throughout this discussion is the fact that the changes I recommend are established practices that have simply not been adopted on a broad scale. The comprehensive musicianship movement is over 50 years old

and constructivist learning principles are even older. In fact, as I examine how band might be considered through a Deweyan perspective, I imagine a curriculum which would be shocking in light of existing practices. Yet many of Dewey's writings are over a century old. There have been thoughtful and potentially effective ideas about how band might be taught differently, but band education has stubbornly retained its practices in light of compelling alternatives. I see this as a problem of tradition.

Wind band conductor and author Peter Boonshaft (2002) referenced the words of the composer Paul Creston regarding tradition: "one must distinguish that which is traditional because it is right from that which is right only because it is traditional" (p. 38). I think we need to examine band competitions in this manner. Does the traditional place of contests in band curricula prevent educators from questioning its use? The answer requires a great deal of introspection. I believe this study's findings offer a number of concerns related to the value of competition as a part of band curricula, yet I have little doubt that competition will continue to flourish. Change would require substantial innovation in teacher praxis along with adjustments of the public's, school communities', and administrators' expectations of bands. Reimer (2003) explained that "the expectations of school music have been shaped by its history" (p. 280) and in this respect any change related to competition will require the field to overcome the historical expectations that we have established. We have done this to ourselves, so I wonder if it can be undone. I find myself asking why we cannot decide what makes band great currently and make that our narrative? How could we provide a new "public relations tour de force" (Keene, 1989, p. 303)? How might narratives which emphasize young people's engagement with music represent the work of music educators in a different light than contests?

Implications

The findings from this study provide a strong foundation to inform suggestions for music education including aspects of teacher education, future research, and in-service teachers. The following section provides suggestions for practice related this study's findings.

Teacher Education

Perhaps due to my own context as a teacher educator, I believe that teacher education has the greatest possibility to influence change and address the findings of this study in a meaningful manner. In this section I outline recommendations for addressing competition in teacher education curricula, curriculum development as a part of teacher education curricula, and dialogue with professional organizations.

Addressing competition in teacher education curricula. Competition has become a traditional part of being in bands and many students who enter music teacher education programs will likely bring competitive experiences with them. A dialogue about competition may give teacher educators a chance to assist preservice teachers in contextualizing and reflecting upon their experiences. The apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 2002) is a powerful influence on teachers of any subject; encouraging students to think critically about their experiences may allow them to question how they were taught.

Findings highlight that contests assess a narrow area of student learning. Teacher educators may ask students to examine what was assessed in their competitive experiences and how that may match with their particular view of music. For example, students may think about music as a subject more broadly if they realize that their competitive experiences did not involve any assessment of their ability to compose, improvise, their understanding of theory or history, or their ability to talk or write about music. This has to be done in a

manner which honors and validates the pride they may feel in their competitive accomplishments but also encourages them perhaps look for more for their future students.

This study highlights the effectiveness of competitive results as a tool for advocacy. Teacher educators should examine advocacy with their students and how they might construct arguments to support their programs in the future. I encourage teacher educators to explore the manner in which competitive results are used within advocacy arguments. Students may recognize the ease and utility of the results but should also be encouraged to broaden their arguments to make advocacy about musical achievements that have to be heard and enjoyed. As Michaela commented that results from competitions allow her to explain her band's performance without all of the "band geekery," I believe we should encourage students to embrace the qualitative elements of their performances. Pre-service music educators might be encouraged to talk about the specific musical characteristics that were remarkable and highlight the contributions of the students on the stage. We may do a great service to advocacy efforts by making our arguments more about music and less about numbers.

Competitive results were incredibly important to teachers. They perceived a connection to their reputation in the field, their continued employment, and their personal perceptions of competence. Teacher educators may also wish to establish a dialogue with students about how they perceive competitive results among each other and as a sign of competence for music educators. They may be unaware (or painfully aware) of the connection between financial resources and competitive success or of the challenges of teaching in a rural area and competing. Teacher educators may assuage these concerns by explaining the established biases in band competitions. Also, preservice teachers will be

confronting concerns about how they are perceived and the reputation they will construct (Fuller & Bown, 1969) throughout their early career. Helping pre-service music educators understand how competitions function and encouraging them to broaden evaluations of their teaching beyond the rankings and ratings their bands receive may help as they enter the profession. Similarly, future music educators may benefit from being encouraged to refrain from evaluating each other, the teachers they observe, or their future colleagues by the competitive results they achieve.

I also encourage teacher educators to advise preservice teachers to observe non-competitive high school band programs. This study highlights how competition is an established and traditional practice. Preservice music teachers will need to see alternatives to competing if they are to believe that it is a viable option. These programs and teachers are often invisible to the profession because they do not participate in the major events and contests. Yet remarkable teaching and learning may occur in such contexts. While the lack of competition as part of a curriculum does not guarantee that these programs would be taught from a facilitative, comprehensive, or alternative perspective, such approaches may be more likely present in programs without the burden of competitive outcomes. Students may benefit from comparing and contrasting the features and benefits of both competitive and non-competitive programs and decide which they may wish to pursue in their teaching careers. In particular, music teacher educators might identify and highlight non-competitive programs where innovative curricular practices may be taking place that might be difficult to achieve in a competitive curriculum.

Curriculum Development in Teacher Education Courses. Each of the directors in this study operated as a maker of a curriculum, yet none identified their actions in show

design or repertoire selection as curriculum construction. Teacher educators have an opportunity to assist students in thinking more about how the choices they make as teachers are often curricular in nature. Preservice teachers may think more broadly about music curriculum if they perceive music as a broad topic worthy of study in multiple ways and through many different roles. Teacher education courses may offer students a chance to design curricula for an extended learning period with criteria in mind such as the degree to which programs are comprehensive, balanced, sequential, and relevant (Campbell, Thompson, & Barrett, 2010).

Additionally, the participants in this study identified their curriculum development efforts as some of the most rewarding parts of their work. Teacher educators could highlight curriculum development as an engaging and creative act. We might situate curriculum development as a process through which music teachers can collaborate with their students, broaden the scope of what students' experience, and generate excitement and interest for both them and the learners who they teach.

Within the scope of curricular discussions, preservice music teachers would benefit from examining the manner in which the commonplaces interact to create an overall educational experience. While I view Schwab's (1973) commonplaces as a useful heuristic for curriculum inquiry, preservice teachers should examine curriculum as a part of their observing and coursework regardless of whether the commonplaces are employed specifically. In particular, the role of the educator in the classroom and the approach to teaching that is used should be emphasized. The executive orientation permeated this study, and was likely a common orientation witnessed by preservice teachers during their apprenticeships of observation (Lortie, 2002). If preservice teachers can examine the manner

in which a particular approach to teaching might influence a specific view of students, subject matter, or educational environment, they may reflect more on how they approach their work.

The Marching Band Techniques Course. The findings throughout this study highlight how participants found curriculum development for marching bands as a uniquely creative and engaging enterprise compared to other types of ensembles. Existing pedagogical texts designed for use in marching band techniques courses (Bailey, Cannon, & Payne, 2015; Foster, 1978; Markworth, 2008; Smith, 2012) focus primarily on the development of arranging and drill writing skills. With the exception of a one-page discussion in Markworth's (2008) manuscript, these texts exclude the competitive influence or intentions of the ensembles. Marching band techniques courses and related texts should include discussion of competition, its potential influences on students, and how it impacts their curricular decisions. The lack of this type of discussion can contribute to the perpetuation of these practices without a thoughtful consideration of how it influences curricular decisions.

As preservice teachers learn the skills related to show design, they should be encouraged to examine what might influence their choices critically. Additionally, preservice music educators should explore approaches to involve students meaningfully in the show design process. Teachers of marching band techniques courses might model methods of soliciting student input and ways of providing students with opportunities to choose from options. Preservice teachers will benefit from seeing methods for engaging students in the show design process and making the educational process more collaborative. Preservice teachers most likely participated in marching programs in which all the creative decisions related to show design were made for them, their apprenticeships of observation will

influence them to potentially teach in the same way. Teacher educators have an opportunity to influence praxis by thoughtfully modeling ways to make the marching program more student driven. Even if the high school students are not manipulating the drill design software, directors have the opportunity to deepen their marching band experience significantly by making them participants in the design process rather than just the recipients of the materials created by others.

In-service Teachers

Competition was a meaningful and significant part of each participant's work as a teacher or student. This study's findings should encourage inservice teachers to examine the curricular decisions they make in their teaching situations reflectively. Teachers should specifically examine how competing might influence the manner they act in the classroom, the way they view their students, and the approach they take to addressing subject matter. Music teachers may find that they perceive competitive results much in the same way as the participants in this study. Do competitions influence their reputation, perceptions of competence, or standing within their school and community?

The historical significance of competition and its view as a traditional part of high school band was evident throughout the study. In-service teachers may benefit by examining why they compete. What specifically do they want students to learn and gain from the experience of competing? What do they as teachers hope to gain from competitive experiences? Additionally, in-service teachers might investigate the curricular aims they wish to achieve and consider the degree to which competition aids in achieving these aims. Recognizing that in addition to the traditional manners in which music educators teach band and competitions have existed, there are a lot of alternative approaches that they may find

rewarding. For example, if teachers are seeking feedback for their ensemble, perhaps inviting a guest clinician to work with their band for an extended period might be more useful pedagogically than traveling to a contest. Hiring a single person to work with one's band may even cost less than sending an entire group of students to a competition. Additionally, as video conferencing technology such as Skype and Google Hangouts has become increasingly ubiquitous, directors may take advantage of the ability to have clinicians work with their students virtually. Researchers have documented compelling examples of this practice including examples of ensembles working with composers (Hoffman & Carter, 2013), virtuoso instrumentalists (Thibeault, 2015), and guest conductors (Burrack, 2012).

Music educators teaching band who seek to motivate their students ought to consider how competition functions as a motivational tool and if other means may exist. Perhaps involving students more in the ensemble's choices would provide the heightened level of engagement they seek. Finally, music educators wishing to establish a culture within their group should consider bringing the students' into the discussion of what the group should expect of one another and what the group might achieve. Throughout this study, teachers bore the sole responsibility for learning and achievement. Directors may take a great deal of pride by placing students in charge of their learning and altering their role in the classroom to encourage, assist, and collaborate with them.

While considering alternatives to the curricular phenomenon of competition, inservice teachers may wish to examine other approaches to teaching and challenge the images of pedagogy they may have developed through their apprenticeships of observation. Music educators who identify as executives may find that adopting characteristics of the facilitator may be worthwhile. They may benefit from an investigation of how principles of

constructivist learning theory might inform their teaching. Similarly, executive oriented music teachers could explore how curriculum might be constructed through frameworks such as the Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance or hybrids of that system. Through an examination of multiple ways of teaching and developing curriculum, inservice teachers may grow more confident of their current teaching practices or perhaps make changes that help them derive more satisfaction from their work.

A significant issue within this phenomenon is that teachers seem to need and go to great lengths to seek accolades within the profession. To my knowledge, teachers in other academic disciplines do not seek recognition at the same scale or with the same impact upon their students. I urge music educators to consider eschewing the pursuit of professional recognition and the need to compare their work to others. While our field's tradition of competition and our professional organizations that facilitate these events have institutionalized and reified this disposition, music educators have agency and can choose how they participate in aspects of bands and the ways they become satisfied with their work. Our field may particularly benefit if we examine our success more by what we do for our students rather than what accolades and accomplishments we earn through our students.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study offered a phenomenological investigation of a curricular phenomenon which is common in American music schools. Practical inquiry (Schwab, 1973) was a means to examine the curriculum as it was lived and experienced. Additional research in this vein would help the field better understand how band is experienced in real and concrete situations. Historically, scholarly inquiry related to competition in music education has focused on quantitative means such as the reliability and validity of evaluation rubrics, score

dispersion and rating inflation, and the influence of nonmusical factors on evaluation. This research is valuable and provides the field with needed data about the process of evaluating ensembles. However, we know little about how competition is lived and experienced. The few qualitative studies examining high school band do not specifically address curriculum or competition.

We have an established body of position papers that argue the benefits and detriments of competition, yet we have no consensus about competition's place in our curricula. For example, current scholarship that has challenged traditional teaching practices, and particularly those in band settings (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Kratus, 2007; Williams, 2011) has generated preservationist (Miksza, 2013) and even hostile (Fonder, 2014) responses. However, studies specifically examining established practices and curricular characteristics may provide a needed basis to continue and evolve the conversation. Rehashing the same arguments as the field has done for last several decades has changed little in how contests are used in our curricula. I recognize that entrenched positions are difficult to sway even in the face of empirical evidence—look no further than the studies showcasing the benefits of comprehensive music through performance (Austin, 1998), and the continued lack of adoption in the schools (Berg & Sindberg, 2013)—but continued curricular inquiry can, in my opinion, only help. This study offers the perspective of what it is like to experience competition and the way it frames band curricula. The field would benefit from further studies in this direction. To look more closely at the human experience of being in band and the way curricular decisions frame the experiences children have in ensembles.

Further practical inquiry into the experience of competing may provide us with more detailed images of competition to inform our positions and perhaps help resolve some of the felt tension. As Schubert (1989) commented: “A large-scale effort to interpret curriculum situations and the results of curriculum deliberation could result in a body of precedent similar to that used in the legal profession as a basis for judgement” (p. 309). If music educators know more about the curriculum, they may be able to make more informed choices about what bands do.

Contest results are an established means of determining competence within the field. This is evident in the literature base (Cavitt, 2003; Goolsby, 1996, 1997, 1999; Junchwicz, Kelly, & Acklin, 2014). Researchers wishing to examine pedagogical processes or effective use of instructional materials have prioritized contest results as a criterion in participant selection and sampling. For example, Goolsby’s (1996, 1997, 1999) studies of time use by directors of varying experience levels required that, among other criteria, experienced teachers have “earned consistent superior ratings at contests and festivals” (1996, p. 289). Experience was not just a factor of years of work, but rather years of competitive success. Cavitt’s (2003) study of error correction in instrumental rehearsals similarly required consistent superior ratings as a criterion for participation in her study. Another example is a recent study by Junchwicz, Kelly, & Acklin (2014) entitled “Rehearsal Characteristics of “Superior” Band Directors.” In this case, the authors used a rating descriptor to label the participants. They justified their use of ratings as a participant selection criterion by explaining “we decided to use previous research techniques used to identify “expert” and/or “exemplary” band directors based on criteria of sustained “superior” ratings at concert festivals or Music Performance Adjudications” (p. 37). The investigators felt that the use of

contest results to identify outstanding educators was an established best practice in instrumental music education research.

The influence of reputation on research may be seen most trenchantly in the lone study which attempted to compare competitive and non-competitive bands (Temple, 1973). The author solicited participants through the recommendations of college band directors and other music educators. He received numerous recommendations for competitive bands but was surprised that few people were aware of non-competitive groups. It was not that these groups did not exist, but rather that their lack of participation in festivals and contests made them largely unknown beyond their schools. The participant selection process led Temple (1973) to remark:

The difficulty which the college band directors and music educators encountered in nominating bands of high quality that did not participate in band competitions and the fact that no non-competition band has a director younger than thirty-four implies that the quickest pathway to professional recognition for a young band director has been through the development of a fine competition band. (1973, p. 109)

Temple's assertion, and the continuing focus on competitively successful groups within the research may point to a troubling gap in the literature. Non-competitive bands and their teachers, may be largely uninvestigated. Music education researchers have highlighted best practices and pedagogical techniques that lead to competitive success. This has reified the content of the evaluation rubrics as determining factors of quality music programs leading to a skewed view of curricular aims and how well they are being achieved. If competitive success is a prerequisite for so many studies, then potentially outstanding pedagogy, curricular development, and overall teaching practices may have been under-researched and erased to this point in the literature. Groups emphasizing more comprehensive curricula which might include composition, popular music, chamber

ensembles, and student-focused approaches are excluded because they do not conform or perhaps participate in the expected competitive evaluations. Additionally, these studies reinforce competition as a significant means for developing a professional reputation as a band director. This establishes an expectation for young teachers that they must promote the same aims as contests if they wish to be considered successful within the field.

Teacher educators and music education researchers should make specific efforts to reach out to music teachers who choose not to participate in competitions. This might include research studies highlighting the work of compelling teachers in non-competitive programs or narratives that highlight students' experiences in these programs and after they graduate. Teacher educators might also consider highlighting non-competitive programs in their classes by inviting teachers to speak in classes and encouraging students to observe and student-teach in these schools. The dominant story of the high school band experience is one of competitive band programs, and other narratives are needed to show different approaches. Rather than a single view of the successful band director with the established competitive record, the field would benefit from multiple visions of successful teaching. We should highlight student achievements, creative pedagogical practices, and innovation would be particularly welcome as they may help preservice and inservice teachers see that other accolades and recognitions exist within the field.

For example, as both Jeff and Adam start their careers, how might their approaches to teaching be different if they did not have to worry about what their bands' scores said about their competence? What if Jeff and Adam entered the field with a desire to innovate and create curricula which were localized to their community and focused on their students' interests and curiosities? How might their first years in the field differ if they were seeking

advice from others on how to best serve their students rather than hoping for advice on how to best prepare their groups for contests?

These changes will require dispositional adjustments for music educators and music education researchers. Acknowledging successful programs who eschew competitive events may mean recognizing educators who have chosen not to participate in their state or national music educators' associations. Given that many professional music education organizations concentrate on running and facilitating contests, embracing change calls for music educators who maintain the status quo to acknowledge the colleagues who they consider outsiders to the norm. Can the field expand how professionals see one another beyond their competitive records?

Teacher evaluation is another area of needed inquiry. While participants in this study did not address teacher evaluation specifically, the consequences they perceived in relation to competitive results suggest that they link competitions to competence. Given the current evaluation climate in the United States and the potential for stakeholders using competition scores as data in teacher evaluations (Hash, 2013), research is needed to determine the value of this type of data, the connection between teacher competence and competitive success, and the development of alternative data for teachers to employ in their evaluation. We might consider what the use of competition results in evaluation says about the way we value music teachers. Should they be viewed as educators whose job is to earn competitive accolades with children? What types of teaching behaviors might a focus on competition results promote and even more importantly, what types of teaching might such a focus prevent? Consider how differently teacher evaluation might look if instead of searching for

quantifiable results, we highlighted the dispositions and qualities that speak to an educator's ability to thoughtfully encourage students musically?

This study provides greater insight into what it is like to be in competition; more information is needed. Music education would benefit from a greater understanding of what is meaningful about competing on a larger scale. I believe an expanded agenda of qualitative research would contribute substantially to our understanding of band curricula, students' experiences, and how teachers go about their work. In addition to phenomenological studies, the field would benefit from case studies of competitive high school bands and their directors, ethnographic examinations of competitive band cultures and practices, and how competition is experienced differently in relation to contexts such as urban or rural settings, financial resources, band demographics, region of the United States, and directors' characteristics. These studies could help music educators better understand how competition is a lived experience and a substantial part of being in band in the United States.

The Null Curriculum

Eisner (2002) developed the concept of the null curriculum to describe “the options that are not afforded [to students], the perspectives they may never know about, much less be able to use, the concepts and skills that are not a part of their intellectual repertoire” (p. 107). The null curriculum is unavoidable as it “explicitly calls our attention to what has long been a matter of common sense—that, when developing a curriculum, we leave things out” (Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton, 1986, p. 34). Many of the issues and recommendations I have discussed in this document relate to what is excluded from band curricula because of the dominant influence of competition. These include the diverse roles and musical intelligences that Reimer discussed (2003, 2004); the deeper engagement with repertoire

afforded by comprehensive musicianship-influenced paradigms (O'Toole, 2003; Sindberg, 2012) and similar band curriculum frameworks (Garafolo, 1976; Labuta, 1972); or the meaningful student engagement and collaboration that can be fostered in learning environments prioritizing constructivist educational principles (Shively, 2004; Wiggins, et al., 2006). Understanding these curricular approaches as components of the null curriculum relates to one of my core arguments: the dominant influence of competition on curricula limits the ways in which students might engage musically.

As a final recommendation, I echo Eisner's (2002) urging music educators to investigate that which we do not teach: "we ought to examine school programs to locate those areas of thought and perspectives that are now absent in order to reassure ourselves that these omissions were not the result of ignorance but the product of choice" (p. 98). By exploring the null curriculum both as a field and as individual educators, we may discover vital musical perspectives that have been omitted and make space for experimentation with the compelling alternatives that already exist. This approach may work to mollify the pervasive Tylerian curricular structure that persists today. Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton (1986) discussed how this investigation might function and the benefits it may lead to:

We begin with a set of educational goals and ask what curricular alternatives will be considered. This question is qualitatively different from asking what content and sequence are most instrumental to accomplishing our goals. The former question urges us toward receptivity and openness, while the latter question urges us toward narrowing the field and arriving at a decision. (p. 40)

These questions ask educators to look beyond the efficiency and narrowness of the Tyler Rationale and most importantly demand a thoughtful exploration of alternatives.

Participants did not discuss formal curriculum deliberations or formal curricula as a part of their competitive experiences. As Eisner (2002) articulated:

what we teach in schools is not always determined by a set of decisions that have entertained alternatives; rather, the subjects that are now taught are a part of a tradition, and traditions create expectations, they create predictability, and they sustain stability. (p. 105)

I believe this to be the case with the curricula discussed in this study. Participants' curricula were consistent with traditional band education practices. I suspect that few questioned these choices as they had never been asked to consider alternatives. It is my hope that perhaps through a discussion and consideration of the null curriculum we may be able to confront the influence of tradition on our educational practices. Finally, if as Eisner (1998) explained "by our works we are known" (p. 40), might we owe ourselves and our students the diligence of thoughtfully examining what we teach, how we teach, and equally importantly, all that we have chosen not to teach? This study has problematized the influence of competition on band curricula. Band education can be a great deal more than it is now, but competition may be a hindrance. It is my hope that this study will encourage band educators to consider what our curricula can be beyond the pursuit of competitive outcomes. To change how we view ourselves and each other through trophies and awards and to start considering curricula with our students needs and interests first.

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APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



APPROVAL: EXPEDITED REVIEW

Evan Tobias
Music, School of
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Evan.Tobias@asu.edu

Dear Evan Tobias:

On 5/19/2014 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Large Ensemble Competition in High School Bands: A Phenomenological Study
Investigator:	Evan Tobias
IRB ID:	STUDY00001108
Category of review:	(7)(b) Social science methods
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assent Form.pdf, Category: Consent Form;• Parental-Consent.pdf, Category: Consent Form;• Consent Form.pdf, Category: Consent Form;• Dissertation Protocol.docx, Category: IRB Protocol;• Dissertation Interview Questions.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);• Facebook Recruitment Script.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials;• Email Recruitment Script.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials;

The IRB approved the protocol from 5/19/2014 to 5/18/2015 inclusive. Three weeks before 5/18/2015 you are to submit a completed “FORM: Continuing Review (HRP-212)” and required attachments to request continuing approval or closure.

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT POTSDAM
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

FILE COPY

Project #: 14-F-945 Revision 2

TO: Emmett O'Leary and Evan Tobias
Department of Crane School of Music
FROM: Johanne Sullivan, Chair, Institutional Review Board
RE: IRB action on submitted human subject proposal
DATE: January 7, 2015

Your proposed use of human subjects for the submitted project "Large Ensemble Competition in High School Bands: A Phenomenological Inquiry" has been approved by the Institutional Review Board and by the Provost of the college as of January 5, 2015. Most projects are approved for a term of one year. If your proposal is funded by a contract/grant the completion date may be based on the terms of the funding. Please note that a termination date of this approval has been set as January 5, 2016.

One month prior to January 5, 2016, the completion date you will receive a Notification of Project Completion form. You must complete this form and return it to Johanne Sullivan, Chair of the Institutional Review Board no later than January 5, 2016. If you have not completed the portion of your study in which human subjects are used you may ask for an extension of approval using the same form.

Comments:

Cc: Sitton, M.
Schaff, M.

Johanne Sullivan, Chair Raymond Hall 204 267-2688 SUNYPotsdamIRB@potssdam.edu