

Promoting Band Participation:  
A Case Study Of One High School Band Director's Beliefs

by  
Michael Scott Staub

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Chair of Committee: Julie Derges

Committee Member: David Bertman

Committee Member: Erin Hansen

Committee Member: Timothy Koozin

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## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to  
My family,  
My students (current and former),  
and  
My mentors and colleagues,  
who regularly point me to Jesus.

*“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” John 1:29*

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## ABSTRACT

Lifelong musical participation is an often-stated goal of music educators, but much of the research considering post-secondary band participation relies on the testimony of current collegiate participants (Isbell & Stanley, 2011; Mantie, 2013; Moder, 2013). To date there have been no studies which explore the beliefs of the high school band director on post-secondary band participation. The purpose of this case study was to describe the beliefs of a high school band director regarding lifelong instrumental music participation and explore how those beliefs shape her daily practice. Fives and Buehl's (2012) understanding of teacher beliefs served as a conceptual framework for this study. The following research questions guided the study: (1) What, if anything, does one high school band director believe about lifelong instrumental music participation? (2) In what ways do one teacher's beliefs about lifelong instrumental music participation serve as filters, frames, or guides for action (Fives & Buehl, 2012)? (3) How do beliefs about lifelong instrumental music participation appear in one teacher's practice on a daily basis? (4) How, if at all, are one high school band director's beliefs about lifelong instrumental music participation influenced by other contextual factors?

This inquiry was a case study of one high school band director, Diane Snyder, who teaches at a large, successful band program in Texas. Data collection occurred over four months and included semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, email responses, and artifacts. The data was coded to determine emergent themes. Trustworthiness was enhanced through prolonged time in the field, multiple data sources, and participant member checks (Creswell, 2007).

The themes that emerged from this study center around Diane Snyder's core beliefs about

teaching band: (a) creating a culture of excellence, ownership, and compassionate community; (b) building independent musicians; and (c) learning from mentors. Diane's central beliefs about teaching band led her to create an environment that encourages post-secondary music participation by providing her students with the skills, confidence, connections, and will to continue. High school band directors might benefit from considering whether they create an environment that supports continued music participation and whether their teaching practice encourages independent musicianship and continued participation beyond high school.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction and Need for the Study**

Lifelong musical participation is an often-stated goal of music educators. As far back as at least 1921, Fay (1921), a supervisor of instrumental music for Rochester, New York, stated that students who played in their school band or orchestra should be able to “carry on in home or community and thus contribute to one of the ends of music education” (p. 97). Ralph Rea (1956), director of bands at Fresno State University, believed that “unless the school music program flowers into an adult program, it has not entirely fulfilled its purpose” (p. 59). Leonard and House (1959) listed active lifetime participation as a product of a successful program in their book “The Foundations and Principles of Music Education.”

Other statements of the importance of lifetime musical participation developed out of the Tanglewood Symposium. The Tanglewood Symposium of 1967 gathered corporate executives, scientists, musicians, and many others to consider the role of music in American society (Choate, 1968). The Tanglewood Declaration created by music educators following the conclusion of the event called for music to be included as a core subject and encouraged, “adequate time for music in programs ranging from preschool to adult or continuing education” (Choate, 1968, p. 139). In addition, they stressed the importance of cultivating the potential of each individual and “developing opportunities which meet man’s individual needs” (Choate, 1968, p. 139).

Music educators today continue to echo the views of their predecessors concerning lifelong musical participation. Cavitt (2005) stated that a “terminal goal of music education is to provide opportunities for music students to master music making in

such a way that will allow them to independently pursue lifelong learning and fulfillment” (p. 42). Mantie (2014) believed that active participation is more important than a simple appreciation for music. He stated, “appreciating music is fine; *doing music* [emphasis added], however, holds greater potential for realizing more of music’s goodness...” (Mantie, 2014 p. 179). Pitts (2016) articulated a similar belief about the purpose of music education when she said, “Music education needs to be about leaving opportunities open, not closing them down; offering routes and role models for lifelong engagement, and articulating these possibilities for young people as part of developing and sustaining their musical identities” (p. 7).

In addition to individual music educators, musical organizations also promoted the concept of active musical participation throughout life. The second Tanglewood Symposium occurred in June of 2007 to address the many changes in society, demographics, and teaching environments since the prior symposium (Boston University, 2018). In the spirit of the first Tanglewood Symposium described above, one of the second Tanglewood Declaration’s stated purposes is “to validate the many forms of music making found in local communities and to prepare students to take their place in a globalized cultural environment” (Boston University, 2018, para. 8). The International Society for Music Education (2017), in their vision for the Community Music Activity Commission, stated that “we believe that active music-making should be encouraged and supported at all ages and at all levels of society” (para. 1). The National Association of Schools of Music (2015) continues to promote this idea today, as one of its general aims and objectives is to, “maintain professional leadership in music training and to develop a national context for the professional growth of individual musicians as artists, scholars,

teachers, and *participants* [emphasis added] in music and music-related enterprises” (p. 9). The Housewright Declaration, developed by prominent music educators and music industry leaders to provide a vision for music education in the new millennium, stressed that music makes a difference in the lives of all people and argued that “meaningful music activity should be experienced throughout one’s life toward the goal of continuing involvement” (National Association for Music Education, 2018, para. 2).

## **Defining Participation**

While some people have encouraged musical participation as a goal of music education, others have worked to define what participation is and what forms it may take. Gates (1991) developed a music participation theory based on ideas from music education, ethnomusicology, and the sociology of leisure as articulated by Stebbins (1979). Gates’ theory centered around motivation and the cost-benefit analysis of individuals as they decided the degree and nature of their participation. Gates (1991) defined music participants as, “those who directly or indirectly produce musical events for an audience, even if the audience is the performer him/herself, and even if the audience is not yet present as when an individual learns or composes music for an upcoming performance” (p. 6). Gates, however, declined to include listeners or audience members as participants. Gates developed a typology of music participants based on their motivation to engage with music and the role that music played in their lives. His six types of music participants in order from most motivated to least motivated are professionals, apprentices, amateurs, hobbyists, recreationists, and dabblers (Gates, 1991). At the professional end, these participants are willing to invest considerable time

and energy in return for their monetary benefit. However, the time and energy willing to be invested decreases with each group and the dabblers are not willing to invest nearly as much time and energy because they deem the benefits unworthy of those costs. Those who invest no time or energy participating in a musical performance are non-participants in Gates' view.

Small (1998) argued for a more comprehensive definition of participation that he called *musicking*, which includes composing, listening, rehearsing, practicing, dancing, or otherwise taking part in a musical performance. He included listeners and audience members in the list of participants, in contrast to Gates (1991). Small argued that musicking is about the relationships that exist between performer and listener and others involved in the process. In any capacity that people engage in a musical performance—thereby musicking—they may express things that words are unable to and be a part of the participatory process.

More recently, Turino (2008) identified four different fields of musical practice. Each of the four fields of music making are characterized by differences in what they value as most important, the goals of the activity, the people involved, and the very activity itself. The four fields of music-making he identified are presentational performance, participatory performance, high fidelity, and studio audio art. High fidelity and studio audio art are both concerned with making recordings. High fidelity music-making focuses on creating a musical recording that is as much like a live event as possible and includes musicians as well as audio engineers and producers. Studio audio art is not meant to simulate a live event, but includes many instances of electronic alteration and creation of sound. In contrast, presentational performance and participatory

performance are live events distinguished by the goals and environment. For Turino, any time that there is some distinction separating the performers and the audience, he considers the performance presentational, not participatory. A participatory performance is an event that is primarily aimed at actively involving everyone and less concerned with the product, whereas a presentational performance is focused most on the outcome and not the process.

Gates (1991), Small (1998), and Turino (2008) presented differing views on the nature of participation, and the traditional band setting likely would be classified differently by them. Thus, most school and community band settings might be considered a presentational performance by Turino (2008) and not a participatory event because he deems the main focus to be on the product and not on encouraging active participation from all. Gates (1991) might consider traditional band settings to be participatory, but would note that there are different types of individuals within each ensemble, some more invested than others because of their motivation and cost-benefit analysis. Small (1998) would consider band settings to be participatory in his definition of musicking, but he might question the formality and exclusivity of such ensembles arguing that they favor one type of musical participation over another.

### **Defining Post-Secondary Band Participation for this Study**

In previous studies concerning collegiate band participation, authors defined non-participation because many of the studies focused on the phenomenon of students who did not continue from high school to college (McDavid, 1999; Stewart, 2007). For example, McDavid and Stewart similarly defined non-participation as being a member of

a high school band but not enrolling in a college band (McDavid, 1999; Stewart, 2007).

In this study, I will define post-secondary band participation as playing a wind or percussion instrument in a school or community ensemble led by some type of conductor or director. This definition eliminates those who do not actively play an instrument, similarly to how Gates (1991) eliminated audiences, and also eliminates those who are not part of a larger group led by some type of conductor or director. While other participation (*e.g.*, chamber ensembles, family music making, etc.) are to be encouraged and admired, they are not considered a part of post-secondary band participation for the purpose of this study.

### **Band Participation and the Role of the High School Director**

As a high school band director, I lamented each fall that many of my graduating seniors decided against participating in college bands during their freshman year—a concern shared by other high school directors (Arasi, 2006). I talked regularly with my seniors and encouraged them to continue their band participation at the collegiate level. I also exposed them to several other avenues for continuing participation such as community bands, small chamber ensembles, musical pit orchestras, and church ensembles. While many students over the years performed in a wide variety of collegiate ensembles, I never achieved the high college participation rates I had envisioned. My frustration was not surprising, however, given the statistics of those who continue their band participation in college. Indeed, Mantie & Tucker (2008) noted that only 20 to 25 percent of those that play in their high school band continue to play at the college level.

The problem of limited post-secondary band participation is not new to our

profession. In 1964, an American Bandmasters Association report opined that “we must find ways to provide a continuation of school band experiences for vast numbers of players or we must abandon, eventually, some long-held notions about the values of instrumental music education” (Henderson, 1964, p. 35). Several studies over the years examined the reasons why a low percentage of band students continue participation in collegiate bands. Clothier (1967) found that only 31.9 percent of the students with prior band experience at five liberal arts colleges in Iowa participated in band during their freshman year. A few years later, Mountford (1977) determined that only 28 percent of high school band participants joined a college band. Several others detailed similar results with disappointing collegiate ensemble participation (Stanley, 1964; McClarty, 1968; Milton, 1982; Delano and Royse, 1987). Even as far back as 1937, the noted University of Michigan band conductor William Revelli (1937) worried that, “perhaps one of the greatest weaknesses of our school band program is that, for the majority of the students, active participation in music ceases upon the day of graduation from our high schools” (p. 33).

The seeming incongruity between the often-stated aims of music educators that students would continue lifelong participation (Cavitt, 2005; Fay, 1921; Leonard & House, 1965; Mantie, 2014; Rea, 1956) and the low participation rates in collegiate bands led many researchers to explore the issue of why students don’t play in college (Clothier, 1967; Delano & Royse, 1987; McClarty, 1968; Mantie & Dorfman, 2014; McDavid, 1999; McDavid, 2006; Milton, 1982; Mountford, 1977; Stanley, 1964). There are several reasons cited by students for discontinuing their participation in musical ensembles. One explanation offered is a declining interest in their instruments (McDavid, 2006). Other

students cited their lack of musical skill (Mantie & Dorfman, 2014) or fears of auditioning (McDavid, 1999) as reasons for nonparticipation in collegiate bands. Time conflicts due to class scheduling and part-time jobs also appear to influence students' decisions not to enroll in collegiate ensembles (McDavid, 1999). More recently, Faber (2010) postulated that students could be affected by the extracurricular nature of many college bands versus the curricular nature of the high school band, and that this may be a factor in reduced participation for non-majors.

On the other hand, students who do continue to participate in band after high school listed many reasons for their continued engagement. Students enjoyed musical, personal, and social benefits from band (Bures, 2008). A pure love of music drove many of the participants to enroll in band because they could not think of their lives without it (Mantie & Dorfman, 2014; Bures, 2008; Mantie, 2013). They participated because they truly enjoyed playing and saw collegiate band as a positive use of their leisure time (Mantie & Dorfman, 2014). Some students even recounted that they would feel empty without music in their lives (Isbell & Stanley, 2011). Students considered music to be a positive influence that kept them out of trouble, inspired them to persevere, increased their confidence, and improved their self-discipline (Bures, 2008; Pitts, 2005). They also saw their post-secondary band membership as a stress release from the other pressures of college life (Mantie, 2013), and they enjoyed the opportunity to make new friends and socialize (Isbell & Stanley, 2011).

With clear barriers as well as obvious benefits, prospective collegiate band members are faced with a difficult dilemma concerning their continued participation. These students often decide whether or not to participate in collegiate ensembles before

they reach college (Delano & Royse, 1987; Milton, 1982; Mountford, 1978, Stewart, 2007). In fact, McDavid (2006) stated that 93.7 percent of students made a decision prior to their first day of college classes.

Because of the early participation decisions by pre-college students, understanding the role of the high school band director in encouraging post-secondary participation is paramount. Stewart (2007) indicated that the pool of potential college participants would be even smaller if not for the retention and recruitment efforts of high school directors. Ng and Hartwig (2011) described the encouragement of student retention as a critical role for teachers. While this may be a self-serving aspect of high school band directors' roles in the process, Delano and Royse (1987) agreed that college participants were more likely than non-participants to have enjoyed their high school band experience. Collegiate band members often remembered the influence of their high school directors who exposed them to post high school participation and encouraged them to continue their active involvement (Delano & Royse, 1987). Likewise, Bowles, Dobbs, and Jensen (2014) noted that 68 percent of non-majors that they surveyed who continued to participate in music ensembles during college recalled their high school directors encouraging post-secondary involvement.

However, not all high school directors see the promotion of college participation as a part of their role. Many high school directors do not view themselves as feeder schools for colleges in the same way that most middle schools are for high schools (Amundsun, 2012; Woody & Parker, 2012). Some teachers are simply too worried about the survival and health of their current program to even think about the long-term participation of their students (Pitts, 2009). Myers (2005) noted that producing quality

large ensemble performances in school settings is important, but it “does not necessarily instill skills and understandings that empower people to fulfill their musical drives and potential over a lifetime” (p. 3). Likewise, Austin (1988) concluded that the “research clearly demonstrates that school music programs have not been very successful in fostering a sustained commitment to music performance among students, either while enrolled or after having graduated from high school” (p. 11).

### **Need for the Study**

Whether because of a disconnection with college ensemble directors, a myopic focus on the local program, or a lack of emphasis on individual musical self-efficacy, there is a need to discover more about what high school band directors believe about encouraging college and lifelong participation and how those beliefs affect their classroom practice. While much of the current literature considering post-secondary band participation relies on the testimony of the students (Isbell & Stanley, 2011; Mantie, 2013; Moder, 2013), to date there have been no studies which explore the influence of the high school band director on post-secondary band participation by considering the director’s beliefs and practice. Previous studies rely on post-secondary students’ memories of their high school experiences. By gathering information from a current band director, I hope to attain a clearer picture of the director’s beliefs about encouraging participation beyond high school graduation and how those beliefs manifest themselves in daily preparations and practice in the classroom. This information could be used to provide suggestions to other high school directors for ways in which they may provide encouragement to their students to pursue lifelong instrumental participation.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this instrumental case study was to describe the beliefs of a high school band director regarding lifelong instrumental music participation and explore how those beliefs shape her daily preparation and practice. Fives and Buehl's (2012) understanding of teacher beliefs served as a conceptual framework for this study. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What, if anything, does one high school band director believe about lifelong instrumental music participation?
2. In what ways do one teacher's beliefs about lifelong instrumental music participation serve as filters, frames, or guides for action? (Fives & Buehl, 2012)
3. How do beliefs about lifelong instrumental music participation appear in one teacher's daily practice, including decision making, planning, establishment of classroom culture, and actions in the classroom?
4. How, if at all, are one high school band director's beliefs about lifelong instrumental music participation influenced by other contextual factors (e.g., other beliefs, school district, colleagues, musical history, teacher identity, etc.)?

## **Conceptual Framework**

When seeking a framework to explore the idea of post-secondary band participation, I reviewed a number of possibilities, including Gates' (1991) musical participation theory and Lave & Wenger's (1991) Situated Learning Theory. Eventually I

decided to focus on teacher beliefs, specifically on Fives and Buehl's (2012) holistic view of this construct. Teacher beliefs as a focus of educational research is a relatively new field, but within the last 50-60 years it has developed into a regular source of inquiry (Ashton, 2015). The existing research on teachers' beliefs dates back to 1953 (Oliver, 1953) and includes many different subjects and methodological approaches (Fives & Buehl, 2012). Many researchers have attempted to predict student outcomes and teachers' practices based on teacher beliefs, but this has been difficult because of the complexity of the construct (Fives & Buehl, 2012). Nespor (1987) noted that, "the contexts and environments within which teachers work, and many of the problems they encounter, are ill-defined and deeply entangled, and that beliefs are peculiarly suited for making sense of such contexts" (p. 324). Additionally, Pajares (1992) argued that, "when beliefs are carefully operationalized, appropriate methodology chosen, and design thoughtfully constructed, their study become viable and rewarding" (p. 308). Fives and Buehl (2012) built on the work of Nespor and Pajares to provide a framework for using beliefs effectively in a research setting. A short review of the work of Nespor (1987) and Pajares (1992) is necessary to provide the context necessary to understand the framework established by Fives and Buehl (2012).

Over the years, research exploring teacher beliefs has grown, but it continues to be called a "messy construct" (Pajares, 1992, p. 307), despite ongoing clarification of the topic. Nespor (1987) worked to establish a theoretical model of teacher belief systems that would assist future researchers in more ably investigating the topic. His model focused on how teachers' emotions affect the way that their beliefs frame each task that they begin. This model was based on a study of eight teachers in the field who were

interviewed several times to ascertain their beliefs about their own teaching, their environment, their organizational structure, and their students. In addition, during the course of other interviews, the researchers asked the teachers to view video episodes of their teaching and provide commentary on the event, thereby revealing evidence of their beliefs in another manner.

Nespor (1987) thought it important to clarify the difference between belief and knowledge and relied on Abelson's (1979) analysis to do it. Abelson noted features that differentiated knowledge systems from belief systems based on cognitive science. These features included the ideas that beliefs often contain assumptions, are often developed out of personal experiences, offer opposing views of the world, that some beliefs are more strongly held than others, that emotional and affective factors are often involved in beliefs, and that beliefs systems are often unbounded—meaning that they can be applied to any situation.

Nespor (1987) focused most on the emotional and affective aspects of beliefs. He argued that those factors color how the memories and experiences of each individual are stored and how they are reassembled during retrieval. The emotional aspects may then in turn affect the way that teachers learn and process information and how they use their beliefs to frame each task. Nespor asserted that, because of the complexities of teaching, the flexibility of belief systems would be a good tool to help make sense of the field. Because beliefs are unbounded, there is no limit to the subjects or experiences to which they may be applied. In a similar way, because people often have opposing or alternative views of reality based on their beliefs, they may frame the same task in very different ways. Finally, strong assumptions about the nature of students or learning may enable

teachers to easily apply beliefs to different settings and populations.

Nespor (1987) thought that beliefs were an important part of a teacher's decision-making process. As a result, he thought that the key to understanding teachers, their practice, and their classroom organization was to focus more on the goals and aims of the teachers. Those goals and aims are rooted in teachers' beliefs, and shape their practice. Because some beliefs are more strongly held than others, Nespor posited that some beliefs may be changed through reflective practice, provided that alternative beliefs were presented.

Pajares (1992) also contended that teachers' beliefs were strongly related to their practice, but disagreed with Nespor (1987) in how the construct should be framed. Whereas Nespor worked to distinguish between beliefs and knowledge by arguing that beliefs had a stronger emotional component, Pajares argued that the two are, "inextricably intertwined" (p. 325). He recognized the difficulty in working toward a definition of beliefs, listed previous definitions by others, but eventually offered his own notion. Pajares defined belief as, "an individual's judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgment that can only be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, intend, and do" (p. 316). Even with a clear definition of beliefs, it remains a difficult endeavor to ensure that researchers' understandings align with the individual's judgment.

Pajares (1992) attempted continued clarity of the construct of teachers' beliefs and offered a set of 16 fundamental assumptions that researchers can reasonably make. These assumptions include ideas about the formation, interconnectedness, filtering function, and priority of beliefs, as well as the ability of beliefs to change (Pajares, 1992).

The assumptions are:

1. Beliefs are formed early and tend to self-perpetuate, persevering even against contradictions caused by reason, time, schooling, or experience.
2. Individuals develop a belief system that houses all the beliefs acquired through the process of cultural transmission.
3. The belief system has an adaptive function in helping individuals define and understand the world and themselves.
4. Knowledge and beliefs are inextricably intertwined, but the potent affective, evaluative, and episodic nature of beliefs makes them a filter through which new phenomena are interpreted.
5. Thought processes may well be precursors to and creators of belief, but the filtering effect of belief structures ultimately screens, redefines, distorts, or reshapes subsequent thinking and information processing.
6. Epistemological beliefs play a key role in knowledge interpretation and cognitive monitoring.
7. Beliefs are prioritized according to their connections or relationship to other beliefs or other cognitive and affective structures. Apparent inconsistencies may be explained by exploring the functional connections and centrality of the beliefs.
8. Belief substructures, such as educational beliefs, must be understood in terms of their connections not only to each other but also to other, perhaps more central, beliefs in the system.
9. By their very nature and origin, some beliefs are more incontrovertible than others.

10. The earlier a belief is incorporated into the belief structure, the more difficult it is to alter. Newly acquired beliefs are most vulnerable to change.
11. Belief change during adulthood is a relatively rare phenomenon, the most common cause being a conversion from one authority to another or a gestalt shift.
12. Beliefs are instrumental in defining tasks and selecting the cognitive tools with which to interpret, plan, and make decisions regarding such tasks; hence, they play a critical role in defining behavior and organizing knowledge and information.
13. Beliefs strongly influence perception, but they can be an unreliable guide to the nature of reality.
14. Individuals' beliefs strongly affect their behavior.
15. Beliefs must be inferred, and this inference must take into account the congruence among individuals' belief statements, the intentionality to behave in a predisposed manner, and the behavior related to the belief in question.
16. Beliefs about teaching are well established by the time a student goes to college.  
(p. 325-326).

Pajares (1992) argued that the “investigation of teachers’ beliefs is a necessary and valuable avenue of educational inquiry” (p. 326), and challenged researchers to clearly define the construct and carefully design their methodology. Finally, he suggested that because the belief construct is so complicated, researchers should ask questions about subsets of teacher beliefs, including teacher efficacy, attributions, self-concept, self-efficacy, epistemological beliefs, and beliefs about specific subjects.

More recently, Fives and Buehl (2012) sorted through the complex construct

Pajares (1992) described, believing that teachers' beliefs are important but admitting that the relationship to practice is "complicated" (Fives & Buehl, p. 471). Their comprehensive review of more than 600 articles about teachers' beliefs found inquiries related to specific teaching practices, self, context and environment, content, teaching approach, and students. Fives and Buehl noted that many have found it difficult to define teachers' beliefs. They suggested that the difficulty is not in defining the term "beliefs," but rather in getting researchers to use the same definitions consistently across the entire educational field. They identified several characteristics of beliefs that have been included in definitions by various authors over the past few decades, including the implicit and explicit nature of beliefs, their stability or instability over time, their relationship to knowledge, and whether or not they are individual or systematic in nature. Throughout their discussion of these definitional characteristics, they took a middle-of-the-road approach, placing each characteristic on a continuum and using evidence to paint either end of the spectrum as extreme. For example, they noted that some have found that teacher's beliefs do change over time, while other researchers have stated that beliefs are relatively stable. Fives and Buehl argued that well-established beliefs are more stable and newer less intertwined beliefs are more unstable. They argued for a more nuanced approach that views teachers' beliefs as neither completely implicit nor explicit and neither stable or unstable.

Perhaps the most important contribution from Fives and Buehl's (2012) review on teachers' beliefs is their exploration of the role and function of beliefs. Fives and Buehl (2012) combined the work of earlier researchers (Hancock & Gallard, 2004; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2006) to identify three roles that teachers'

beliefs serve. Teachers' beliefs may serve as filters, frames, and guides (Fives and Buehl, 2012). In their role as *filters*, beliefs serve as a lens that helps educators decide what things to consider seriously and what to ignore. New situations, experiences, and information received by teachers are filtered through their beliefs to "shape what and how they learn about teaching" (p. 479). Examples of filters include teachers' beliefs about students, about their role in the classroom, and their overall personal belief system. In their role as *frames*, beliefs help teachers define the problem at hand. This framing sets new information in relation to what they already know and provides context that may be helpful during observation, planning and preparation. Beliefs serve as frames when they are, "purposefully engaged during problem solving tasks" (Fives & Buehl, 2014). For example, while teachers plan for lessons several beliefs may interact to help them carefully consider the task and decide on a course of action. Finally, beliefs may serve as *guides* for action when they affect teachers' daily behaviors in the classroom. Teachers' beliefs about self-efficacy and task value often guide them in their goal setting, their adherence to the task, and their attitudes about that dedication.

Fives and Buehl (2012) carefully considered the ways in which beliefs and practice interact and concluded that oftentimes the relationship is complicated. Some studies concluded that there was no direct relationship between beliefs and practice, and others concluded a very strong relationship. Fives and Buehl (2012) argued that it is "not a matter of whether beliefs and practice are or are not congruent but rather the degree of congruence or incongruence" (p. 481). Some beliefs may conflict, causing one to be subordinate to another. Fives and Buehl (2012) note that "beliefs that serve as filters or frames may appear less congruent with practice because of the influence of beliefs that

function as guides” (p. 481). While teachers may believe that something is important they may not act on those beliefs because they feel that they cannot adequately incorporate those things into their curriculum. They also noted that there are both internal factors, such as their own knowledge, and external factors, such as their current classroom context and school district, that may prevent or encourage beliefs from being implemented.

Fives and Buehl (2012) offered guidelines for research in educational environments. First, they encouraged researchers to clearly define the construct and use that definition consistently to guide their inquiry. Second, they encouraged investigators to focus on the ways in which beliefs function as filters, frames, or guides for action. Third, they pointed to the fact that beliefs have a reciprocal relationship with experiences and can be shaped by them. Fourth, they posited that researchers should consider context when investigating beliefs to see how different aspects of a belief system may conflict and cause perceived incongruity. Finally, they encouraged careful consideration of methodologies in research environments and concern for the strengths and limitations of each such methodology.

In conclusion, the construct of teacher beliefs as outlined holistically by Fives and Buehl (2012) guided the process of collecting insights into the complex thinking and beliefs of a band director. I constructed my research questions based on Fives and Buehl’s (2012) suggested guidelines, as listed above. I clearly defined post-secondary band participation to avoid confusion about the topic at hand. I used Fives and Buehl’s (2012) concept of beliefs serving as filters, frames or guides for action to sort the band director’s beliefs on the subject. The framework also encouraged me to consider beliefs

in their context and explore the various factors that may influence the teacher's thinking.

Finally, I have heeded Fives and Buehl's (2012) exhortation to carefully consider methodologies, and I believe that the current plan resulted in a thoughtful investigation of the phenomenon.

## **Chapter 2: Review of Related Research**

The purpose of this case study was to describe the beliefs of a high school band director regarding lifelong instrumental music participation and explore how those beliefs shape her daily preparation and practice. This chapter includes a literature review focusing on four areas related to this study. First, I will take a historical look at musical participation. Second, I will focus on the existing research regarding lifelong musical participation. Third, I will focus specifically on literature pertaining to collegiate band participation, especially the involvement of the high school band director in that process. Finally, I will conclude by summarizing research that investigates teacher beliefs, paying special attention to those that relate to music education.

### **Historical Perspectives of Music Participation**

As noted above, lifelong musical participation has been articulated as a goal of musical educators in the United States throughout the last 100 years (Cavitt, 2005; Choate, 1968; Fay, 1921; Leonard & House, 1959; Rea, 1956). However, musical participation has been an important part of societies for thousands of years as a part of religious practice, entertainment, education, and civil society (Mark & Gary, 2007). Mark and Gary (2007) cited the musical activities of the Hebrews of the Old Testament as the beginning of music in Western Civilization. The Bible recorded active musical participation among the Israelites in its description of Moses' composing and teaching them a song (Deuteronomy 31:13, 19, 22). The Bible also recorded war songs and songs for use in religious ceremonies with the responsorial nature of the psalms meant to

encourage participation (Mark & Gary, 2007). Similarly, the Babylonian Talmud required singing with sacrifices and warned that a lack of participation could lead to the invalidation of the offering (Mark & Gary, 2007).

The ancient Greeks also assigned a high place to musical participation as adults were expected to participate in this essential part of their culture (Mark & Gary, 2007). The Greeks often included music in their educational system because they believed it to be useful for training soldiers, inspiring loyalty and being useful in war (Mark & Gary, 2007). The philosopher Aristotle, however, believed that students should learn music not to develop into warriors or professional musicians, but to develop a love for music and use it in their leisure time (Mathiesen & Treiter, 1998). This idea of leisure time surfaces again in theories of musical participation today, which trace their origins to Aristotle (Mantie, 2012). While the Greeks did encourage musical participation, it was only for a select few. This practice of limited participation continued throughout the Roman era and into the early Christian era (Mark & Gary, 2007).

Saint Augustine brought classical Greek thought to the church and paved the way for music to be an essential part of the Christian church and way of life (Mark & Gary, 2007). His major writings about music are contained in *De Musica*, where he considered how Greek thoughts about music aligned with the Christian faith. Augustine struggled with whether to encourage the use of music within the church, for he felt that the pleasure of listening to music could be sinful. However, in the end he encouraged use of music for singing in church because he hoped that, “by the delight of the ears the weaker minds may rise to the feeling of devotion” (Augustine, 1860, p. 146).

The Roman Catholic Church became the primary force for encouraging musical

participation and musical education in the Middle Ages, because the church needed music for worship services. Monastery, cathedral, and parish schools developed to provide a basic education, but also to prepare and train musicians to serve as participants in the daily musical offerings of the church (Mark & Gary, 2007). These schools were only for boys, and not for the common people. Their primary purpose was to train people for service in worship at a time when the ordinary of the mass was sung only by the priests. (Mark & Gary, 2007).

During the Reformation, however, Martin Luther fought for many reforms that would reshape the educational and musical landscape and revive the participatory role of the congregation in worship. Luther introduced liturgical singing in the vernacular, which previously had been done only in Latin (Schalk, 1988). He also developed hymns and chorales related to the ordinary of the mass with the express purpose to “enable the congregation to participate in the liturgy of the Western Catholic tradition” (Schalk, 1988 p. 42). This new development meant that the common people needed to have musical training so that they could actively participate in the singing at local worship services. Luther emphasized that the education should be for boys and girls in every town and include training in religion and music (Green, 1979). This education was to prepare the children so that “the common people will learn from the pupils what, when, and how to sing and pray in church” (Luther, 1966). These reforms eventually flowered into a great era of Lutheran participatory music-making, exemplified in the music of Johann Sebastian Bach (Leaver, 2007).

Immigrants to the New World seeking hope of religious freedom brought with them the same devotion to music that had flourished during the Reformation. As these

immigrants of various religious sects including Anglicans, Lutherans, Moravians, Quakers and others came to America they established schools to educate their children and ensured that music was a vital part of that education (Mark & Gary, 2007). Music was important to the community life of many of these groups and so from early on they instilled the necessary skills for participatory music making. The purpose of this training was to lead to instrumental and vocal participation in the church by every member of society (Mark & Gary, 2007).

Eventually music became a part of public education due to the efforts of Lowell Mason and others in Boston, built on the success of singing schools and his Boston Academy of Music. Early supporters of music education in public schools continued to hope for benefits advocated by the religious sects: quality singing in their churches (Mark & Gary, 2007). This focus changed as music was accepted into the curriculum of more schools and was treated as a serious subject with mental, physical, and moral benefits (Mark & Gary, 2007). The music texts of the day began to include much more secular music and the specific participatory goal of congregational singing was no longer a priority. A connection to real-life use is important however, as Mark and Gary (2007) noted that “the most successful [music] education relates closely to life activities, fostering skills the young need to assume a place in the adult community” (p. 65-66).

Around the turn of the 20th century, the rise of concert bands brought about a new wave of participatory music making. But while the early musical movements in the United States were focused on musical participation in the church, this movement was propelled by the progressive education movement’s goal that students make a worthy use of their leisure time (Mantie, 2014). The concert band movement was an outgrowth of the

brass bands imported from Europe with the colonists and has always been closely associated with feelings of nationalism. The military regularly used band performances as a way to inspire morale and improve recruiting (Rhodes, 2007). After the Civil War, professional bands began to emerge, led by bandsmen such as Patrick Gilmore (Rhodes, 2007). They developed into the premiere entertainment of the day, in the time before radio, when Americans enjoyed the music of their town band and professional traveling bands such as the Sousa Band (Mark & Gary, 2007). The growth of the band movement was due in part to the fact that the school bands focused on preparing students to play in their town bands as recreational participants (Mantie, 2014).

Much of the participatory culture of recreational band participation in the United States has been lost, and some of that may be linked to technological innovation and the inability of bands to adapt to those changes. As the phonograph was being introduced in the United States, people attended fewer concerts and discontinued many of their family music-making endeavors because they could listen to superior performances in their homes (Thompson, 1995). Thomas Edison worried about the effects of recorded music on people's perceptions when he stated, “[Non-recorded] music in time will sound strange to those brought up on radio music and they will not like the real thing” (Kempf, 1927, p. 304). The American composer John Philip Sousa (1906) warned about the infusion of technology and its effects when he said,

And what is the result? The child becomes indifferent to practice, for when music can be heard in the homes without the labor of study and close application, and without the slow process of acquiring a technic, it will be simply a question of time when the amateur disappears entirely... (p. 281).

Indeed, the concerns of Sousa and Edison have materialized to some degree, as people today tend to think of professionally recorded music as the ideal form and many shy away from participating themselves (Goddard, 2016). As a result, the focus of music educators shifted from preparing students to use their musical skills as leisure activity, and instead shifted to treating music as a serious academic subject to safeguard its place in schools (Mantie, 2014).

Music used to be a participatory family event in the home that occupied leisure time in the evenings. This practice died out in many American homes due to the rise of radio, and then television and the internet. Gossett (2010) argued that, “Mass media and pop culture have replaced the need for band and choir in and by society” (p. 34). The bandstand used to be a central feature of many towns in Sousa’s day, but today in many towns “the only music that is heard in a town is through iPod earbuds or piped into buildings” (Rohwer, 2011 p. 122). Even in many churches, once a bastion for music making by the masses, the focus has shifted from participant to audience with the rise of praise bands (Goddard, 2016).

In conclusion, the participatory nature of nations and cultures can shift over time. Within our current American landscape, the concert band seems to be struggling in its ability to continue a participatory culture as defined by Turino (2008). While band participation continues to have a strong presence in school settings because of the traditions of the past, the participatory ethos of post-secondary instrumental settings seems to have faded with the advent of technological innovations. While others—notably Eric Whitacre (2019), for example—have utilized the internet to encourage collaboration and participation with his virtual choirs, the band world has been slow to innovate in this

regard, although there have been some recent attempts to follow Whitacre's model (Josephson, 2019). These changes present a challenge to instrumental music educators as they seek to fulfill their stated goal of producing lifelong active music-makers and find new ways to encourage participation.

### **Theories and Models of Lifelong Musical Participation and Commitment**

While instrumental music educators have struggled to adapt to the challenges of a changing participatory environment, researchers continue to theorize and create models explaining lifelong musical participation, commitment, and learning (Busch, 2005; Chiodo, 1997; Gates, 1991). Their hope is that by reviewing the active musical lives of adults, they can find ways to return to the times of more widespread active participation throughout the lifetime. Their research focused on motivational factors involved in instrumental participation (Gates, 1991), developing a model of commitment to lifelong instrumental participation (Chiodo, 1997), and identifying predictors that influence lifelong musical learning (Busch, 2005).

As discussed in Chapter 1, Gates (1991) developed a typology of musical participation and argued that it may help with policy formation as leaders look at the rewards that are offered for musical programs and how those rewards align with the needs and expectations of each group. Gates posited that most musical groups cater to professionals, apprentices, and amateurs, but ignore the hobbyists, recreationalists, and dabblers. Ensemble directors struggle to appeal to all typologies within a single group because of the different motivations and musical and non-musical factors involved. Gates (1991) believed that incorporating ideas of play could make the benefits outweigh

the costs for hobbyists, recreationalists, and dabblers.

Following the recommendation of Gates (1991), Chiodo (1997) used qualitative investigation techniques to craft a portrait of lifelong commitment among instrumentalists. She was less concerned about why some discontinued participation, but instead focused on why some continued to participate for a lifetime. She used purposeful sampling and recruited participants who exemplified a lifelong commitment to instrumental music participation—both amateurs and professional musicians. She interviewed 28 instrumentalists in the western New York area using a semi-structured format.

As a result of her research, Chiodo (1997) developed a model of lifetime commitment to instrumental musical participation based on combined life histories of the participants. She depicted her model of lifetime commitment to instrumental music as a tree. Chiodo listed six stages of commitment: awareness, commencement, expansion, affirmation, involvement, and fulfillment. She found that throughout the lives of musically active instrumentalists, their involvement grew and expanded as they moved toward a musically active future. The early childhood years were critical in establishing a strong root system and awareness of musical activities. Building on the family and school influences of early childhood, the commencement stage is marked by instrument choices and the beginning of music lessons during childhood. As students enter adolescence during high school, their commitment to instrumental music participation continues to branch out and includes increased technical skills, membership in high school ensembles, admission to honors ensembles, and learning additional instruments. Chiodo's affirmation stage of musical commitment falls during the early adulthood period of

musicians' lives, and includes ever-expanding involvement such as participating in community ensembles, considerations about including music in their careers, making musical participation a central part of their lives, and integrating musical participation in and around marriage and children. As individuals continue to grow into adulthood, the involvement stage features either a successful career in music or devoting serious leisure time to musical activities. In either case, musically committed participants often play in multiple ensembles and in multiple settings as they reach toward the fulfillment stage.

This final stage of commitment to instrumental music in Chiodo's (1997) model represents a complete maturation of the individual, depicted as a mature and majestic tree, and is characterized by an inability to envision their adult life without active involvement in musical ensembles. Chiodo argued that "pursued over the span of an entire lifetime, music participation becomes a consistent pattern of behavior, a basic orientation that influences major life decisions, and a behavior so firmly entrenched that informants cannot envision lives without music" (p. 136).

While Gates (1991) developed his theory of musical participation and Chiodo (1997) formed a model of commitment to instrumental music participation, Busch (2005) utilized a mixed-methods study in an attempt to identify predictors for lifelong learning in music among those involved in performance ensembles at Illinois community colleges. Her purpose was to paint a picture of active community college participants by describing their lifelong learning process, the predictors of continued lifelong learning in music, relationships among those predictors, and what effect those predictors have on their present musical participation.

Busch (2005) recognized four predictors of lifelong learning in music. She

suggested that students who were offered a wide variety of musical opportunities by their music teachers are more likely to continue to participate in adulthood because individuals tend to “gravitate toward activities and behaviors that resemble their past experiences” and that those experiences enable them to learn music in a variety of ways (p. 268).

Consistently listening to music was another predictor of lifelong musical learning, leading her to suggest that music educators should regularly incorporate listening activities into their music lessons. Third, Busch stated that musical learning is a multi-phased process similar to Chiodo (1997) and that those who continue to pursue lifelong musical learning were exposed to situations allowing them to consistently receive musical input and motivation from others, which inspired their continued participation. Busch also noted that “positive encouragement plays a crucial role in attaining success in learning scenarios and prompting a lifetime involvement in music” (p. 275). This is crucial for music educators, highlighting an essential disposition, and their ability to shape lifelong musical learning.

Mantie (2014) argued that listening and appreciating music can only be part of the equation and that teachers must expose students to ways in which they can actively *do* music once they graduate. He argued that the aim of music education should be to prepare students to use music for leisure and recreation and not merely appreciate it or learn about it. In the early part of the 1900s, music educators focused on preparing students to use their musical skills. They prepared them for active participation in their leisure time, through involvement with many of the community bands or ensembles of the day. However, with the rise of technology and the end of the war, there was a major shift in thought among American music educators, and they began to talk of music as a

serious academic subject. Mantie argued that this change of focus led to the decline of musical participation because people do not see the value of it in the same way that they see the value of exercise for their health. He explained, “When we favor learning over participation we risk reducing what we do to either a never-ending quest that permanently delays gratification, or, as has been the case with school music, we turn music into a ‘subject’ to be learned where participation is rendered unnecessary once the learning objectives have been attained” (Mantie, 2012, p. 228). He suggested a return to a positive view of music as a leisure activity and an appropriate aim for music education.

### **Summary of Musical Participation Theories and Models**

These theoretical approaches to musical participation, commitment, and lifelong learning provide a foundation for this discussion of post-secondary band participation. Gates’ (1991) typologies provide a rationale for how to approach, recruit and retain potential participants based on their motivation to continue with an activity. Each different type of potential participant will need to have their motivation addressed in order to attract and retain participation. Chiodo’s (1997) model provided an ideal outcome of what an active adult participant may look like. She compared the musical life of active participants to a tree and noted the importance of having a strong root system established during the youngest years to provide a foundation for lifetime involvement. Busch (2005) specifically recognized the important role of the music educator in presenting experiences that may promote further participation and providing encouragement that improves confidence. Mantie (2014) encouraged a return to the idea that music should focus on active participation. Mantie opined that in the past music

teachers prepared and encouraged students to use their musical skills in leisure activities after graduation, but today the focus is often on music as an academic discipline. Mantie (2014) encouraged educators to reconsider the purpose of instrumental music education not as something to learn, but to use. Ultimately, teachers will need to be encouraging (Busch, 2005) and use proper motivational techniques to reach out to all within their ensembles (Gates, 1991). In doing so, educators may be able to increase the number of individuals who commit to a lifetime of musical participation (Chiodo, 1997). In the next section, I will explore the ways that people come to include lifelong musical participation in their lives, their reasons and motivation for continued participation, benefits of participation, and barriers to participation.

### **Pathways into Lifelong Musical Participation**

Music educators hope that their students will continually engage with music beyond their school years, thereby providing a continuous route into lifelong musical participation. Pitts' (2009) qualitative study focused on tracing the musical life histories of 71 ordinary people to see what factors led to their active musical lives. The participants relayed information about their home life, school experiences, and adult participation. She found that most active adult participants had important musical influences both at home and at school. The home influences often focused on their early life, as the participants' parents shaped their musical interests through listening to music in the home and supporting and encouraging them through music lessons. Most school-related influences centered around performance ensembles and interactions with the teachers of those ensembles. The path to lifelong participation for these participants

required a joint effort between parents and teachers. Pitts emphasized the important role of the music educator to “bridge the gap” between home and school (p. 249). Finally, she noted that “the teacher’s day-to-day decisions are a witness to beliefs about models of success and opportunity, and have the potential to make music central or peripheral to the lives of their students” (p. 255). This observation sets the stage for the current study about the teacher’s beliefs about future participation.

Sometimes, however, despite the efforts of music educators, the path to musical participation is not continuous or straight. Pitts and Robinson (2016) completed 18 life history interviews with British adults that followed up an online questionnaire and asserted that, “there is not a straightforward, reliable route from music student to adult amateur musician, but that multiple factors of opportunity, attitude and skill acquisition intersect in unpredictable ways to affect the likelihood of continuing or resuming playing” (p. 343). For amateur musicians, sometimes life gets in the way and causes an interruption in their active musical lives. Pitts (2016) encouraged educators to teach with future participation in mind and help students understand how to get from where they are to an active musical life. She argued that people need to leave school “with information about the musical routes that are open to them with their particular combination of skills and enthusiasms” (p. 6) and suggested that providing role models of lifelong participation will go a long way toward securing a path to continued engagement.

Even with the proper educational preparation, each individual pathway into lifelong musical participation can be varied. Lamont (2011), using information gathered from over 10 years of in-depth interviews with both adults and children, argued that while opportunity, motivation and continued engagement may contribute to lifelong

participation, a well-developed musical identity is the major factor leading to it. Opportunity is important, but in some cases, the development of a mature musical identity leading to lifelong musical participation may take many years and might not follow a linear path. Lamont (2011) asserted that the best way to increase lifelong musical participation is to provide an environment that encourages musical identity formation throughout childhood and adulthood. That musical identity will then, in turn, lead them toward a path or return to lifelong musical participation (Lamont, 2011). Lamont argued that there may be many false starts on the path to continued participation as individuals try on different musical identities before eventually finding one or a combination that fits them.

Rohwer's (2017) narrative investigation provides one example of a pathway into active musical participation that was not continuous or straight. She traced the musical background and involvement of the participant, Jon. Jon's musical background was similar to many adult participants from other studies in that he had a family history of musically engaged parents and relatives (Bowles, 1991; Coffman, 2002). Jon was not an active musical participant after high school years, but reengaged with music later in his life. Rohwer (2017) believed that musical identity was very important to Jon. His participation in many different musical ensembles, provided him with an opportunity to have a wide variety of roles. Sometimes he was a learner, sometimes a teacher, a mentor, a professional, an amateur, or a volunteer. Jon's case is complex, but Rohwer embraced the idea of situated musical identities, which change based on the location, ensemble or role being played. The members of community ensembles will be very different, and have a variety of needs, making it necessary for ensemble leaders to have a good

knowledge of their members.

Sometimes the pathway into lifelong musical participation may be aided by the policies adapted by community ensembles. One recent study by Billaud (2014) examined a multi-generational community band and found that the structure of the band can have a profound influence on who may be enabled to participate. The members of the band ( $N = 32$ ) who were interviewed for this study included those with no previous band experience, those who returned to playing after an absence, and those who were lifelong musicians. Based on the interviews with these musicians as well as observation and document review, Billaud (2014) discovered that eliminating restrictive policies such as fees, auditions, and attendance policies made this community band a particularly inviting place that allowed members to “participate at their own discretion” (p. 144).

In addition, other policies implemented by this band enabled a broader population of the community to participate, resulting in seven generations of performers and a truly community ensemble. The band welcomed parents with young children by providing a child-friendly area. The availability of childcare kept young parents engaged, exposed youngsters to the participatory environment, and over time even resulted in those children becoming a part of the band (Billaud, 2014). The band also worked to acquire instruments so that finances or an inability to obtain an instrument would not be a barrier to membership. Finally, more experienced players acted as mentors for those with little experience, thereby encouraging community and a participatory environment that allowed everyone to feel a part of the whole (Billaud, 2014).

Pathways into lifelong musical participation vary from individual to individual and may be very different (Lamont, 2011; Pitts, 2016). One common thread throughout

the research, however, is that encouragement from parents and teachers is a vital component that may help lead to a life of musical participation. In addition, a careful examination of the governing policies of community ensembles may lead to more potential participants.

## **Reasons and Motivations for Lifelong Participation**

Individuals have varying reasons as to why they continue to participate in musical ensembles throughout their life and the purposes that active participation serves for them. Pitts (2005) provided a profile of the purposes that musical participation plays in their lives. According to Pitts, musical participation can serve extra-musical purposes such as an opportunity for social interaction, a way of adding excitement and variety to daily life, escaping from the everyday realities of life, and as a way to increase personal confidence. In addition, active participation can serve musical purposes such as providing the opportunity to perform with other people and to uphold and remember favorite repertoire. Finally, musical participation may serve as an avenue for lifelong learning in which the participants improve their skills or learn new ones.

Many of Pitts' (2005) conclusions about the purposes and roles of musical participation are echoed in other research findings about motivations for lifelong involvement including musical, social, and personal reasons for participating in a musical ensemble. She also noted, separately, that motivation to participate can be passionate, habitual, or a result of feelings of obligation (Pitts & Robinson, 2016). Many who cite musical reasons for participating are passionate about their involvement. Chiodo (1997) noted that those that reached the fulfillment level of her commitment model can't

envision a life without music. Many others cited a love for music-making or playing an instrument as a motivation for continued involvement (Bowles, Dobbs & Jensen, 2014; Bures, 2008; Busch, 2005; Isbell & Stanley, 2011; Shansky, 2010). Others noted that prior positive experiences with ensemble involvement was a motivator for many to participate, hoping to relive the musical high and sense of accomplishment present with a high quality performance (Jacob, Guptill & Sumison, 2009).

Shansky's (2010) investigation of a community orchestra revealed that some continue their participation out of habit or obligation. As one participant noted, “[I]t makes you play; otherwise you would never pick up the instrument” (Shansky, 2010 p. 8). Similarly, one of Pitts and Robinson's (2016) participants reflected an obligation to continue because “if I just don't continue to play into adulthood—I've lost like ten years of my life!” (p. 341). Other musical motivations given for participating in musical ensembles include the opportunity for the continued learning (Shansky, 2010), ability to pass on musical knowledge to family members (Rohwer & Rohwer, 2010), and keeping up their musical skills (Isbell & Stanley, 2011).

While social involvement was not important for the members of Shansky's (2010) study, it is an important motivator for many others. Jacob, Guptill, and Sumison (2009) used in-depth interviews of nine members of a leisure-based choir to explore their motivations for joining and continuing their participation. While they found musical motivations noted above, social bonding and the community within the group were also important reasons for participation (Jacob et al., 2009). The participants looked forward to sharing the company of like-minded people united toward a common goal (Busch, 2005; Jacob et al., 2009). The importance of joining with friends in musical activities was

important for college students (Bowles, Dobbs & Jensen, 2014), and participants' admiration for their conductor also kept them engaged (Bowles et al., 2014).

In addition to the musical and social motivations for joining musical ensembles or continuing participation, musicians cited personal reasons for their involvement. Some were motivated to participate in a musical ensemble because it provided a break from college academics (Bowles et al, 2014). Others were motivated by the stress relief that they anticipated from their musical involvement, because of its ability to offer a respite from their problems (Klickman, 2014).

### **Benefits of Lifelong Musical Participation**

Often the motivations and reasons cited by ensemble participants to participate in an ensemble are a direct result of the perceived benefits that they receive from their membership. Bures (2008) interviewed 12 university non-music majors who shared that participatory music making resulted in musical, social, and personal benefits. These college non-majors celebrated the musical challenges that made them grow while also enjoying feelings of flow in rehearsals that stimulated their imagination and creativity. They benefitted socially from their musical participation because it helped them form lasting friendships, learn to work together as a team, and stop being so shy. Bures revealed a host of personal benefits listed by the students as a result of their participation including stress relief, increased self-confidence and self-esteem, and energized thinking abilities in regard to their academics. In addition, they felt that their musical participation was a deterrent to negative behaviors and even helped them physically.

Kokotsaki and Hallam (2007 & 2011) explored the benefits of participatory music

making for students in English university settings first for music majors, and then for non-music majors. Their qualitative studies collected the perceptions of these students through identical questionnaires with two open-ended questions. Kokotsaki and Hallam (2007, 2011) asked about the participants' perceptions of their present or past experiences with ensemble participation and the impact that participation had on their lives. Kokotsaki and Hallam found that both music majors and non-music majors perceived social, musical, and personal benefits due to participatory music making, but the strength of the benefits differed depending on their musical or non-musical career choice.

All students identified musical benefits of ensemble participation such as increased technical ability, broadening musical tastes, increased performance confidence, and better sight-reading skills (Kokatsaki & Hallam, 2011). The group of music majors, however, felt more confident that they were a part of the musical success of the group. Both groups of students enjoyed social benefits of their participatory ensemble experience such as socializing with friends and enjoying the company of like-minded people and working as a team. However, the non-music major group singled out enjoyment of the group social life as the most important item, while music majors cited a host of social factors related to group interaction such as cooperation, compromising, satisfaction with group success, and feeling important. Both groups also perceived personal benefits, but the music majors saw their ensemble participation as helping them improve their musicianship and musical leadership, while the non-majors focused on the benefits of music to their complete person.

Isbell and Stanley's (2011) study of 20 college non-majors explored what benefits the campus band had for those members. The participants cited many benefits of active

participation in the group, including both musical and social factors. They enjoyed their time in the ensemble, which allowed them to experience the beauty of performing music while feeling the emotions of the music. In addition to their joy, they improved their musical skills on their instruments and felt that they broadened their overall knowledge about music. The relaxed atmosphere of the campus band and lack of competition relieved their stress and allowed them to participate to the best of their ability without worrying about messing up. Finally, the participants enjoyed the social community and family atmosphere provided by the band in an activity that they were familiar with from previous school encounters.

Sometimes, however, the benefits of a musical program do not lead to continued participation in musical ensembles. Arasi (2006) evaluated the long-term effect of an esteemed high school choral program to determine the meaning and influence that it had in the lives of the participants. Her semi-structured interviews of eight adult participants who chose non-musical careers revealed that the non-musical benefits of the program were more impactful in adulthood than the musical ones. Only one of the eight participants continued to be actively involved in choral singing as an adult. Many of the participants considered the high school choral experience as something that happened during that specific period of their lives without musical carryover into the rest of their lives. While most students did not engage in active participation during their adult lives, all of them identified music as important to them and indicated several lifelong non-musical influences of their high school choral experience. Participants often considered the extra-musical social benefits such as teamwork and confidence building as crucial to their personal development and growth.

Arasi (2006) argued that aspects of the hidden curriculum—those things which students learn that are not the intended lesson—in a choral program may have more long-term impact on students' lives than the musical elements. She cited the low active musical participation of her alumni and worried that musical skills did not carry over into adult life. Arasi also wondered if students may not be learning the musical skills that teachers believe they are teaching. She even opined that, "lifelong involvement in music is not encouraged with the current traditional system." (p. 199). Arasi's finding is concerning, given the successful nature of the program, and it highlights the fact that even when students achieve musical success it does not necessarily lead to lifelong participation.

### **Barriers to Lifelong Musical Participation**

Despite the benefits of lifelong musical participation, people have identified several barriers that prevent them from making it a part of their lives. Burch (2016) used five focus-group interviews with a total of 21 participants to explore what young adults attribute to their choices of non-participation in musical activities. He found that these young adults attribute their non-participation to prioritizing other life activities such as completing school, beginning their careers, and dating and starting a family. Those priorities leave little time for leisure, and that, combined with the restrictive policies of many community groups, result in non-participation. The time commitments required by the ensemble often do not meld with the demands of work and home (Klickman, 2014) and the flexibility needed by young adults with families (Busch, 2005). Sometimes, those individuals never return to an ensemble (Pitts and Robinson, 2016). In other cases, a

move to a new geographical location may serve as a barrier to participation (Pitts, 2012). Other times, a lack of appropriate ensemble choices or no social connection to them will prevent active participation (Klickman, 2014; Pitts, 2012). Occasionally a bad experience with a conductor may also lead prospective participants to cease their involvement (Bures, 2008; Pitts, 2012).

Pitts (2012) also noted that, for a few individuals, financial obstacles block the way to lifelong musical participation. She explained that classical music genres often eliminate segments of society because of the financial burden of instrument costs and lessons. This echoed the concern of Mantie (2013), who stated that, despite the efforts of music educators to provide music for every child, a life of active musical participation may not be possible for some segments of society because of the stratification evident and the economic realities required for many activities.

Sometimes musical factors can be barriers to continuing participation. Some young adults attribute their diminishing musical skill as a reason for avoiding active participation (Burch, 2016). The difficulty of the music or a need for additional practice outside of rehearsal can be a barrier too large for them to overcome. Sometimes this is due to the gap in time between secondary school the beginning of community ensemble seasons. Burch (2016) also stated that while most participants had positive high school experiences, many of them lacked knowledge about the available community musical offerings—another reason cited by others for their non-participation (Cavitt, 2005).

Significant barriers exist that cause some to cease lifelong musical participation. Even among active participants those barriers can still be felt (Pitts, 2005). Pitts (2005) stated that “participants mention the strains of musical involvement quite frequently, but

these are far outweighed (at least for those who persist with musical activity) by transcendent moments of enjoyment, achievement and fulfilment, felt to be unattainable by other, ‘everyday’ means” (p. 141). One hopes that music educators can provide the types of transcendent moments that lead more students to continue their participation.

### **Suggestions for Increasing Musical Participation**

Along the way, some have questioned the motives and methods of music educators and called for a radical reformation of school music to achieve the goal of more musical participation throughout life. Christopher Small (1998) argued that school music was actually causing students to be less musical and accusatorily said that music teachers “too often regard themselves more as agents for the discovery and selection of talented potential professionals than as agents for the development of the musicality that lies within each child” (p. 212). Rohwer (2011) wondered if “by venerating certain forms of music over others, colleges have set in place an unnatural hierarchy that may be antithetical to the vision of community music as a natural transition for students” (p. 125). Recent research by Dabback (2017), however, revealed that almost all music educators (91% of those surveyed) believed that they were encouraging and leading students toward lifelong engagement with music. Some have called the goals and aims by music educators to increase lifelong musical participation “mostly lip service” without the real action needed to support such views (Jones, 2009, p. 201).

However, the vast majority of the literature on lifelong learning, lifelong participation, and lifelong engagement is united in the finding that music teachers believe that they *can* make a difference in the lives of their students. Music teachers believe that

they can improve the future musical participation of their students and, as a result, they offer all kinds of suggestions for doing so based on their research. Researchers who have studied participation and lifelong learning have made suggestions that fall into three main categories—teaching for musical independence (Arasi, 2006; Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2011; Lamont, 2011; Rohwer & Rohwer, 2010), broadening the musical experiences of the students (Busch, 2005; Chiodo, 1997; Lamont, 2011; Myers, Bowles, & Dabback, 2013; Wall, 2018), and increasing connections with community (Burch, 2016; Moder, 2013; Myers, Bowles, & Dabback, 2013; Rohwer & Rohwer, 2010).

First, many researchers have focused their suggestions for music educators on increasing the musical independence of their students, because active participation in most musical ensembles requires some degree of musical skill and confidence. Lamont (2011) argued that teaching for musical independence will support the development of musical identity. She encouraged music teachers to promote skills that increased musical independence, such as practice strategies and strong technique (Lamont, 2011). Arasi (2006) also encouraged an increased focus on teaching musical independence by providing a balance between a performance focus and creative activities. She also advocated for expanding the scope of music teacher education so that prospective educators were more prepared to teach musical independence and encourage lifelong musical participation. Rohwer and Rohwer (2010) suggested an increased use of chamber music as a way of encouraging musical independence and leadership while also providing opportunity for social interactions around musical subjects. Kokotsaki & Hallam (2011) also stressed the importance of chamber music for increasing musical independence, but cautioned that care be taken to form appropriate ensembles with the right of amount of

instruction and independence to ensure for motivation and success.

Second, researchers have also argued that in order to increase musical participation, educators need to appeal to a larger population (Myers, Bowles, & Dabback, 2013). Because of the variety of motivations possessed by potential musical participants (Gates, 1991), musical leaders must understand their motivations and address them. Researchers claimed that adult musical participation is almost always based on collaboration, and therefore having teachers act more like facilitators and allowing more interaction during school years may lead to more active participation later in life (Myers et al., 2013). Others suggest that another way to appeal to a larger population is to expand the type and variety of experiences that are offered to school children, such as including popular music ensembles or electronic ensembles in course offerings (Wall, 2018).

Chiodo (1997) noted that individuals who displayed a lifetime of musical participation were exposed to a wide range of musical experiences and continued to broaden their musical involvement as they increased their commitment. A wide array of musical experiences may provide children with a firm foundation on which to continue their musical participation and many options that fit their preferred style of learning (Busch, 2005; Lamont, 2011).

Finally, many have called for more connections with the community in order to encourage lifelong musical participation. Rohwer and Rohwer (2010) suggested having student-directed ensembles perform in informal settings to provide performance opportunities while connecting with community members. Others encouraged music educators to have students inquire about the musical lives of others (Myers, Bowles & Dabback, 2013). They specifically encouraged teachers to facilitate school children's

personal interaction with adult amateurs so that they can see an example of, “the people most of them are likely to become—music amateurs.” (Myers et al., 2013, p. 146).

Burch (2016), concerned about the lack of connection between school musical activities and those available outside the classroom walls, offered several suggestions to help bridge the gap. Burch urged high school directors to, “demonstrate the value of lifelong participation” by being actively involved in community ensembles (p. 106). He extoled the virtue of directors leading by example and discussing this involvement with their students. In addition, he encouraged high school directors to involve themselves in forward recruiting, similar to the efforts that they use to reach out to middle school students. He believed that collaboration with community ensembles would lead to increased awareness.

Moder (2013) encouraged high school directors to take their students to college and university or community concerts to expose them to future participation opportunities. In addition, by providing information about active community ensembles and scheduling joint rehearsals or concerts with community ensembles, educators may foster increased lifelong participation (Rohwer & Rohwer, 2010). Rohwer & Rohwer believe that “communication, education, and exposure may help students make smooth transitions into musical communities, whether those communities are community music ensembles, concerts in the community, or family sing-a-longs.” (p. 38).

While the overwhelming majority of the suggestions for music educators are for high school directors, Rohwer (2011) argued that if the trajectory and number of people actively involved in musical participation throughout their lives is really going to change, then colleges and universities need to include community music making units in their

current educational offerings. Given the already crowded curriculums and high price of college tuition, it seems likely that the easiest way to introduce this content is through a unit inserted into the current teacher preparation classes. However, Rohwer (2011) suggested that a better option may be to reimagine the entire curriculum not as age-based topics, but conceptually to address music making challenges and pedagogical practices at every level.

### **The High School Director's Involvement in Post-Secondary Participation**

Researchers have found that music educators can make a difference in the future lifelong musical participation of their students and have offered many suggestions for improvement over the years (Burch, 2016; Busch, 2005; Lamont, 2011; Rohwer & Rohwer, 2010). Post-secondary band participation is one form of lifelong musical participation that has received a fair amount of attention. Often this research has come in the form of questionnaires filled out by college students reflecting on the reasons for or against their participation in a collegiate or community ensemble. Several of these quantitative studies have indicated the profound impact that the high school band director has on the decision-making process of and future musical participation of those high school seniors, as discussed below. I will trace the historical importance of the high school band director throughout the literature on this subject.

### **Early Studies Addressing the High School Director's Role in Post-Secondary Participation.**

One of the first studies to examine the issue of post-secondary band participation was Stanley's (1964) look at Ohio University freshmen. He interviewed 148 university students, both band members and non-participants, using a researcher-created

check sheet. He hoped to pinpoint reasons for the non-participation of high school band members in the Ohio University band program and the influence of high school band programs. The results of his study indicated that the reasons for participation and non-participation at the college level are multi-faceted. He asserted that students' decisions to enroll or cease participation at the college level may be affected by several factors including the following: time, their enjoyment of music, their attitude towards their high school director and towards their high school band experience, as well as other elements. Stanley (1964) concluded that students who have a positive attitude about their high school band director and high school band experience are more likely to enroll in a collegiate ensemble than those who had a negative attitude.

Stanley's (1964) research revealed some interesting information about that sample of Ohio University students, but it seems that he often overgeneralized the results to a larger population. For example, he stated: "These results indicate that the student who does like his high school band director is more likely to continue band participation in college than is the student who does not like his band director" (p. 28). While this claim may or may not be true for the larger population of students in the United States at large, Stanley's study spurred more exploration of the topic in coming years and emphasized the important role of the high school band director.

Clothier's (1967) investigation mirrored some of the findings of Stanley's (1964) study, while confirming the important role of the high school band director in affecting participation. Clothier (1967) focused on students with prior high school band experience at five small colleges in Iowa. There were 307 freshmen identified who had high school band experience across the five colleges and 282 of them completed a researcher-

developed questionnaire. Clothier tried to determine the factors that help high school students decide to enroll in college bands. The results of the questionnaire indicated that those who participated in collegiate ensembles tended to have participated in high school band during their senior year, participated in small ensembles and solo contests, spent the most time practicing during their senior year, and felt that they were some of the best players in their band. Clothier found that decisions to enroll in collegiate band were based on multiple interrelated factors. He determined that the most influential factors were related to college life, while the high school band experience rated second. People were also important for those who enrolled in college band, with participants citing the role of their parents and band director as influential in their decision making.

Just a year later, McClarty (1968) questioned 178 freshman non-music majors at the University of Montana about their reasons for or against participating in the collegiate band program. Of those, 166 were not members of the university band and 12 were members. McClarty (1968) had similar motivations to Stanley (1964) and suggested that the study was needed because of the lack of recent similar research in the western United States. This study pointed to high school as a critical time for decision making regarding post-secondary participation. McClarty (1968) found that the majority of students, both participants and nonparticipants, made their decision about collegiate band enrollment while still in high school. In addition, a majority of those who chose to participate enjoyed their high school band experience, confirming Stanley's (1964) earlier finding. In his conclusions, McClarty (1968) recognized the importance of the high school band director in the process and provided several recommendations for increasing participation. He encouraged high school band directors to promote band as, "...a

lifelong experience, not a terminal experience concluding at high school graduation,” and hoped that they would plan their program to, “promote a highly satisfying total band experience” (p. 134).

As research into the phenomenon of post-secondary band participation continued, high school band directors continued to receive attention. Mountford (1977) concluded that a longitudinal study design may be able to more precisely pinpoint the reasons for non-participation in collegiate ensembles following high school graduation. Up to that point, studies focused solely on the college students, and Mountford wondered if the gap in time from high school to college clouded some memories of the decision making process and of their high school experience. His longitudinal study focused on the senior band members from high schools in Stark County, Ohio and their high school band directors.

Mountford’s (1977) purpose was to determine if the musical experiences and attitudes of these high school band students were valid predictors of college band participation. He specifically considered the topic of carry-over—how musical activities during high school might lead to lifelong participation. To combat the loss of memory of the high school experience, he surveyed students about their high school experiences while they were still in high school, and then checked in with them a year later to inquire about their college band participation status. The survey sent to those 86 high school band members asked about their high school band experiences and involvement, while the inquiry for the directors was a simple two-question survey asking about their perceptions of each student’s success and whether they sat in the upper, middle, or lower third of their section.

Mountford (1977) found that, in that population of high school students, the factor best able to predict collegiate participation was the early decision to continue, which was made during their senior year. This seemed to confirm the earlier findings by Clothier (1967) and McClarty (1968) which pointed to the senior year of high school as the most likely time for decisions regarding college participation. In addition, Mountford found that the performance of solos and involvement in community ensembles were also significant predictors of college band participation. He asserted that, “any plan that is to be implemented to increase the number of college band participants will have to be concentrated at the high school level” (p. 166). This study points to the importance of the senior year of high school as the key time for collegiate band participation decisions and the centrality of the high school band director in providing an environment that leads to continued participation.

Delano and Royse (1987) continued the trend of trying to determine why many college freshmen choose not to participate in collegiate musical ensembles. The impetus for the study was to find ways to reach out to students who were not involved in musical activities at Kent State University. They surveyed a group of 352 freshman participants and non-participants in instrumental ensembles. The results of the study indicated that the students who continued to participate in college were profoundly influenced by their high school band directors. Collegiate band participants were significantly more likely than non-participants to have enjoyed their high school experience, had positive attitudes about their high school director, and received encouragement from their high school director to continue participation after graduation. The authors concluded that “one logical bridge between high school and college would seem to be the high school

ensemble director, who could encourage the students to participate in solo and ensemble festivals, to undertake private instruction on their instruments, and to continue post-high school performance” (p. 16-17).

Milton (1982) probed the subject of collegiate band participation with his investigation of small colleges in Ohio. Milton surveyed 189 freshman from these colleges who had high school band experience. He inquired about attitudinal, social, and musical constructs. He also continued to examine the influence of the high school band director on the decision-making process of prospective collegiate ensemble members. While Milton did not find a significant difference between college band members and non-members based on the encouragement they received from the band director, he did discover other interesting aspects of a high school band director’s involvement. The high school band classroom clearly has an effect on the decision-making process because students who looked forward to high school rehearsals, cited band as their favorite class, and liked their band director as a person were significantly more likely to be collegiate band members than those that didn’t. However, he found that more than 50 percent of the students questioned indicated little or no encouragement from their high school director regarding participation beyond high school. He recommended that high school band directors work to establish quality personal relationships with their students and “foster the idea that college band participation is a natural and logical step upon going to college” (p. 180).

All of the previous studies have displayed the progression of research into this subject over the past 50 years. They pointed toward the important role that the band directed played in providing a favorable environment for continued participation and

actively encouraging that activity. However, researchers need to continue this line of inquiry to continue the search for answers about the low participation rates in collegiate and community bands and orchestras and explore what high school band directors can do to encourage and promote continued band involvement.

### **Recent Studies Addressing the High School Director's Role in Post-**

**Secondary Participation.** Moder's (2013) study of 2,933 college non-music major band participants is one of the largest to date. The purpose of her study was similar to many other investigations on this topic throughout the years: to determine aspects that led students to enroll in collegiate ensembles. She found that the strongest factor for continued participation in college is a love for playing music. The second highest rated factor was the student's overall high school band experience. This seems to confirm the significant role of the high school director as he or she provides the daily structure and activities of the ensemble. Additional activities such as solos and ensembles and multiple performance opportunities have been cited by others as reasons for college enrollment (Clothier, 1967; Stanley, 1964). In addition, Moder (2013) noted that students remembered concerts and performances by college ensembles and cited that as a reason for their college participation. The high school director often serves as a coordinator and for these types of events, therefore encouraging lifelong participation. While the study does not recognize the direct personal influence of the high school director as a reason for continued participation, it is clear from the data that the high school director has a profound influence on high school students' future participation decisions by shaping the program to meet individual needs (Moder, 2013).

The common thread throughout the previous studies concerning the high school

band director's involvement in the college band decision-making process is that all utilized a quantitative method of inquiry. Mantie and Tucker (2008) used qualitative techniques such as focus groups and interviews to explore the idea of post-secondary music participation. The participants were members of three community ensembles directed by researchers. They used Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning as a framework for the study. The results of the study indicated two main obstacles to lifelong participation. The first problem they proposed is that the school environment is different from the types of musical participation that happen in community settings, and to some extent college. Often students continue musical participation during school for reasons that do not exist in community settings. During school, students participate to please their teachers and earn good grades, but do not necessarily develop the independent musical skills needed to operate in a post-secondary environment (Mantie & Tucker, 2008).

The second obstacle to participation noted by Mantie and Tucker (2008) is that teachers often do not include lifelong participation as an aim of their teaching. One student recounted how his high school teacher encouraged him to pursue music as a career. The student had no interest in a musical career, and after that, the director did not encourage musical participation in another form. According to this student, the director did not encourage post-secondary musical participation in the classroom setting for general enrollees. In this case, the student did not recall or perceive an explicit effort by the teacher to encourage post-secondary participation to a larger audience (Mantie & Tucker, 2008).

It is possible that teachers believe that their teaching is leading toward lifelong

participation, but that their practice does not align with their beliefs. Furthermore, it is possible that teachers believe in encouraging lifelong participation, but that they fail to implement their beliefs in a way that students perceive. Interviewing and observing a teacher directly in regards to aims and goals for lifelong participation may give us a glimpse of one teacher's beliefs and practice that can be lost when relying on the memory and perception of a student recalling his high school participation.

Bowles, Dobbs, & Jensen (2014) surveyed members of college music ensembles who were not music majors to identify factors inspiring continued participation. The online questionnaire of students at a large Midwestern university had a response rate of 50 percent ( $N=476$ ). In their literature review, the authors cited the influential position of the high school director (Cavitt, 2005; Delano & Royse, 1987; Kuntz, 2011; McDavid, 2006; Milton, 1982; Mountford, 1977; Stewart, 2007) and asked specific questions to explore the students' experiences with their ensemble leaders. They specifically asked about "language and activities" that high school directors may use to encourage post-secondary participation (Bowles, Dobbs, & Jensen, 2014, p. 13). Sixty-eight percent of collegiate ensemble members recalled their high school directors mentioning and encouraging post-secondary musical participation to their group (Bowles, Dobbs, & Jensen, 2014). At the end of the survey, students had the opportunity to add other written thoughts about their high school experience. They reported specific experiences provided by their high school directors that inspired them to continue, including the following: joint concerts with college and community ensembles, director and alumni testimonies about college participation, attending college performances, interactions with college directors, and college brochures distributed by their directors (Bowles, Dobbs, & Jensen,

2014). While this study did not utilize a primarily qualitative approach, the additional information provided by the students in the open-ended section presented a more thorough picture of the landscape in a high school classroom as it relates to continued participation. The participants in this study suggested many specific activities organized by their high school directors that encouraged them to continue playing beyond high school. Those experiences contributed to their positive inclination toward band participation (Bowles, Dobbs & Jensen, 2014). A qualitative open-ended inquiry into the beliefs and practice of a high school band director would be interesting to see if it may yield similar insights into activities within a high school classroom that may encourage lifelong instrumental participation.

### **Teacher Beliefs in Music Education**

The research described above regarding post-secondary band participation revealed the important role the band director plays in providing a quality experience, encouraging future participation, and establishing the musical skills necessary to be successful at the collegiate level. To learn more about teachers and how their beliefs impact their practice, we turn to some studies from general education. As noted earlier, teachers' beliefs are important because they serve as filters, frames, and guides for action (Fives & Buehl, 2012). Beliefs affect pedagogical decisions, personal interactions and classroom climate, thereby shaping many of the interactions that occur in schools (Rubie-Davies & Peterson, 2011). Throughout general education research there have been numerous studies which explored the construct of teacher beliefs and its relationship to practice. Fives and Buehl (2012) noted that this line of research is more than 50 years old

and includes more than 700 articles. Pajares (1992) called this a “messy” construct and worked to clean it up. More than 20 years later Fives and Buehl (2012) still worked to clean up the construct, arguing that while it is “messy,” the majority of the scholarly literature concludes that teachers’ beliefs are important and in some way affect the practice of current educators.

While research into teacher beliefs has been a prolific avenue in general education for over 50 years, it has not been utilized in music education until recently. Part of this may be due to the past failure by some music education researchers to properly define the construct as Fives and Buehl (2012) recommend. Indeed, Pajares (1992) declared that researchers often fail to define the construct clearly.

[Beliefs] travel in disguise and often under alias—attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertoires of understanding, and social strategy, to name but a few that can be found in the literature (Pajares, 1992, p. 309).

In the past 10 years there has been a notable increase in the number of music education studies using the term “beliefs” (Biasutti, 2010; Legette, 2012; Schiff, 2015; Schmidt, 2013; Scott, 2010; Shouldice, 2013; Shouldice, 2014; Williams, 2011) suggesting that there may be more consensus on the construct being studied. However, there are notably still some that explore similar constructs that use terms such as “values” (Gossett, 2015; Whitmore, 2017) and “dispositions” (Popow, 2017).

This review of research concerning teacher beliefs in music education, focuses

primarily on qualitative inquiries, which will inform the method for the current study, along with a couple of quantitative investigations that relate to the current topic. While there has been quite a bit of research on pre-service music teacher beliefs (Butler, 2001; Campbell, 2000; Schmidt, 1994), they are beyond the scope of this paper because this study is focused on the beliefs of an experienced teacher.

Legette (2012) examined music teachers' beliefs about the causes of success and failure in music using attribution theory. Attribution theory seeks to explain how individuals explain and attach meaning to the causes of events and behavior (Weiner, 1972, 1979), and Legette (2012) wondered if understanding the views of teachers about the causes of success and failure in music could provide information about how they format their classroom activities based on those beliefs. The results of the survey indicated that music teachers ( $N = 309$ ) believed that ability and effort were the leading causes of success and failure. Music teachers believed that effort was an important causal factor because students can modify their effort. Teachers might encourage students to work harder to accomplish their musical goals.

In another quantitative study, Williams (2011) investigated Texas middle school choral directors' ( $N = 72$ ) beliefs about repertoire selection. He used a quantitative online survey to study the directors' beliefs about repertoire selection, specifically whether repertoire selection differs based on: (a) the source of curricular guidelines (self vs. administrator), or (b) the perceived discussion of the topic during their undergraduate education. Fourteen belief statements about various aspects of repertoire selection were presented to participants as 3-point Likert-type items. The choir directors displayed a high level of agreement in their beliefs about selecting repertoire, with the majority

response for 9 of the 14 items being 85 percent or higher. The middle school choral directors, with over 90 percent agreement, thought that students should sing songs in foreign languages, in duple and triple meter, from different time periods, from different cultural backgrounds, and in different styles. There was not a consensus view on whether students should be allowed to vote on repertoire choices, whether music should be chosen to teach altered solfege syllables, or to increase the students' enjoyment. Because this survey on teacher beliefs limited participants' responses to predetermined selections created by the researcher, it is possible that the richness and variety of teachers' individual beliefs were not captured. This seems to point out the limitations of some quantitative investigations to thoroughly explore topics related to teacher beliefs because many surveys make participants respond to given prompts without the ability to articulate them in their own words. Because of the complexity of the teacher belief construct (Pajares, 1992), qualitative investigations may be more appropriate to fully examine the current subject.

Scott (2010) studied Orff Schulwerk teachers' beliefs about the importance of singing. She conducted open-ended interviews with eight Orff Schulwerk teachers to explore their beliefs about pedagogical and curricular priorities, their own self-concept, their efficacy beliefs, and how their beliefs were situated within larger belief systems. Scott found that each teacher did believe in the importance of singing as part of the Orff Schulwerk approach, even if some lacked confidence in their own singing abilities. However, teachers utilized singing in different ways with their students based on ability, and prioritized the various techniques associated with Orff based on their individual situations. Finally, Scott (2010) noted the importance of early family experiences on the

teachers' beliefs. Early singing experiences were very influential in the current beliefs of these Orff educators, echoing similar studies about the impact of early musical activities on the future participation of adults (Pitts, 2005; Chiodo, 1997). However, Scott's findings have limited generalizability because she only collected a single interview from each participant. Additionally, she did not do any observations of the participants, which is an important aspect of studying teacher beliefs (Pajares, 1992).

Another recent example of qualitative inquiry into teacher beliefs is Schiff's (2015) exploration of music teachers' beliefs about teaching composition. Schiff's (2015) purpose was to examine teachers' definitions of composition, explore their beliefs about composition and explore the way that they incorporated composition into their pedagogical practices. She also explored the efficacy beliefs of teachers concerning their ability to teach composition and how their past experiences shaped their beliefs about teaching composition. Schiff (2015) found that incorporating composition into the curriculum was easier for some teachers than others based on their existing core beliefs. She discovered that when teachers' core beliefs are more flexible, it is easier for them to incorporate composition into their curriculum.

More recently, Whitmore (2017) conducted a qualitative study exploring the values of high school band directors and how they affect daily practice. While Whitmore stated that he was examining "values," the author's first two research questions focus on how high school band directors describe their beliefs and how they operationalize those beliefs while preparing lessons and experiences for their students. Whitmore conducted in-depth interviews with 13 California high school band directors. Findings revealed that band directors' early musical experiences through their collegiate years have a profound

impact on their beliefs. Additionally, he found that the beliefs and values of high school band directors are sometimes challenged by outside influences that affect the day-to-day practical decisions that they make. One of his secondary findings was that several of the participating band directors clearly stated their aspiration for their students to have a lifelong participation and connection with music after high school.

The most thorough and thoughtful recent qualitative study dealing with this construct is Shouldice's (2013) study about one elementary teacher's beliefs. Her thorough and extensive data collection procedures reflect careful attention to trustworthiness. Her case study of one elementary music teacher explored how that teacher's beliefs about her students' musical abilities shaped and guided her daily practice. She gathered data through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and by gathering teacher lesson plans and teaching videos to provide a detailed description of one teacher's beliefs and their impact. She spent a great deal of time in the field as a participant-observer and engaged in multiple informal conversations with the participant in addition to several formal interviews. The wide variety of data sources and extensive time in the field showed Shouldice's concern for trustworthiness and allowed her to triangulate the data to ensure accuracy.

While Shouldice's (2013) qualitative inquiry techniques are very important to the current study, the subject of the study itself includes aspects that relate to the current exploration on teacher beliefs. Her purpose was to determine the full nature of the participant's beliefs about students' musical abilities, how the teacher's beliefs appear in her decisions, her interactions with students, and in the culture created within her classroom. Shouldice also explored the relationship of the teacher's beliefs about music

education to her beliefs about students' musical ability. After thoroughly analyzing her data, Shouldice identified four major themes that emerged. The four major themes were the teacher's belief that all students could be musical, the teacher's attention to each student individually in order to nurture their musicality, her creation of a classroom culture that encouraged the musical growth of each student, and her encouragement of lifelong musical engagement for her students. Shouldice (2013) recognized that the teacher in this case provided a classroom culture that allowed each student to succeed and grow, echoing the findings of Busch (2005) who found that a positive and encouraging environment from teachers was a key component of continuing participation. Shouldice (2013) also confirmed findings by Arasi (2006) who noted that a wide variety of musical activities and the teaching of musical independence may lead to continuing participation. While Shouldice (2013) focused on a teacher who taught the youngest students in a school setting, the belief that all students can be musical applies equally to high school directors as they work to ensure a participatory musical future for all.

### **Summary of Related Research**

This chapter explored the existing research pertaining to lifelong band participation. Lifelong musical participation has been a stated goal of music educators in the United States for many years (Cavitt, 2005; Choate, 1968; Fay, 1921; Leonard & House, 1959; Rea, 1956). Active musical participation was an important part of many cultures and societies before the advent of American music education in religious ceremonies, civil events, military musters, and entertainment (Mark & Gary, 2007). Concert bands, one of those avenues of active participation, were once a primary source

of entertainment for Americans (Mark & Gary, 2007). Concert bands do not have the same prominence or participation rates as they once did, and people have opined that it could be because of technological changes (Gossett, 2010) or the focus on band as a subject to be learned instead of something useful for leisure (Mantie, 2014).

Today, researchers continue to study how and why people engage in musical participation for a lifetime. The path to lifelong musical participation is not always straight or continuous (Lamont, 2011; Pitts, 2016; Pitts & Robinson, 2016). In spite of the crooked pathways into active participation, researchers have identified many musical, social, and personal benefits of participation such as increased skills, emotional experiences, lasting friendships, stress-relief, and increased confidence. (Bures, 2008; Isbell & Stanley, 2011; Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2007). People who continue their participation in musical ensembles are motivated by a variety of factors including (a) a love for music-making (Bowles, Dobbs, & Jensen, 2014; Bures, 2008.; Busch, 2005; Isbells & Stanley, 2010; Shansky, 2010); (b) the desire for social interaction (Bowles et al., 2014; Busch, 2005; Jacob, Guptill, and Sumison, 2009); (c) opportunities to continue learning or to retain current skills (Isbell & Stanley, 2011; Shansky, 2010); and (d) so that they can pass on music to family members (Rohwer & Rohwer, 2010).

Even with the various motivations and benefits identified above, many individuals do not continue active participation beyond high school (Arasi, 2006; Burch, 2016). There are many barriers to active participation including financial limitations (Mantie, 2013; Pitts, 2012), previous bad experiences (Bures, 2008; Pitts, 2012), and time and family demands (Busch, 2005; Klickman, 2014). Researchers have continued to search for answers as to why more students do not continue their band participation beyond high

school (Bowles, Dobbs & Jensen, 2014; Delano & Royse, 1987; Mantie & Tucker, 2008; Moder, 2013). Many have identified the high school band director as a key to continued participation (Cavitt, 2005; Delano & Royse, 1987; Kuntz, 2011; McDavid, 2006; Stewart, 2007) and several have suggested that educators may increase participation by teaching for musical independence (Arasi, 2006; Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2011; Lamont, 2011; Rohwer & Rohwer, 2010), broadening the musical experiences of the students (Busch, 2005; Chiodo, 1997; Wall, 2018), and increasing connections with the community (Burch, 2016; Moder, 2013; Rohwer & Rohwer, 2010).

Researchers in education have studied teachers' beliefs to see how those beliefs affect their daily practice (Fives & Buehl, 2012; Pajares, 1992). In recent times, more investigations have been done in musical settings which have provided examples of the ways in which people have used the construct of teacher beliefs to explore various topics in music education (Legette, 2012; Sciff, 2015; Scott, 2010; Shouldice, 2013; Williams, 2011). The purpose of this case study was to describe the beliefs of a high school band director regarding lifelong instrumental music participation and explore how those beliefs shape her daily preparation and practice. In the next section, the methodology for the current investigation is described based on information from this literature review.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This chapter outlines the methodology and procedures that I used to complete this study. The purpose of this case study was to describe the beliefs of a high school band director regarding lifelong instrumental music participation and explore how those beliefs shaped her daily preparation and practice.

As described in Chapter 2, most of the other studies involving post-secondary band participation have used quantitative means to collect data, relying on the population of easily accessible college students (Bowles, Dobbs, & Jensen, 2014; Delano & Royse, 1987; Milton, 1982; Moder, 2013). However, Fives and Buehl (2012) noted that the construct of teacher beliefs is multi-faceted and complex. Also, Shouldice (2013) argued that the normal means of quantitative data gathering, “may not accurately capture the complexity and true nature of participants’ beliefs” (p. 55). Thus, a qualitative approach to inquiry may be helpful in capturing a more complete picture of the nature of one teacher’s beliefs.

### **Study Design**

This study used an instrumental case study design (Creswell, 2007). An instrumental case study design was used to examine a particular case in order that the information collected might provide an understanding of the greater issue of which that case is part (Stake, 1995). In this instance, the issue being observed is post-secondary band participation, and the case is one high school band director’s beliefs about that subject. Hancock & Algozzine (2011) state that a case study approach is an ideal

technique to “create mental images that bring to life the complexity of the many variables inherent in the phenomenon being studied” (p. 16). Given the complex nature of teacher beliefs, I tend to agree with Shouldice (2013) that, “allowing participants to express their beliefs freely, without imposed categories or restrictions, would enable a more authentic depiction of their beliefs” (p. 25).

## **Participant Selection**

In order to select a participant for this study I used a purposeful sampling approach (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) explained that “purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 77). The University of Houston band and music education faculty made recommendations for possible participants based on the following criteria:

1. The high school band director led a program that regularly had alumni who were participants in collegiate ensembles, both as music majors and non-music majors.
2. The high school band director had at least 10 years of teaching experience and was in the *expert phase* of their teaching career (Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz, 2000). A teacher in the expert phase is self-reflective and constantly working to grow and get better, is attentive to student needs, and supports the educational growth of all (Steffy et al., 2000).
3. This band director was recognized by colleagues as an outstanding educator and a leader in the field.

4. The band director had a willingness to participate in the process of research through interviews, observations, and artifact collection.

After considering their recommendations, I chose to invite a participant for the study because she met all of the above criteria.

### **Limitations**

While it would be desirable to study more than one high school teacher and college students who were former participants in their bands, it is beyond the scope of this study. Researchers are often limited by the amount of time that they can devote to fieldwork (Stake, 1995). I have chosen to focus on one individual teacher for this study so that I can give proper attention to the complexity of this teacher's beliefs and allow the teacher to express beliefs freely without feeling limited by time (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Shouldice, 2013). A multiple case study and comparisons with student perceptions may present opportunities for future research.

### **The Participant**

Diane Snyder (pseudonym) is the band director at Green Hill High School (pseudonym), which serves over 2800 students in grades 10-12. All names of schools, school districts, cities, places, and individuals in this and further chapters are pseudonyms to protect their identity. Green Hill High School is located in the Greenwoods Independent School District, a large suburban district in Texas. Two assistant directors teach along with Diane, team-teaching marching band with her and each serving as a lead teacher for their own concert band. One of the assistant directors is a percussion

specialist. Over 380 students, including students from the freshman campus across the street, are involved in band at Green Hill High School. The directors divide those students into four different bands based on an initial audition and each of those bands meets for 90 minutes every day. In addition to concert band, students have the opportunity to participate in marching band, solos, ensembles, and full orchestra as well as the ability to take a music theory course.

Diane Snyder has been teaching band for 32 years in the state of Texas, and for the last six years at Green Hill High School. Her bands consistently earn sweepstakes awards at University Interscholastic League (UIL) contests. The UIL is a state-run organization overseeing sports, academics, and musical activities for Texas public schools, and a sweepstakes award is presented to bands that receive a superior rating in marching band, concert band, and sight-reading. Diane's peers recognize her as an expert teacher, regularly inviting her to lead region bands and serve as a clinician for other bands. She has taught both middle school and high school and served as an instrumental music administrator. In addition, Ms. Snyder regularly serves as a cooperating teacher for student teachers from several Texas universities, helping to prepare a new generation of music educators.

## **Data Collection**

Data collection in a case study design is usually very comprehensive and includes many sources of information (Creswell, 2007). Beliefs can often be hard to explain or put into words, so the variety of data collection techniques makes case study design an ideal method for this study. Pajares (1992) noted that, "individuals are often unable or

unwilling, for many reasons, to accurately represent their beliefs. For this reason, beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured but must be inferred from what people say, intend, and do” (p. 314). I collected the data in this study using a variety of techniques, including semi-structured interviews, observations, teacher reflective writings, document collection, and prerecorded podcasts. (Creswell, 2007).

The primary source of data collection for this study was semi-structured interviews. I followed Seidman’s (2013) suggestion of conducting three interviews in order to gain a complete picture of the phenomenon. Seidman (2013) encourages this approach because it, “allows the interviewer and participant to explore the participant’s experience, place it in context, and reflect on its meaning” (p. 20). The first interview focused on the teacher’s background, specifically her path into musical participation and attraction to the music education profession. The second interview explored the participant’s core beliefs about teaching band and highlighted a typical day in her classroom. The final interview focused on what it means to the teacher that she is in the position to have a lifelong impact on her students and what she hopes her students will know when they move on from her classroom.

These interviews occurred over the course of three months. Seidman (2013) encouraged some spacing between the interviews, but not too much. Participants need time to consider the previous interview, but not too much time to lose the connections between each one. The difficulty of scheduling and spacing interviews during a busy marching season proved difficult, so while the first two interviews were spaced within a couple of weeks, the third interview occurred about a month and a half later. I interviewed the participant in her office each time, to provide a convenient yet quiet

setting that was free from distractions (Hancock & Algozinne, 2011). I audio recorded all interviews with my iPhone SE in order to have an accurate sound file of the conversation. Soon after each interview, I transcribed the audio recordings to provide a textual representation of the data. Merriam (2009) noted that transcribing the interviews provides the researcher with an “intimate familiarity” with the data (p. 110).

In addition to the interviews, I observed Ms. Snyder teach nine times in her classroom during ensemble classes throughout the data collection period. I looked for teaching episodes that reflected her beliefs about post-secondary band participation and instances in which she encouraged continuing beyond high school. An observation guide helped me properly document time, place, and events that applied to my research questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). I wrote complete field notes as soon as possible after each observation to provide a detailed picture of the scene (Merriam, 2009). The observations helped me to connect what Diane said that she believed to what actions actually happened in the classroom.

After reviewing transcripts and fieldnotes, I also sent Diane emails seeking clarifications for questions that arose. She replied to those questions via email and those responses were included in the data collection for this project to give me yet another way to triangulate information. I also collected other documents from Diane so that I would have a complete picture of her teaching and her environment. These documents—such as band handbooks, concert programs, weekly memos, program administration documents, and pre-recorded podcasts provided me with additional sources of information on the participant, her context, and beliefs.

## **Data Storage and Ethical Issues**

Throughout the investigation process, I exercised great care to protect both the participant's identity and the data collected during the course of the study. All participant information was removed from the interview transcripts and pseudonyms were created to protect the anonymity of the teacher and locations (Creswell, 2007). All of the interview recordings were exported from my iPhone and stored on my password protected computer to safeguard the data. Additionally, all transcripts were stored on my password protected computer. All collected documents, including all consent forms, were stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office (Creswell, 2007).

## **Data Analysis**

Following Merriam's (2009) advice, I started analyzing the data after the first interview so as to not be overwhelmed by too much data. This initial relationship with the data allowed me to start thinking about possible codes and themes right away and helped me continue to focus the study according to my research questions. In addition to citing initial themes, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) recommend writing memos about what you have already learned and I wrote several of these as I wrestled with the data. Creswell (2007) described the analysis of data as a spiral process that keeps touching on the data again and again while reading, classifying, arranging, and eventually representing it in a way that can provide a description of the case. I initially used *in vivo* coding (Saldaña, 2009), in which I used the participant's own words as codes before moving to axial coding to arrange them into groups. As the themes began to emerge, I started thinking about the theoretical framework and how Ms. Snyder's beliefs might fit within that

framework to serve as filters, frames, or guides (Fives & Buehl, 2012).

## **Trustworthiness**

In order to provide trustworthiness, I used triangulation of the many data sources I collected (Stake, 1995). The interviews, observations, documents, and email responses enabled me to confirm similar accounts from multiple points of data. In addition to data source triangulation, I relied on a peer review of my coding to provide investigator triangulation (Stake, 1995). Finally, Diane reviewed the data and working document to provide member checks and ensure that I represented her beliefs correctly (Stake, 1995).

## **Researcher Lens**

Every research study is carried out by individuals and in qualitative research it is common for the investigators to share their viewpoint (Creswell, 2007). Creswell (2007, p. 18) says that researchers “position themselves” in a study and they share their values and biases while writing in a way that shows their personal connection to the participants. I believe that encouraging participation beyond high school is important or I would not have studied this phenomenon, but I worked to objectively present the participant’s beliefs and let her speak in her own words.

When I was very young I remember sitting next to my father in the church balcony while he was singing with the choir. It was a great opportunity to see people enjoying their time together while participating and making music. At the same time in my life, however, I remember constantly walking by my father’s old snare drum that sat under the hall tree in our house wondering why he still had it if he did not play it

anymore.

Throughout my life, I have been exposed to people who have continued to make music beyond their high school years and also those who put their instruments away and never used them after high school. I played in a jazz big band group started by a gentleman who just loved to play. He spent hours of time and thousands of dollars gathering music and equipment to establish a big band that rarely played a gig. But he did it for the sheer enjoyment of playing the music he loved with friends. On the other hand, I have two parents who played instruments through high school, but then stopped playing once they graduated. I know countless others who did the same. This contrast continued to puzzle me. Why did some people continue looking for ways to continue active participation while others did not?

During my time as a high school band director, I was exposed to many adults who continued to enjoy making music on a regular basis. Before I assumed the position, there had been a regular tradition of interaction between community member musicians and high school band students. Students played alongside adult community members in musical orchestras and polka bands. One of my predecessors started this tradition and always stated that there was no better way for students to learn than by playing next to an experienced adult. I believe that he was right, but I also believe that these opportunities were just as valuable for the adults who continued to play and experience the joy that comes from making music. These interactions were fun to watch and even more fun when the adults that came back to play were former students ready to mentor young high school students and continue their participation.

I believe that these experiences helped me see lifelong participation as something

important and shaped several of my students into lifelong participants. I believe that lifelong instrumental music participation is important. While this lens definitely affected my perspective to start the study, I committed to letting the participant speak for herself so that her beliefs about lifelong instrumental music participation were revealed.

## **Chapter 4: The Participant and Her Context**

The participant of this study, Diane Snyder, is a veteran teacher with 32 years of service as a band director in the state of Texas. She has taught middle school and high school band and has served as both an assistant and head director. Her bands have been recognized for outstanding performances at every level including being a state honor band finalist multiple times, state marching band finalist, and regularly earning superior ratings at concert and sight-reading contests. She is recognized by her peers as an excellent educator and regularly serves as a clinician and adjudicator throughout the state. She regularly mentors student teachers from several universities across the state of Texas and serves in leadership positions in several musical organizations within the state and nationally.

This chapter will be an introduction to the participant in this case study and an overview of the contextual factors that have shaped her beliefs as a band director. I will trace her musical history as well as the important role that her parents and former teachers played in her decision to become a teacher. In addition, I will describe her preparation for teaching, teaching career, current school district, and views on the purpose of music education. This is all intended to give a complete picture of the participant and the contextual factors that have influenced her through the years. All of these factors contribute to the person she is today, as well as her beliefs about teaching band and lifelong band participation. Pseudonyms are used throughout this document to mask the identity of people, places, and schools.

## **Musical History and the Decision to Become a Teacher**

Diane Snyder grew up in a family that appreciated music and encouraged her participation. She described how her family appreciated music and shared it with her when she was a child.

*So [my family was] not really a musical family, so to speak, but they really appreciated music. I was exposed to a lot of it. We did a lot of concerts. We did a lot of symphony concerts. When we moved down here we did a lot of Pinewood Symphony concerts. We did a lot of musicals. I was exposed to it, but nobody in my family was like a band director or a music teacher or anything like that. They just really appreciated it and saw the value of it, so it pushed us that direction.*

(Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

While Ms. Snyder's parents were not active participants in adulthood, their appreciation of music led them to provide many opportunities for her to experience great music at a young age in a variety of venues. Diane's parents had a great impact on her musical past and the role that music played in her early life and musical growth.

Diane also described the musical histories of her family and the opportunities she received as a child. She told of her musical start, first on the piano, and then how she selected her band instrument.

*Well, my mom was in band...I was born and went through junior high in another state. And she had been in band through high school. Dad...[had] no musical background, none whatsoever. So I took piano lessons. We had a piano. My mom and dad wanted me to take piano and then in...fifth grade, band was available to us. And so I started in fifth grade and because my mom was a flute player and we*

*had a flute, I was one of those. I really wanted to be a trombone player, but we had a flute and luckily it worked out. So I started with flute.* (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

Even though Diane did not get to start on her preferred instrument, she really enjoyed her middle school band experience because she had a terrific teacher, Mr. Friedrich. She described Mr. Friedrich as a dynamic personality who inspired her to enjoy music as she began her band experience. She talked about his influence.

*I still remember him and he was just so dynamic. And he was just the most positive energetic person I think I've ever known. Like crazy! (Laughter). ...He was just a fabulous teacher, or at least to a fifth grader he was a fabulous teacher. And [he] made it really fun. And yet, I think we learned a lot because I had some skills. I didn't think so at the time, but now being a teacher and looking back. He was so enthusiastic and he was so energetic, but yet we learned a lot. So I guess it's the way he delivered the message in the lessons. I mean, it was just the best class ever. And it was engaging and he was loud and boisterous and all over the room and you know, had us laughing and doing all sorts of things all the time every day.* (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

Teachers often are inspired to go into teaching based on interactions with a really good teacher. Mr. Friedrich's energy and passion for what he was doing was infectious to Diane at that age, and she loved playing in his band. He was her band director throughout middle school and accepted the high school position as she was about to advance.

Right before high school, however, her parents told her that they were moving to Texas and that she would have to leave her state, her friends, and the only band director

she knew, Mr. Friedrich. Diane almost quit band at that point because she found out she was going to have a female band director. She described how her parents made her follow through on the commitment that she made to summer band and how that influence led her to this profession.

*When I came down here, I found out that, and this is the funny part of the story, that I had a female band director. And there was absolutely no way that was going to work. I couldn't believe it. I was like, "I want to quit. I'm not going through summer band. It's hot. Texas sucks. Now I have this female band director. This can't be good." I was going to quit, and my parents made me go through summer band because I had already agreed to do that. They said, "You need to follow through on your commitment, and you need to at least go through summer band." And if I didn't like it, they would let me quit. Well, I went through summer band and the rest is sort of history. I ended up loving it...and decided I wanted to be a teacher, and I was going to use music to do it. (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)*

Her parents' encouragement to live up to her commitment ended up making a huge difference in her life.

Despite her initial reservations, Diane's parents convinced her to go to summer band at Cedarville High School and, to her surprise, she had a great experience with her high school teachers, both of whom were female. She talked about her high school marching band experience, the culture that surrounded it, and the excellence that her teachers expected.

*They had developed sort of a cultish culture on that [military marching band]. I*

*mean we had bumper stickers that said “military rules and corps sucks” ...And it was, this is the way to do it...everything is with precision in everything. And then just the music. We didn't play arrangements and things. We played full-on marches. We would go to the, now it's NAMMB (National Association of Military Marching Bands), but back then it was specific festivals for military marching bands and do really well. And one thing we didn't do, and I didn't realize this till later on, we never went to state marching contest. She didn't believe in that. And so we just always thought that region UIL [contest] was the end all. We didn't even know there was a state marching contest.* (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

Besides marching band, there were many other parts of her high school band experience that were formative for Diane. She described some other aspects that were emphasized by her teachers.

*[She also] placed a big emphasis on solos and ensembles...And the private lesson program—you had to take private lessons, period. That's just what you did...Chamber music was really big. All-state process—really big. Tons of concerts. We'd do a lot of community events.* (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

The band culture at her high school completely immersed Diane. She recalls how important her high school directors were to that culture and how the band even influenced the culture of the entire high school.

*When I went to Cedarville, it was the first four years the school had opened. So we were developing not only a culture, we were developing the traditions of the entire school. And...the band was huge. I remember that. I'd never seen a band that big before... I mean Ms. Day [high school band director] ...had us hooked.*

*She had everybody hooked, and great bands. We would have between 12 and 15 all-staters every year. The bands were great. And we were just immersed in the band world. If you didn't do band at Cedarville High School, you didn't participate, period. It was kind of the thing.* (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

The band culture at Diane's high school inspired participation, demanded excellence, developed individual skills, and exposed all the students to outstanding musical repertoire.

Diane learned to love music because of those high school experiences and started to think about a career as a band director. The fact that both of her high school directors were women in a traditionally male-dominated profession (Sheldon & Hartley, 2012) inspired her to think about being another one of the first women to teach high school band within the state. She talked about the impact of those two women.

*[R]emember I was going to quit [band] when I found out I had [a female director]?....When I came down [to Texas] I was like, "There's no way!" So that totally opened up all those possibilities to me and that's when I went, "This is something, not only that I can do this, something I really want to do and I want to take that path." So yeah, that had always been in the back of my mind because if historically, if you look at it, there's not many [female directors]. (Laughter) There's not many. And in back then 32 years ago, there really wasn't, you know? There were five in west Texas. There were none down here. None. And there were three in central Texas and that was it, you know? So it was like, "Wow!" So that became sort of a thing.* (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

Diane always enjoyed helping other people and talked about how she always

knew that she wanted to be a teacher. She recalled some of her early teaching experiences.

*I just knew that I was always – I just really liked it, you know? I used to work at little daycares. I'd help with summer camps counseling and stuff like that. I remember doing swim team and helping the coach teach swimming lessons to the kids. I just have always sort of been immersed in that and I just always enjoyed helping other people learn how to do stuff, you know? And, I just, it's natural to me. So there wasn't anything that happened. I just knew I was going to be a teacher. I just knew. That's my mark. That's my place. And what level? It didn't matter, you know? I can teach a three-year-old how to ski, which I did that for a while. And I can teach a college-aged kid to play Barber. So I'm happy just doing that.* (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

Based on her positive experiences at Cedarville High School, Diane decided that teaching music as a band director was the right avenue for her to help others because it allowed her to engage the creative part of her personality.

*I think I started out going, I'm going to be a band director, but really what it is, is I knew I was going to be a teacher. I knew I was good at helping and instructing and I knew that I had a gift for that. So I think my thing is I knew I was going to be a teacher. I just happen to use music to do it...And so I get to do teaching, but I use the vehicle of music to do it to, to satisfy the creative part of my personality.*

(Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

## The Path to College and Learning to Be a Band Director

Once Diane decided that she was going to be a teacher and a band director, she had to figure out where to go to college, and her parents once again provided the support she needed to pursue her dream. She credits her parents with supporting her and helping her navigate a pathway to college since she was the first one in her family to attend. She talked about their significant influence.

*My dad had no idea what band directing was. He was an immigrant. He had no idea what any of this was. Even through college, [he] didn't even really understand what I was going to do. My mom was a flute player. They just wanted me to go to college and their idea of what they wanted me to be when I grew up was totally different than what I am now. But yet, when I decided to go that path, that support that I had—even though they didn't get why I wanted to do it, or even what it was—that was huge. So if I hadn't had that, and if I hadn't had a parent to figure out how to get me to college because I'm the first one in my family to go, you know? (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)*

The admiration for her parents is genuine, and their support was essential to the career path that she chose and her ultimate college destination.

Diane recalled the recruiting efforts of her college band director and her trip to the university with her mother for the scholarship audition.

*Mr. Eckert, who was the director of bands at Central University at the time, and the flute professor John Rock contacted me and said, “Come for a visit and come for a scholarship audition.” I said, “Okay.” So I went up and—mom and I flew up there—and I did my scholarship audition, and I met with Mr. Eckert, and I think*

*you know when you belong on a campus...I felt so comfortable...So I ended up at Central University.* (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

Diane developed a personal connection with the faculty based on that college visit. Those teachers, her eventual college band director and flute teacher, were a key part of her decision to attend that university. Once she decided to attend there, she worked toward her goal of being one of the trailblazing female high school band directors in the state. She said, “I made sure that everything I did in those four years at Central University set me up for all of that [being a female high school band director]” (Interview 1, September 10, 2018).

In particular, Diane’s college band director, Mr. Eckert, prepared her for her career in music education. She identified him as one of her two most influential teachers and mentors. She discussed what she learned from him about both music and teaching.

*Mr. Eckert, without a doubt, is the consummate musician. Everything that he taught us about music had to do with communicating the music to our audience...He would show us how to bring out the emotional and the musicianship of the music while still being very proficient and, and things like that.* (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

Through her college band director, Ms. Snyder learned a lot about how to be a musician. She learned to continue to appreciate music and expanded her musical experiences.

Mr. Eckert also provided practical experiences for Ms. Snyder that were invaluable for her development as a teacher. He would take his upper-level music education students with him when he went to clinic bands so that they could continue to watch him teach, which often led to teaching experiences for her, too.

*Anytime...a school needed some private lessons or they needed some people to come out and help with marching band and stuff like that, of course they contacted the university because that's the only thing around. We would get to do that, [and] so I got a lot of real practical experience teaching.* (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

Those practical experiences helped prepare her for her first teaching job, and Diane considered herself lucky to have had a teacher like Mr. Eckert who took time to provide experiences beyond the classroom for his students.

### **Diane's Career as an Educator**

Diane has taught for 32 years in the state of Texas. She started her teaching career in the same city as her undergraduate university as an assistant high school director. After three years, she became the head director for the middle school that fed students into the high school where she previously taught. After a couple of years there, she decided to move on to a bigger city and took the head director position at Preston Middle School in a larger metropolitan area.

Throughout her teaching career, Diane kept working to improve her craft. During her time at Preston Middle School she met Mr. Loomis, a prominent Texas band director and clinician, who, along with her college band director, was one of her most influential mentors. While Mr. Loomis' contributions will be explored more fully in Chapter 7, a brief review here is helpful for understanding her background and influences. Diane learned Mr. Loomis' unique approach to band pedagogy and teaching, and in that way, could make her students be more responsible for their own playing—skills that are needed

for continued participation.

*He [Mr. Loomis] taught me the pedagogy, number one. And he taught me how to make my students be the people that perform the music. He taught me how to ask questions of my kids and taught me how to teach them to give those answers. And make my students responsible for their playing....[T]hrough Mr. Loomis, I learned how to give them the skills so that they could self-evaluate and make those decisions, which is what you should do as a musician anyway. (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)*

The pedagogy that Ms. Snyder learned from Mr. Loomis is central to her teaching. She changed from teaching by giving every direction from the podium to a style where she asked her students more questions and encouraged them to evaluate their own playing.

Diane stayed at Preston Middle School for eight years, but eventually decided she wanted to pursue her initial dream of being one of the only female high school head directors in the state of Texas. She went on to teach at Red Rock High School for 10 years before dabbling in administration as an instrumental music coordinator. She was very comfortable in that setting, and likely would have stayed there if not for her friend who urged her to come and check out the job at Green Hill High School. She came and investigated the job and ultimately decided to make the move. She recalled that process.

*I came down here [to Green Hill] and met everybody...and decided this was a wonderful position. I'm originally from Greenwoods [town where Green Hill is located], so it was kind of coming full circle. And so just - sort of spontaneously I went, "Wow, this is a really great gig, and this is a really good step up." And so I moved here and I've been here, this is my sixth year. So that's how it came about*

*to all of this.* (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

For the last six years, Diane has taught at Green Hill High School. Her bands consistently earn sweepstakes awards at the state-level concert and sight-reading contests. Her peers recognize her as an expert teacher, regularly inviting her to lead region bands and serve as a clinician for other bands. In addition, Ms. Snyder regularly serves as a cooperating teacher for student teachers from several Texas universities, helping to mentor a new generation of music educators.

### **The School and the District**

Green Hill High School, which serves over 2,800 students in grades 10-12, is located in the Greenwoods Independent School District, a large suburban district in Texas. Over 380 students are involved in band at Green Hill High School, which includes members from the freshman campus across the street. Three full-time directors serve at Green Hill High School. The directors divide the band students into four different bands based on an initial audition and each of those bands meets for an hour and a half every day of the week. In addition, students have the opportunity to participate in marching band, solos, ensembles, and full orchestra as well as the ability to take a music theory course.

Ms. Snyder has continued to enjoy her six years in this place. She talked about the support that she experiences in the school district and at her school that enables her to do the things she wanted to do.

*I have lots of in-house resources that are really good. We have a supportive band community. We have a supportive band administration. I mean, they love us, and*

*they very rarely say no to anything I ask for, which is wonderful. I have unbelievable staff [her fellow directors] and now we have a unique opportunity to set up a full cluster of team-teaching from fifth grade on through 12 because we only have one feeder. We have one intermediate school that goes to one junior high that comes here and I've been able to hire those band directors, and so we've got like-minded people. We got a team of 10 people from fifth grade to twelfth grade, so this is the first year that's happening and so it's hopefully the start of something pretty unique.* (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)

Because of the flexibility, resources, and financial support of the district and the community, Diane is in a great position to unfold her vision. Blessed with those resources, Diane also has the autonomy to help influence the culture within the whole cluster of intermediate, middle, and high schools, not just within her own school. She has input on the staff at not only the high school, but also her feeder schools, so that everyone is working toward a shared culture. She also ensures that the pedagogy consistently focuses on developing individual musicians and making them responsible for their own playing.

In addition to the administrative support and the personnel in her district and high school, the schedule is also a great benefit. Ms. Snyder described the daily schedule.

*We're lucky enough to be double-blocked. So we see the same kids every single day, the same time of day, every single day for an hour and a half, which is a luxury. During the fall, basically we start at 7:20. We have four periods a day and as you can see we, we, we team teach it. We team-teach it depending on what we need that day.* (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

The ample time in the weekly schedule allows Diane and her team to implement all aspects of a band program with excellence.

## **Summary**

In summary, Diane Snyder's teaching career has been one marked by continual learning and outstanding success. Her musical history and the parental support she received helped establish an early love for music. Her parents and their support were very formative and continue to affect the way in which she goes about her business. Her band experiences in middle school and high school continued to spark her interest in music. Diane always enjoyed helping people, and as music became central to her life during high school, she decided to pursue a career as a band director. Her female high school band directors opened to her the possibility that a woman could aspire to that position, and provided a model that encouraged independent musicianship. Throughout college Diane's instructors provided multiple opportunities for practical teaching experiences in local schools, allowing her to feel more prepared for her career. Even as an established teacher, Diane continued to seek out new mentors and develop her teaching methodology, working to provide her students with a better educational experience. The school district sometimes provided obstacles for Diane, but overall, it has been a positive factor that enabled her to attain many of the goals that she set forth. Diane's teaching in this place is marked by a concern for her students and a love for them. She works hard to ensure that they have a positive band experience and hopes that experience will lead to continued participation.

## **Chapter 5: The Green Hill Way: Building a Culture of Excellence, Student Ownership, and Compassionate Community**

In the next three chapters, I will present the main themes that emerged from the data. While the research questions focused on Diane Snyder's beliefs about lifelong band participation, the three themes that emerged center around her core beliefs about teaching band. Diane's three core beliefs are (a) a belief in creating a culture of excellence, student ownership, and compassionate community; (b) a belief in building independent musicians; and (c) a belief in learning from mentors. These themes do not relate in every aspect to lifelong band participation, but in the final chapter, I will explain how all of them are interrelated and in what ways each of these beliefs affect the teaching that occurs in her classroom and support her belief in continued participation. In this chapter, I will focus on the first theme—Diane's belief in building a successful culture within her band program.

### **Introduction**

Diane Snyder believes that it is important to create a classroom culture and atmosphere that is optimal for learning. She bases her classroom culture on three elements that she views as necessary for success: excellence in everything, student involvement that leads to student ownership in the program, and compassion for all students as they learn to work together and “be human.” She believes that when all of these elements are present, the students will reflect on their experiences and think of their time within the band program as worthwhile.

First, Diane believes that everything that happens within her band program must be excellent. She demands excellence in all musical activities by setting high standards for all of her ensembles. She also expects excellence in non-musical aspects such as performance etiquette and the students' other classes. She holds that following set processes can lead to excellence. Ultimately, she believes that pursuing and achieving excellence is fun. Second, Diane believes that student involvement in leadership is also a key tenet to help students to feel ownership in their band program. She believes that students should be actively involved in decision-making for the band program and that the leadership council should include students from all bands within the program. She believes in engaging with the students and hearing their voices throughout the learning process. Finally, Diane believes in teaching all students to "be human" (Interview 2, September 24, 2018). In other words, she believes that part of her responsibility is to help students learn how to be compassionate and work together with their fellow band members. She thinks that her teaching is about much more than music and that it can have a lifelong impact on the lives of her students. She wants everyone to be able to have a place within her band program, to treat each other with respect, and to learn to work together toward common goals.

Diane feels so strongly in the notion of excellence that she works daily to create this culture within her program and names it the "Green Hill Way." She explained the Green Hill Way and how her team of educators work together to establish it in their band program.

*The Green Hill Way is that we [team of band directors] run our band program where the expectation is: everything we do is done to the highest level of*

*excellence that our skills and our abilities will allow us to achieve. And those expectations are realized by setting goals every year. The goals are set by our Student Leadership Team and the band staff. They are then communicated to the other band members and to our parents. We have a process for everything we do, and that process is what we refer to as the Green Hill Way. We really try to create an environment where everyone feels like they are being heard and validated while achieving at a really high level.* (Email Response #2)

Diane believes that when students strive for excellence, feel an ownership in their program because their voices are heard, and deal with each other in a compassionate way her program will be successful and her students will continue their participation because they enjoy the experience and value the high quality musical education that they receive.

### **The Green Hill Way: An Expectation of Excellence**

The first part of the Green Hill Way is the expectation of excellence in everything. At Green Hill High School, there is a comprehensive culture of excellence. The introduction to the band handbook articulates the expectation that excellence in everything is central to the band program at Green Hill High School.

*We are happy to have you as a part of the Green Hill High School Band. There are great things happening in the band program, and we take great pride in those accomplishments. The tradition at Green Hill is one of very high standards both as musicians and as citizens. Each student will be held to very high standards both in and out of uniform. Being a part of the band is a commitment to our school, our team, and each other.* (Green Hill High School Band Handbook,

opening paragraph)

Diane's expectation extends beyond the classroom to include academic and behavioral excellence in addition to outstanding musical performances. She expects this of everyone. She explained that this is "excellence at everything."

*We expect excellence at everything at every level by everybody every time. And I know that sounds really cliché, but we really do. We have a process in place on how we learn and, and how well, there's a process for everything. There's a process for everything. There's a method for everything. There's a way we do everything, because to us, the bigger deal you make out of the littler things, the details, the bigger pictures take care of themselves.* (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

Diane's expectation of excellence is universal, meaning it is for all band students all the time. This includes musical excellence, but also includes non-musical elements, and Diane and her team have a process in place to ensure that it occurs.

**Musical excellence.** This expectation of excellence, The Green Hill Way, means that every performance is important, regardless of the venue. In one particular instance, Diane reiterated the belief that excellence is not optional or dependent on the audience or situation. The band performed the previous Friday night at the football game in less than optimal conditions. The woodwinds and pit percussionists did not play because of potential for damage to their instruments due to the rainy conditions. As the students and teachers reflected on that evening, band members made some excuses for the perceived poor quality of their performance. Diane's response to the student forcefully advocated for excellence at all times.

Student: “*I think partly that was because we weren’t in the stands, and we didn’t have the pit, and we weren’t wearing uniforms and everyone kind of wrote it off. This isn’t really our first performance, so it doesn’t really matter.*”

Diane: *Interesting. OK. So I’m going to address that too. I think there’s probably some truth to that. Does it matter? Are we going to qualify our performances? No. We don’t qualify a performance. A performance is a performance is a performance. Whether we are playing in Carnegie Hall or we’re playing in our gym at a pep rally, a performance is a performance. Whether you’re doing your scale or whether you’re doing your last set before making all-state, it doesn’t matter. It doesn’t matter. It doesn’t matter... It doesn’t matter. A performance is a performance.* (Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes, September 24, 2018)

In the prior example, Diane advocated excellence verbally, championing the importance of outstanding musicianship at every single performance, even pep band events that others may consider insignificant.

In other ways, Diane’s beliefs about excellence are seen through what she does. Every band member receives a region band project assigned by the directors. In this project, Diane and her team divide the audition etudes into smaller chunks and determine a course of action for learning the etudes for each band; this process is described further in Chapter 6. The band directors then work through the etudes systematically during the course of the first semester, addressing the difficult passages, helping the students play more musically, and testing them each week on the specific excerpt assigned for that week. Diane explained the expectation for excellence in that project across all classes.

*It’s the same project for every band, but obviously with the Wind Ensemble they’re*

*in the all-state process and so they're going through all of that. With our freshmen, it's the all-state etudes, but with a modified cut on those all-state etudes and with concert two, it's an etude project with different etudes. But it's the same - the curriculum is the same. And the expectation is the same. They have to get a 95 or above to consider that project completed successfully and they have to come back as many times as they can in order to complete that. (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)*

While the level of musical difficulty varies for each of the bands, Diane's expectation of excellence is consistent across the program. All students must achieve a 95 or above as judged by the band directors in order to pass the region band project. This high standard set by her and her team does not allow students to settle for mediocrity and also promotes a growth mindset as students continually work to improve. The students must meet this standard in order to complete the project, ensuring that they learned the music well. Her expectation of excellence encourages all students to improve their own musicianship. I saw Diane and her team of educators provide time for students to work individually on their etudes across several weeks, while they listened to students one at a time, giving each the chance to achieve the standard. The following excerpt from the fieldnotes describes one of those rehearsals.

The cacophony of sound was interesting as everyone was working on their own on scales or region etudes at different sections...After about five minutes [of the students working individually] of this type of rehearsal the directors came out and asked who still needed to replay their cuts [portion of the audition excerpts].

Several students raised their hands and the directors provided an order and a

process for them. One student was to be in the room and another outside the office waiting to enter as soon as the previous person completed their pass-offs [playing tests]. The time spent in the office varied from person to person as some students had more pass-offs to complete and some had only one. The students in the main band hall were very on task with their individual practice. (Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes, November 14, 2018)

The notes above suggest that all of the students are at different places in their testing process because some have multiple pass-offs to complete and some have only one.

Diane and her team allow the students multiple opportunities to meet the standard, but continue to require excellence from all. While it may take some students longer to achieve the level of excellence that is expected, Diane does not view this as a problem, but continues to encourage the students to keep striving for that goal.

The Green Hill Way is not just a catch phrase, but a systematic way of doing everything and a way to remind the students about the expectation of excellence and how to achieve it. When Diane refers to the Green Hill Way of doing things, the students know what that means. On one occasion, as Diane discussed the upcoming region auditions with her wind ensemble, some students wondered who was going to be the door monitor for their room. However, Diane steered the conversation back to what she felt was most important for the students: performing their best.

Diane: *Let's bring ourselves back into the Green Hill Way, OK. Stuff like that doesn't matter. Stuff like that absolutely does not matter. Whoever is running your room doesn't matter. Who the judges are doesn't matter, because those are things that you can't control. What are the only things tomorrow and Saturday that you*

*can control?*

Students: *Performance*

Diane: *Your performance and how you set yourself up for a good audition. OK?*

*Now, this is no different than getting ready for concert and sight reading. This is no different than getting ready for state marching contest. It is not different than that. We do Green Hill. You've been given the skills. You've been given the information to do everything correctly so that you can be successful. And you have to trust that. And I think you guys do. You just do your thing.... And you do what we do at Green Hill. And if you do that you're going to have a great audition experience.* (Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes, November 29, 2018)

With Diane's high expectations and the emphasis on having a successful region audition, one could wonder if this creates a belief in winning as the most important thing. In my observations of Diane's classroom, she never promoted that idea, but instead focused on a growth mindset. Conversations revolved around improving from performance to performance and giving the best effort every time. After making it to the state marching band competition, the band performed well, but was not selected as a finalist. I asked Diane about the disappointing end to the season, but she had a surprising response.

*The funny thing is, I'm not sure it was really a disappointment....It certainly wasn't for us [the directors]. I don't think it was for the kids either. I mean, I think, yes, they would have loved that [winning], but we don't talk about those kinds of results. What we talk about is, "Was this performance better than the last one?"....We knew at our prelims [preliminary round] performance at state, that*

*was our best performance of the year. The kids knew it, and we knew it and, ...that's how we prepare and talk about it. So, yes, and I think I even said this too, "It's okay to be disappointed that we didn't make finals, but we're at the state championships, and there are hundreds of bands that didn't get this far, and you're the first Green Hill band to ever get this far. So, oh my gosh, that's nothing but a success" The only time we really sort of get onto them is if it was a bad performance.* (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

Through the Green Hill Way, Diane promotes excellence by always looking for improvement and focusing on the importance of each individual performance. Students participate in both individual contests and full band contests, but the target is constant improvement, not a first-place finish. “We want each performance that they do at any contest to be better than the last one. So that’s our goal for them” (Interview 2, September 24, 2018).

Because Diane’s focus is on performing your best in every circumstance, her belief in excellence is contagious and permeates the culture of the band program at Green Hill. It frames how students think about everything else. Her band colleagues share this philosophy, and her students reflect the expectations of their teachers. Diane believes that as the culture of excellence begins to permeate the group, the standards continue to be raised and no one is content with the previous level of accomplishment. At the conclusion of one rehearsal, the directors were talking with the students and asking them to evaluate the performance of the piece of the show that they had just finished.

They concluded the rehearsal with the group together to talk about it. The directors asked them how many of them were satisfied with their performance. A

few raised their hands and they rephrased the question to be how many of them would accept that as a finals performance and then no one was satisfied. The students are challenged to raise their expectations. (Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes, September 9, 2018)

**Excellence in everything.** Diane's belief in a culture of excellence is not limited only to the musical aspects of a performance. She expects students to do their best in every aspect of their band experience. On the day before the Holiday Concert, I observed Diane taking time to establish and practice her expectations for concert etiquette following chamber music performances. More than seven minutes of the rehearsal on the day before the concert was dedicated to how to bow properly. She talked about how to stand after the performance and how to bow and what it should look like. She made the students practice it several times. I recorded her final thoughts at the end of that episode.

*We'll practice that tomorrow, too. But you need to understand what you look like when you do that.... They're showing their appreciation for you. You are saying thank you. Now there's a difference between thank you and thanks. This is "thanks" [barely bowing or acknowledging]. This is "thank you so much" [full bow]. [As if to an audience] "Thank you. I appreciate it." But you have to be as gracious as they are. (Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes, December 10, 2018)*

Diane's demand for professionalism as students bow is another example of her expectation of excellence and how it goes beyond the music.

The expectation of excellence and the Green Hill Way extends even beyond the band hall. The band directors expect the students in their ensembles to be good citizens outside their classroom and to keep up with their studies in other classes, telling them that

they are constantly representing the organization.

*They [other band programs] don't worry about what the [band] kids do outside the classroom. We do, so if they're messing up in a [different] class, we'll hear about it. And we're like, "No! We don't let them do that." [We tell the students,] "No, you're representing our organization. Even when you're not here, you are and we don't let you be that way. Or we don't let you not turn in your homework. We wouldn't let you come in here and not know your music. You can't go in there and not know your homework."* (Interview 3, December 18, 2018)

Diane became a teacher because she believed in helping people and she wants her students to succeed in everything. She daily lives out this belief. I witnessed Diane talking to students about their work in other classes during one of my site visits and how their failure to achieve excellence could limit their participation in musical activities because of state eligibility rules.

Diane urged them to stay on top of their work. She reiterated the importance of every single person to the success of the group. She talked about how all of the students had been working so hard, and how she wants them to be able to participate in marching contests. She asked them to look her in the eyes as they discussed eligibility because some students were looking down or to the side. Diane reviewed the fact that they had already talked to those students with eligibility issues individually during pass-offs and that most of the problems stem from not turning in work. They discussed how not turning in assignments can snowball and cause stress. She encouraged them to take care of their work... (Concert Band Fieldnotes, September 24, 2018)

I saw students nodding as she talked about how late work can snowball. Diane has a finger on the pulse of students and pushes for excellence all the time.

**Exhortations to excellence and celebrations of excellence.** The weekly memos from Diane that contain announcements about the band program also continually serve as a reminder of the high expectations of the program and keep everyone working toward the same goals.

*We need you to always remember that there are NO SHORTCUTS to EXCELLENCE. Be prepared to work hard and be EXCELLENT....because EXCELLENCE IN EVERYTHING is what WE do!!!!!!! Let's have a great week! (Weekly Memo, October 3, 2018)*

When the students rise to meet the expectations and achieve the excellence that the directors expect, they are praised for their hard work. Diane believes that it is important to celebrate the excellent work of her students and the hard work that it takes to make excellence happen. This belief can be seen in a communication to parents after the ensemble made it to the state marching band finals.

*And last....and most important....To the amazing young people of the Green Hill High School Band/Color Guard. Thank you for trusting the process and going bravely into the unknown. Thank you for believing that there are no shortcuts to Excellence and working so hard to make our goals.....a historical reality! I do not have enough words to tell you how very proud we are of all of you!!!!!!!!!!!!!! You continue to inspire us each and every day!*  
*How fitting that we will be finishing our marching season during the month of Thanksgiving. The Green Hill High School Band has much to be grateful for. On*

*behalf of all of the Directors.....We say THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! It is an honor and a privilege to be your directors.* (Special Letter from the Directors, October 28, 2018)

Diane values the efforts of the students as they achieve excellence and recognizes the tremendous effort that they contribute every day. She believes that the students can achieve excellence and that when they do achieve that excellence they will have fun. This concluding thought from Diane summarizes her expectation of excellence and the increased challenge and fun that result when it is achieved.

*Sort of our underlying philosophy or my underlying philosophy is that it's really good to have fun, but it's really fun to be good. When you're good at what you do,...and when you're a better player you get to play harder music or more interesting music, or you get to do more with your marching band and you get to do more with chamber music, and then that becomes more fun.* (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)

## **The Green Hill Way: Fostering Student Ownership**

**Involving student leaders.** Diane believes in fostering ownership and buy-in from the students. She feels that the positive attitudes within her program are a result of the fact that students know their voices are being heard and valued by the directors. She said, “And so that produces an ownership that they’re not going to give up. And so that helps with retention too” (Interview 2, September 24, 2018). She constantly works to foster that ownership in the band program among all of her student leaders.

In order to achieve the excellence that she expects, Diane believes strongly in

involving student leaders in the daily operations of the band program as part of the Green Hill Way. She believes that involving student leaders is a vital component of the success of her instrumental ensembles because it creates feelings of student ownership within the band program. In an interview as part of a pre-recorded podcast, Diane said, “...I'm a huge advocate of student involvement in student leadership. I think that that's the absolute key to getting buy-in to your program” (Conversations with Educators Podcast).

Diane invites all students to apply to be part of the student leadership cabinet, whose task it is to determine the direction of the program and help with the daily administration. She asks the students to sign a contract promising their commitment to the band as part of their application packet:

- I promise to exemplify the ideal GHHS Band member at all times in and out of uniform by setting the example for all band members to follow and be proud of. I understand that this includes anytime that I am out in public even if not with the band.
- I promise to be professional at all times.
- I promise to fulfill all responsibilities and duties assigned to me as a member or a leader.
- I promise to attend all rehearsals, performances and events as assigned by the directors.
- I promise to fulfill any job assigned to me by my Director.
- I promise to abide by every rule and regulation in the GHHS Band Handbook.
- I promise never to be seen ANYWHERE cursing, using obscenities, smoking, drinking or under the influence of alcoholic beverages, or to partake in and/or be

under the influence of drugs AT ANY TIME...EVER.

- I promise not to participate in public displays of affection as it is a reflection on my personal character and the character of all band members.
- I promise to lead by example.
- I promise never to lie.
- I promise to uphold all issues of confidentiality with my fellow officers as well as with me and the Director.
- I promise to enforce the rules and regulations stipulated by the GHHS Band Handbook and assigned by my Director equally with my fellow leaders as well as lead by example if I am chosen as a leader.
- I promise to demonstrate equal and consistent strictness with my fellow leaders.
- I promise to do my fair share of the work and fulfill my share of the responsibilities.
- I promise to display mutual respect for my fellow leaders as well as respect for the band members and the Directors.
- I promise never to complain. (GHHS Leadership Team Application)

These promises by student leadership candidates reflect a commitment to their fellow students and display ownership in the work needed to make the program successful.

The student leadership team at Green Hill High School includes a broad cross-section of the band, not just the best musicians in the top ensemble. Consequently, Diane's leadership cabinet is a bit larger than those of other band programs of similar size, with 45 students from throughout the band program. Even with all of the obligations noted in the leadership team application, students are very interested in being a part of

this group.

Diane seeks to include students throughout the band program in leadership positions, not just older students or those in the top band. She allows students who are in lower bands, who are younger or less experienced, to be involved in student leadership positions, so she creates a different process for selection. She described that selection process.

*Some of them are chosen, some of them are elected, but the way we do our leadership process, it makes it very easy for that third band kid to have an office, you know? Now they're not going to probably be a section leader, because the section leaders need to be the best musicians and marchers in the program. But we do have some symphonic band section leaders and then we've got...uniform officers.... That's maybe where some of our third and fourth band kids take those positions, but yet their voices are heard. (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)*

Because of her selection process, there are students from the third and fourth bands that are a part of the leadership team and their voices are heard. Every one of the concert ensembles have representatives in the student leadership, so all students feel that their voices and concerns are heard.

The idea of involving students in the leadership seems to be deeply rooted in the fabric of the Green Hill band. During eight of my nine visits to Diane's classroom, she talked about issues that would be addressed by the leadership team in their next meeting. The leadership team meets on a weekly basis with Diane to discuss together the important issues affecting the members of the band while preparing for upcoming events. This continuity shows that Diane really believes in student leadership. One example of an

exchange between Diane and a student demonstrates the centrality of the leadership team to the everyday progress of this band program and what types of issues may be addressed during a meeting.

*Student: I think that a big thing that contributes to individual performance is the focus before. And I feel like that has always been a problem for us.*

*Diane: I think we need to address that tomorrow morning in officer meeting. I think that's a really great and valid point... [P]ut your thinking caps on and tomorrow morning when we're in officer meeting—and those of you that aren't an officer if you have concrete ideas to help us with that, get ahold of your officers. Relay that to them, and let's talk about that at the meeting tomorrow. Absolutely.*

(Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes, September 24, 2018)

Any issues that arise during a normal rehearsal are referred back to the student leadership team. The students within the ensembles know which leaders they can contact about their concerns or ideas, and they know that the leaders will share these with the directors. The highway of communication between students and directors is very open and regular throughout the year.

Diane believes in developing the student leaders so that they can be effective in their management, so she organizes training sessions that build student leadership. Each summer before the new school year starts the student leadership team goes through an intensive three-day training that develops their leadership skills, but also provides an opportunity for them to set goals for the year. Diane explained the three-step process they use to reflect on prior leadership teams and think about the future:

*1. [I ask them to] tell me the pros and cons of past leadership teams. And we go*

*through what their experiences were.*

2. *[I ask them to consider], a year from now, what our students are going to say about you as a student leadership team? And we lead the discussion through that.*
3. *[Finally, the next day I ask them to] tell me about the pros of being in the Green Hill Band program. Tell me the things you'd like to improve on.*

(Conversations with Educators Podcast)

Diane and her assistant directors gain valuable insight about their own teaching and administration of the program through this exercise while also helping the students to think about leadership. After the students finish reflecting on past leadership and their hopes for the future, they finish the process, which Diane explained:

*We circle the top five in each of those categories and the pros become our wish list and the cons become our reality list. Because that's really the state of the union.* (Conversations with Educators Podcast)

Diane continually helps the students consider what good leadership looks like and the problems that ineffective leadership can cause. Even as the year progresses, she seizes every opportunity to help her students see the model of leadership that she believes is best. This quote from Diane during a September rehearsal explains how she wants her leaders to act, while also using humor to poke fun at herself. Diane was talking to the members of the Wind Ensemble. While not all of them are on the student leadership team, a good number of them are, and the others are still seen as leaders within the program as a whole because of their musical skill and membership in the top band.

*If you notice that somebody behind or next to you is struggling with a certain*

*section of music—it always happens when we add choreography. Somebody quits playing. So grab that person. And it's because they don't feel comfortable. They either don't feel comfortable with their body or they don't feel comfortable with their music. Figure out which one it is, take them aside, help them out so that they feel comfortable doing both at the same time. It's not that they don't care. It's not that they're not trying. It's that they're uncomfortable with one of those two aspects, and they can't put them together yet. So figure out which one it is and help them with that. Don't just stand there and tell them, "You gotta play!" Well duh, everybody knows that they've gotta play. Plus that's my line. I'm the one that's supposed to say that. [Laughter]* (Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes, September 24, 2018)

In the initial training process, and after the new student leadership team considers the successes and failures of past teams, it is their turn to brainstorm for the upcoming year. Diane desires the input of her student leaders, so she involves them in the yearly planning process and gives them a voice to determine the goals for the year so that they take ownership in the program. She said, “I think it's okay to let the students decide the direction of your program to an extent” (Conversations with Educators Podcast).

The student leaders hear the goals that the directors already determined for the upcoming year, and then they are divided into small groups of five or six students. Diane urges them to brainstorm other goals for the group that would add to and complement the goals already established by the directors. These actions all reflect the guiding function of her belief in the Green Hill Way, producing student leaders who are effective and well-trained.

*They're to come up with a list of goals–each group. This is what we want to see happen for this year. Then they do a presentation...to the entire leadership team, and then we have our drum major give them three stickers, and they go around to all the six posters, and they vote on which ones they think are the best goals. We have our drum majors total them up. Then we bring them back out and go this was the number one most popular idea and then we have to really discuss if it's really a goal or if it's really a strategy to a goal.* (Conversations with Educators Podcast)

After the students discuss the goals that were presented, they come up with a final list of goals and then they discuss how they are going to present those goals to the other students and parents. This year one goal that the students had was to increase student participation in region band auditions so that more students would feel comfortable playing in front of others. Another goal was to implement a chamber music recital where students could play things that were not on the UIL list. Diane believes that the students own those goals and it is their job to figure out how to accomplish those goals and to sell them to the other students in the band program and the band boosters organization.

*We come home with our list of goals and then what they will do next week when we start. They'll get up and they'll present them not only to the students but they'll present it at the first booster club meeting. "These are our goals." And we make posters and hang them in the band hall, and it just sort of guides us for the whole year...* (Conversations with Educators Podcast).

Sometimes even with Diane's guidance and interaction the goals that are set by the leadership team may be difficult to accomplish. She believes in using this as an

opportunity for learning.

*Actually, some of the best ways to learn are when you don't reach that goal or that you realize that goal is really not going the way you want it to. That's a perfect learning opportunity to go, "Okay, now what do we do with this? Say we didn't reach the goal that we wanted to. How far did we get? What worked in the way we were doing it? What went wrong? Why didn't we get there?" Okay, well then that becomes an area that we look at, and perhaps there's another goal that comes out of that... We and our program don't ever talk about failing to reach a goal. It's that we just haven't gotten to that goal yet. So it may show up the next year, or it may be reassessed and reworded. (Conversations with Educators Podcast)*

Even in what others would consider as failure, Diane rebrands it as an opportunity for learning and collaboration.

All of the focus on student leadership from Diane and her teaching partners is aimed at fostering student ownership of the program. The teachers help the student leaders learn what good leadership is, how to be successful leaders, and how to overcome obstacles all in the hopes that the students will become invested in the program and inspire other band members to feel that ownership as well.

**Student and teacher interactions.** In addition to input from the student leadership team, Diane regularly provides opportunities for all students within the band program to voice their opinions and dialogue with the directors. The band teachers and students often reflect on past performances together, and the candid conversation below is typical of what I witnessed during my observations.

Diane: *Now why did we have that performance? Why did that happen? ...*

Student: *The different ways that y'all teach compared to last year, I think it helps people be more prepared to perform.*

Diane: *Like, what—to you—what's the difference in the way we teach? What's different about it?*

Student: *It's better.*

Diane: *Are you saying I was a bad teacher last year?*

[Laughter]

Student: *No. You took what didn't work so well and you advanced it, and now...*

Diane: *Ok. Because that helps us. That helps us a lot.*

Student 2: *Whenever we did individual section time, it's easier to make us better.*

Diane: *So you liked the small group stuff?*

Student 2: *Yeah.*

Diane: *How many of you feel that way? How many of you liked the small group stuff?* [almost everyone raises their hand] (Concert Band Fieldnotes, October 9, 2018)

The students appreciate the fact that their teachers listen to their feedback. Diane listens to all of their comments in these discussions and often approaches her teaching differently as a result of their feedback. The students in this ensemble liked the way that she did more small group work and I often witnessed her implementing more of that in the weeks that followed.

Diane believes the interaction between students and directors creates an environment at Green Hill High School that is different from many of the other band

programs in Texas.

*There's a lot of student-director interaction. We ask them a lot of questions and we force them to hear and think on a higher level than, you know, they'll [other ensembles] sit in a class where somebody feeds them everything that they need to do.* (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

Diane learned this type of interactive and conversational approach from her mentor, Mr. Loomis, who was a legend in Texas band programs, as described in Chapter 7. She has implemented this more in her teaching as she regularly questions the students and encourages them to think on a higher level. The following exchange happened as the wind ensemble was in the beginning stages of rehearsing a march and talking about some difficulties that they were having aligning the rhythmic passages.

Diane: *So...we have some alignment issues, yeah? You got any thought on that?*

*Give me your thoughts. Why is it not in alignment? Or what part is not in alignment?*

Student: *Beat 4.*

Diane: *OK. Beat 4. Yes. (She doesn't act like that's the right answer). Is the first note of every measure played together?*

Students: *Yes.*

Diane: *Pretty much, right? The first note's always played together. So I'm giving you a huge hint. What's the problem?*

Students: *[mumbling]*

Diane: *The 2<sup>nd</sup> note. Probably the 3<sup>rd</sup> note. Probably not so much the 4<sup>th</sup> note. Probably the 5<sup>th</sup> note and probably the 6<sup>th</sup> note. OK. Why are the first and the*

*fourth note not so much of a problem?*

Students: *[Several answers at once]*

Diane: *Those are?*

Students: *Downbeats.*

Diane: *Downbeats, right? So the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> subdivision, subdivided notes and the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> subdivided notes. If they're not downbeats they're inner beats, right?*

*So what's the problem? You're doing what to the what?*

Students: *Rushing.*

Diane: *You're rushing or?*

Students: *Slowing Down.*

Diane: *Slowing down the?*

Students: *Inner beats.*

Diane: *Inner beats. Say it.*

Students: *We're rushing or slowing down the inner beats.*

Diane: *So that means the subdivision in your brain is not working. Does that make sense? Which is what happens when you have technique. It's never the downbeat notes that are the problem. It's the notes that aren't on the downbeat that are the problem. OK. So now we've got inner beats and you're not together, so do that again. OK. Now that you know that figure out if you're rushing or dragging your inner beats. Everybody count 1-2-3.* (Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes,

December 5, 2018)

The questions she asks are not too difficult to answer, but the students seem to enjoy the interaction with their teachers. The students are encouraged to think about what is

happening, listen beyond their own part, and verbalize it instead of just responding to teacher instructions. Diane challenges them to think and listen, but creates a comfortable environment where students are not afraid to answer incorrectly.

### **The Green Hill Way: Compassion and Community**

The third element to the Green Hill Way is Diane's belief that one of her greatest responsibilities as a teacher is to teach her students "how to be human" (Interview 2, September 24, 2018). She believes in creating a culture that promotes excellence and results in student ownership, but ultimately she feels responsible for creating a compassionate community where students learn how to effectively collaborate and work together. She says, "That is the most important thing to me—that it creates community. I think our society is missing that" (Interview 2, September 24, 2018). Diane has fond memories of the community that she experienced as a band member in her own high school. She remembers being "immersed in band" and the positive things that resulted from her involvement in her high school ensemble.

*When I was talking about being "immersed in band," I was referring to the fact that being in band became my social center of my life. It is where my best friends have come from...it is where I developed my confidence....it became my home away from home, so to speak. (Email Response #1)*

Diane's belief in creating a community of compassion affects the way she manages student interactions. Diane and her team work hard to create the same kind of community she experienced as a high school student so that her students can also feel "immersed in band." As she explained, "We try and instill that [sense of community] into

our students by making our band program a place where a high school student can feel safe, productive and be able to just hang out with friends" (Email response #1). I saw this happen on many occasions as I arrived for my observations in the band hall.

This was the first class period after the lunch hour. As I had approached the band hall, I noticed many students in the hallway leading to it. They were eating their lunches, enjoying each other's company, and conversing. There seems to be a strong sense of community among this group. (Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes, September 19, 2018)

Creating a compassionate community is so important to Diane that she has included it in her band handbook as one of the goals of the band program. She believes that there is a place in band for everyone who wants to participate. The handbook states that the Green Hill High School Band will strive to, "provide any interested student with opportunities for fun, musical knowledge, and musical *fellowship* through participation in band" (Green Hill High School Band Handbook).

Former students often return to Green Hill High School and share their post-secondary participation experiences because they value what happened when they were in high school. They fondly remember the community they experienced in their high school ensembles and return to reconnect with their directors and share their experiences. Diane recalled some of their visits:

*They play in their community bands or they come back and they go, "I played Tuba Christmas." You know, they may dig their tuba out one time a year to play Tuba Christmas in [city], Texas. But they do it, and that's pretty cool. Or even if they just come back; they may not have picked up their horn again, but they'll*

*come back and visit, and you get to see and hear what they've gone on and done. I mean, it's just cool because they come back. They come back because they had a good time while they were here, and they saw value in what they did while they were here. I love that.* (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

Diane loves to see her students be successful. When alumni come back, they often talk about their collegiate participation experiences and even make a recruiting pitch for their ensembles.

*A lot of alumni come back, and we let them talk to the kids. You know, they'll do their little recruiting for East State University or Seaside College and we let them come in and present their little thing. And we say, "You don't have to be a music major to be in the marching band." Yeah, that I think is the best.* (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)

These visits by alumni create a sense of a larger band community, while also exposing her students to the idea of continued participation.

Diane's belief in creating this compassionate community inspires her to include opportunities for fellowship within her band program. She hosts events that encourage interaction not only among band members, but also among parents, as she works to enact her belief in the importance of community. One such program is the Band Olympics in which students from the band form teams that compete in various games including athletic competitions and trivia contests while parents watch and cheer.

*Hey Green Hill Band!! Do you have what it takes to bring home the Gold in the 8th Annual Band Olympics? This will be a GREAT night of fun with your section as we compete in brain wars, athletic events, silly games and*

*much...much...more!!!! This is a celebration of the end of summer band rehearsals and the start of the school year. It is a Fun Party and we want everyone to attend!... PARENTS!!!! You are invited to come out, watch the competition and CHEER for your favorite country...Come Join the Fun.....It will be a great way for you to meet the other band parents and to get involved!!!!!!* (Band Olympics info letter, emphasis in original)

This event includes parents and students to celebrate the end of summer band. It is meant to be fun and build community within the band program as a whole.

In addition to providing opportunities for fellowship and community, Diane believes that her program must create a culture where everyone is valued. She believes that her most important responsibility is to teach them how to “be human” as they interact together.

*My responsibility is to teach them how to be human. That's my responsibility. I am providing them with skills that will go far beyond them learning Algebra and English, and I'm well aware of that. People are gonna forget how to do some of the formulas and Algebra. They're not going to forget how to treat each other.*

*That's what I teach them in this class, first and foremost.* (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)

She wants all students to have a great experience in band regardless of their academic or musical skills. She articulated her belief when she said, “It doesn't matter if you're the smartest kid in school or if you're a life skills kid [in need of special education support]. There's a place in the program for you and you will be validated in this program” (Interview 3, December 17, 2018).

As she welcomes and includes students of all levels in her band program, Diane believes in valuing their participation and ensuring that everyone has a good experience. She includes these goals in her band handbook to remind herself and her students how important it is to treat each individual with respect. In addition to the musical outcomes, the band program at Green Hill High School will...

- Provide for the mental, physical, social and emotional development of students.
- Provide basic psychological needs such as recognition, belonging, self-respect, and a feeling of achievement.

(Green Hill High School Band Handbook 2018-2019)

Diane has seen a shift in her priorities over the years toward the mental, social, and emotional needs because of the changes that have occurred in society. She believes that she is responsible for teaching things that did not have to be taught in the past because they used to be a normal part of every child's life. She prepares her lessons and creates her classroom culture a bit differently as she puts more emphasis on the non-musical elements.

*I feel responsible for teaching them things that their academic classes don't teach them and sometimes their parents don't teach them. I feel that it's my job to do that and to be a role model and while doing that, create an appreciation for something that you can't put a monetary value on. So that's my job. Probably way more than music. Music is just a part of it. So, I think it goes way beyond that, especially in today's world, especially in today's world. More so than when I was a student. That part of the job has gotten, I think, to be more important than*

*teaching music. Teaching them how to play an instrument has gotten littler as far as the job description. And the others have become much, much, much, much bigger because they've had to.* (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

Diane has found that music has become a smaller part of what she teaches, and the human element has increased.

Diane thinks that teaching students how to be human has become more important because she believes that students are motivated by instant gratification today. She believes that students are much more likely to quit something than in previous generations, and she works diligently to fight against that and keep kids in band so that they can learn extra-musical skills, such as....

*It's too easy in this day and age for kids to quit things because of the way our world is right now. They want instant gratification. They want the quick fix and, when they don't get it, they move on to something else. We also are moving through a generation of ...people who are entering our workforce that are generated by, "How many things can I do and get done quickly?" And that's not what music is about. That's not what music has ever been about. So we never, we have never had to sort of learn and explain that lesson. I think that's really important for students to understand that music is a process, and it is a long process. That's what the creative process is. No matter what they do, when they get out in the real world, they're going to be in a situation where they won't have instant gratification and they won't have, um, the quick fix and they can't get into the habit of quitting things because then it, I mean, that's just a recipe for disaster.* (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

Diane wants students to learn how to collaborate and work together and not to be focused on instant gratification, but appreciate each other and the little things in life. Diane believes that this is a “tremendous responsibility” that should not be taken lightly. She discussed her feelings about the opportunity she has to help students learn to work together.

*It's intimidating. It's very scary because I have a tremendous responsibility [to teach them how to be human]. And I'm also pretty honored by that as well too. [I]t's cool, the creative arts are a very cool vehicle to teach people to be human and I get to do that. (Interview 3, December 2018)*

Diane believes that every band member deserves her focus and her best effort. She visibly lives out this belief as she models the way that every member of the ensemble should be valued on a daily basis. This is evident in the daily life of her classroom in the way that she treats each student. While discussing the results from a marching contest the previous weekend with her Concert Band II, Diane solicited student feedback. In the course of the conversation a student, Bobby, repeatedly volunteered to be a part of the conversation. However, when Bobby talked, it took a long time for him to get his words out and it almost never had anything to do with the conversation at hand. In spite of this, Diane always listened to his complete thought and tried to put the best construction on it. She displayed patience and never got upset with him for speaking off topic. She encouraged him to continue contributing to the group. Her caring spirit of concern was visible in all her interactions with this student. One example of her engagement with him demonstrates her beliefs about the value of all students and the right of all to have an outstanding band experience. The rest of the group reflected on their performance from

the Saturday before.

Diane: “*Bobby do you have something else?*”

Bobby: “*Somehow, Somehow, one of the, there were, there was a school that was before us...*”

Diane: “*Uh huh. There was. Did you see them?*”

Bobby: “*Yeah.*”

Diane: “*Did you like them?*”

Bobby: “*Uh, I don’t know, but they, they, they did try.*”

Diane: “*They did. They did. And they did really well. They did really well. Did you know that they watched us? They went right back into the stands and watched us.*” (Concert Band Fieldnotes, October 9, 2018)

This kind of compassionate community in which people are valued is evident in the teachers’ interactions with each other, as well. Diane talked about her colleagues and their collaborative work together and how they are a true team.

*Yes, I’m the director of bands, but I do not make any major decision without all of us. It’s very collaborative, very collaborative. And we meet as a staff regularly once a week to just discuss the week or decide what, you know—it’s 100 percent team teaching.* (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)

Diane believes in modeling the type of community that she hopes to teach to her students. She described how she regularly interacts with her teaching staff and what the students learn from their interactions.

*I think it helps them [students] figure out how to work in all situations. Because they see - they see us together and teaching, you know? They also see us when*

*we're in here meeting and stuff like that. They don't ever see us argue and we do argue. They never see that. We don't ever bring it out there. But you know, but we'll, we'll be very honest about it. We'll go, you know, we had a big debate in the office about this, and I thought this and Mr. Fischer thought this, you know, so we bring that out and they see that. We all...have our roles, and the kids laugh about it. We make fun of it, but we have our roles. Like for instance, Mr. Fischer [assistant band director] handles anything that has to do with logistics. Mr. Kuhn [assistant band director] handles anything that has to do with new technology. I handle all the emotional problems. That's what we say. So it's kind of funny the way we kind of do all that. But the kids see that, and they see that Mr. Kuhn runs the visual part of the marching program, and they see me, the head director, take a backseat to that and they don't see it as, "Oh, he's running it and she's not." They're like, "Oh, well that's what he does. And he does it because he's better at it, you know." And I do this because I'm better at it, and the kids see that and I think that helps them, especially when they have to go like into group projects in other classes where they have to work with each other in our sections and stuff like that. I think...they've learned a lot from that.* (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)

The students see teamwork and appropriate interactions modeled by their teaching team. Diane hopes that they will never forget how to treat each other as a result of their experiences with the Green Hill High School band program and she strives to build a community that reflects that compassion and inclusivity.

## **Summary**

Diane believes in creating a positive culture within her band program, which she refers to as the “Green Hill Way.” The Green Hill Way incorporates three core beliefs: (a) creating a culture of excellence; (b) fostering student ownership in the program; and (c) developing a compassionate community where all students are welcome and they learn to care for each other. She expects excellence from everyone in everything all the time, including excellence in musical performances and in academic and non-musical activities. Another way she works to develop a positive culture is by creating opportunities for student ownership by involving student leaders and helping them learn what good leadership looks like. Diane believes that when she creates an environment where student voices are heard and valued the students will develop an ownership in the band program. When students take ownership Diane believes that they will strive for the excellence that she expects. Finally, Diane models good leadership by creating a compassionate community within her band program where everyone is valued. She treats all students with respect and interacts with her staff in a way that exemplifies the way in which she wants her students to act. She provides opportunities for her students to develop a sense of community and encourages students to collaborate in ways that honor all. The Green Hill Way empowers students to invest in their band program and each other as they unite to achieve excellence. When all of these things happen, Diane believes that her students will have a great experience. She reflected on how she hopes they will value their Green Hill Band experience as a result of the culture she created:

*Well, I want them to look at the, at their time in the Green Hill Band and go,*

*“Those were some of the funnest experiences I ever had in high school was*

*because of the band." That's what I want them to say. I want them to be able to tell their kids that and go, "You need to be in band because it's going to be some of the funnest things you [will] ever do—is through your high school band program." That's what I want them to be able to do. And I want them to be able to know that they were good, and I want them to know that maybe they've developed some friendships and stuff like that. I want them to know what it means to work hard, and that sometimes that's not a fun thing to do. But if you're going to be good, you have to do that. I want them to realize that and then maybe, when things got really, really tough, it ended up being worth it. So that's what I want them to say. (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)*

## **Chapter 6: Building Independent Musicians**

### **Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I presented Diane Snyder's beliefs about creating a positive classroom culture. In this chapter, I will present the second emergent theme about Diane's belief in encouraging lifelong band participation: building independent musicians. She believes that one of her chief duties as a music educator is to help students develop into independent musicians who can take control of their own playing. She clearly articulated this belief in the second interview when she identified the role of music educators, saying, "So my philosophy is that they develop the individual musician" (Interview 2, September 24, 2018).

Diane's beliefs about developing independent musicians revolve around three key subthemes: increasing individual musical skills, the importance of chamber music, and student self-evaluation. First, she believes in increasing independent musicianship by helping each musician improve their performing skills. She believes that, in order to do this, it is important to assess the skill level of each player. She then helps them increase their skills through the region band process, individual instruction, and private lesson attendance. Second, Diane thinks that chamber music involvement is a key to developing independent musicians. Every student in her band program is involved in a chamber music group, and she allows students a great deal of autonomy as they learn to work together and rehearse in their groups. Finally, Diane believes that students should learn how to self-assess and evaluate their own performance, and she teaches these skills in the large ensemble. By asking the students engaging questions, Diane believes that she can

help the students learn to listen and think more critically about their playing.

Diane believes that building independent musicians is one of the most important parts of her job. Independent musicians develop the skills needed to be able to play their instruments at a high level, be able to engage with others in chamber music ensembles, and have the self-awareness to be able to rehearse and critique their own playing. She believes that if the musicians become independent in participating in those ways, they can be successful in any future musical setting.

### **Increasing Individual Skills**

Diane's belief in developing independent musicians is multifaceted, but at its core is an emphasis on increasing the individual skill level of each student. In order to build and grow individual musicians, she says that you have to "figure out where the gaps in their skill level are" (Interview 2, September 24, 2018), and so she begins by assessing the achievements and deficiencies in each student's playing so that she knows what needs improvement.

Diane believes that the state-administered region band process serves as a great tool to help assess the individual skill gaps of each student. In the region band process, students prepare the etudes prescribed by the state music educators' association and then audition before a panel of five judges. The judges rank all auditioning students, and these rankings determine who makes the region band. Highly ranked students may qualify to advance in the process to audition for a chance to participate in the all-state band—a group of the best instrumentalists from across the entire state. As students prepare for these auditions, their band directors provide feedback on their playing and teach practice

strategies for students to use on their own. Diane and her team place a great deal of emphasis on the region band process within their band program because they believe it helps them serve each individual's needs. They believe that each of the selected etudes have much to teach their students.

Each week the students are expected to individually play a small portion of their prescribed etudes (usually one line or less) and a scale for their band director, who will then rate their performances on a 100-point scale. The directors hold the students accountable for the music with the weekly playing tests and the students are often given time to work on that music during large ensemble rehearsals. The directors believe in the importance of listening to students individually so that they can provide feedback to help them improve their skills. Diane recounted their process for region band:

*Monday's usually concentrated on the all-region process, all-region and all-state music, and our skills. So every class has a region project. They may not all be working on the region music, but it's called a "region project." It's...weekly assignment playing tests that they have until mid-December to do for us, and it's every Monday so that [it's] consistent. Kids know what they're gonna be tested on. We go through the test; we take care of any preliminary stuff, like for today we've got to get some choreography done [for marching band], but when they're done with that they go back to [individually] practicing the region approach process.* (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)

After Diane identifies each student's areas for growth, she then tailors instruction to teach new concepts and skills through the etudes and repertoire required in the region band process. She often works individually with students and provides valuable feedback

that helps them increase their skills in those areas. On multiple occasions, I witnessed Diane doing this as she gave the students individual time to work on their region band music.

Then Diane departed to go work with some students individually on their all-state music. She provided individual feedback to students for a while before leaving to go listen to individual pass-offs. (Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes, November 29, 2018)

Diane also believes that the region audition results serve as a good measurement tool for students' year-to-year progress. While the process is competitive in nature, she does not focus on whether students are selected to a region or all-state ensemble, but instead considers whether they are rising in the rankings from year to year as evidence of their increasing skill level.

*We want their individual skill level[s] to get higher so we have greater participation in region band. And not so much that they make region band, but when you're looking at the results that we're moving up in the rankings. That means their skill levels are getting to the point where they could be an all-stater, you know? (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)*

Diane's belief in increasing the individual musicianship of each player is not limited to the top band. She aims to help each student in every band improve by keeping the curriculum uniform between the bands. She includes the region band process as part of that curriculum each fall for every group, just at a different skill level. While not all students in the lower-level bands are learning the same audition etudes, she believes that the younger and more inexperienced band students can eventually progress to the top

ensemble as their skills improve.

*The vast majority of those kids will move up. There's only a handful right now [that haven't moved out of the lowest band]. [Of] the kids that you saw, there's only maybe five or six that were there last year. But yes, eventually they move up, which helps with retention, too, because those kids are moving up. They're not always stuck in that band, so to speak, because they're not ignored. It's not a scale-jail band [where they only do fundamentals and don't play music] for them. There's a curriculum and they go to contest and everything is there. Everything that the Wind Ensemble does Concert Two does; they just do it on different levels.*

(Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

She believes that her lower-level bands can be a feeder program for her wind ensemble so that the students are constantly progressing and advancing. She says, “We want that [the increased musical skills] to trickle down so that we can be a feeder: fourth band to third band, third band to second band, second band to first band” (Interview 2, September 24, 2018). Diane believes that their advancement within the program happens because of their musical skill development and the attention that they get from their directors.

Her overall goal is that, as each individual improves and progresses into more advanced bands, all of the bands will get better. Then, as the ensembles get better, they can perform more difficult music.

*That's our long-term thing. We've kind of reached that—playing more difficult literature with Concert One and Concert Two—that's a long-term goal,...but you've got to get their skill levels there in order to do that.* (Interview 2,

September 24, 2018)

The individual skill development of her students is a focus for Diane on a daily basis. The increase in skills enables the students to progress through the program from the lower bands to the higher bands, while also helping the bands to improve and play more difficult music.

While Diane encourages the development of individual skills through the use of the region band process, she also believes that private lessons can be a great way to improve individual skills and independence. She believes strongly in the benefits that private lessons provide and is working to increase the number of students in her band program who take private lessons in addition to their large ensemble instruction. Many large Texas high schools encourage students to take private lessons, and band directors often have a large roster of private lesson teachers who teach at the school each day, with students often taking their lessons during the band period. Diane's beginning-of-the-year correspondence to band parents outlines the private lesson program and informs them of the idea that lessons are not tutoring, but an enrichment to the band program in order to improve individual skills and collectively make the bands better.

*It is the goal of the Green Hill High School Band Cluster to provide superior learning opportunities for our band students. One of these opportunities is private lesson instruction with a professional instrumentalist. These lessons are optional, but HIGHLY encouraged as enrichment to the musical education of interested students before or after school, or during their scheduled music class. Lessons will focus on the enhancement of performance skills for a particular instrument.*

*The Private Lesson Program serves a two-fold purpose. It allows interested*

*students to receive additional individual help in their musical training. Secondly, this individual attention improves the performance level of the student, which has a positive effect on the ensemble in which the student participates. Some credit the individual achievements and collective successes of our band students to the Private Lesson Program.* (Private Lesson Program Information Page & Sign-up 2018-2019)

Prior to Diane's arrival at Green Hill High School, many parents equated private lessons with tutoring, believing that students only need extra help if they are struggling. Diane's beliefs in building independent musicians and increasing their skills cause her to work hard to change the attitude about private lessons at Green Hill High School. She recounted how many of the parents in her district think about private lessons:

*We're still changing that culture that it's not like going to tutoring. They think it's like going to [tutoring], like you only get private lessons if you're struggling instead of, "No, you go to get better." And so that's changing, you know? That comes from their parents; their parents don't understand. They think private lessons are tutoring.* (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

Another barrier to private lesson enrollment is the financial situation of many of her students. Diane believes so strongly in the Private Lesson Program—and its benefits to individual musicians and the program as a whole—that the band boosters organization at Green Hill provides scholarship money to eligible students who have financial need. Diane said, “Our kids are very middle class so they can’t afford private lessons...[The band boosters] spends a lot on private lessons scholarships” (Interview 3, December 17, 2018).

Diane's belief in building individual musicians through private lessons also demonstrates her belief that students should continue playing their instruments in college. Whenever possible, she uses connections she has at universities in the state to arrange private lessons with university music faculty prior to all-state or college auditions.

*So we've set up lessons with those university professors so that they can get a lesson for their all-state audition but yet get to meet that professor before their college audition. (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)*

These lessons not only help the students prepare for their college auditions and build their individual musical skills, but they also allow students to establish connections with those faculty members, possibly leading to continued participation after they graduate from high school.

Diane's beliefs about the important role of private lessons and the skills that students can learn through them is seen every day through the normal operations of her classroom. On most days that I observed her classroom, I included notes about the flexibility of her rehearsal and the students coming and going to attend their private lessons. One such excerpt from my fieldnotes follows:

As the announcements continued, I again hear students working in practice rooms and saw lesson teachers entering the band hall. There are continually private lesson teachers there. It appears that they must have quite a few students taking lessons on a regular basis and students leave rehearsal for a portion of time to take their lesson. (Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes, December 10, 2018)

Private lessons were valued because of their ability to help students improve their skills and the band rehearsals continued with the sounds of private lessons in the background,

private lesson teachers entering and leaving the band hall, and students constantly coming and going throughout the period.

### **Chamber Music Participation**

Another part of developing independent musicians is Diane's belief in the importance of chamber music. She explained, "That's why we place as much emphasis on concert band as we do marching band, on chamber music as we do concert and marching band, [and on] developing the individual player" (Interview 2, September 24, 2018). These small chamber ensembles of three to eight students require independent playing because each individual member is responsible for his or her own part. In this section, I will describe Diane's thought processes in developing a holiday chamber music project for her wind ensemble and how that has evolved over time. In addition, I will explore her expectations of students and their roles within those chamber ensembles, and her beliefs about the important role of chamber music for all students in her program.

**Development and evolution of the holiday chamber music project.** Every band member at Green Hill High School participates in chamber music, but this chamber music participation varies a bit between each of the bands. The wind ensemble gets to do a special ensemble project that has developed over the last few years as an introduction of chamber music for the younger bands.

*With the wind ensemble—from the end of marching season [in] the second week in November to Christmas—that's what they do. They do chamber music only and so their Christmas concert is chamber groups, not a full-band thing.* (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)

Throughout her years as a teacher, Diane has prioritized chamber music participation as part of her band program, believing in the valuable learning experiences that it provides her students. She wanted all students to have an opportunity to learn the independent musicianship skills needed to perform in a small ensemble. However, she found that some students in her third and fourth bands could not play well enough to perform the required literature for solo and ensemble.

*It [chamber music ensemble project] actually started for me as a result of, as a way of getting our third and fourth band kids—and this is prior to me coming to Green Hill—a way of getting my third and fourth band kids involved in the solo and ensemble process. Because the problem is with a fourth band kid, they can't even, some of them can't even play a class three solo or a class three ensemble and get to go to UIL solo and ensemble. Because you have to play off that list.*

(Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

Diane developed a special project for these younger and less experienced students so that they could participate in chamber music ensembles without having to play music from the required repertoire list.

*So I thought, “What can we do where you don't have to play on the [state repertoire] list and still get that [chamber ensemble] experience? And so I developed this sort of ensemble project. It was an ensemble project, that's what it started out with, and everybody had to do an ensemble. We have our own sort of ensemble night. Now from that, it kind of turned into a bigger deal than actually going to solo and ensemble at the school where I was previously.* (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

Instead of preparing for solo and ensemble contest, Diane created a chamber music recital where all of those students could have the experience of rehearsing chamber ensembles, but perform for their parents instead of for a judge at contest.

At Green Hill, Diane morphed the idea of the non-competitive ensemble project into something that she used for her top group instead of the lower groups as a way of introducing chamber music to everyone in the program at the Holiday Concert. Instead of providing relief from the prescribed competition solos, the project provides a change of pace from the stressful and busy marching season, while allowing more freedom and time for her more advanced students to improve their independent musicianship. She explained how the project changed at Green Hill High School.

*I got to thinking, okay, marching season was so intensive here, and it usually ended in November, and then my wind ensemble kids are involved in the all-state process. If our goal is to raise the musicianship of the individual and develop the individual player first, then I need to give them time to make sure that the region band process is really successful for them. So I need to give them time—[and] us time to be able to hear the region band tests. I need to give them time to practice and to make changes. Doing that after marching season and then trying to prepare music for a Christmas concert, kind of was a time thing. So I thought, “What if we did ensemble projects at Christmas?” So that's how that developed here;...it kind of killed two birds with one stone. We're able to still give the necessary attention we need for our region project, while at the same time the kids are preparing for a Christmas concert, but they're doing it in a different way. Then that sort of snowballed;...they loved it. They loved it so much. (Interview 3,*

December 17, 2018)

The chamber music project for wind ensemble students became not only a way to provide more time for individual practice time on music for the region band process and a break from the pressures of marching band, but also for Diane to build students' independent musicianship. She further explained the wind ensemble holiday project to me during one of my observation visits and broke down the process and the responsibilities of the students that help them develop their individual musicianship skills. She said,

*They're responsible for every step of the process. They have to pick an ensemble coach or an ensemble leader, OK? ....They pick their ensemble, and we approve...[the] ensemble. Then they have to submit a lesson plan, and they have to rehearse it....When we come back from the holidays [Thanksgiving] on Wednesday and on Friday they'll have to present. They'll have...to play for the class whatever they have worked out. Then what we'll [the band directors] do is we'll divide up and go coach them.* (Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes, November 14, 2018)

This chamber music project for the wind ensemble gives the students a lot of freedom but also a great deal of responsibility for the preparation and rehearsal of their music. Diane believes in letting the students lead the ensembles and working out most of the details. This belief guides her actions in giving students the freedom and responsibility to lead, while still being there and available if and when they need assistance.

Diane: *It's kind of – it's a good way for them to understand how to rehearse on*

*their own with a small group, and what to listen for, and one to a part and stuff like that. It makes a good introduction to that.*

Researcher: *And so they're just kind of split up all across the room and then you're just floating around?*

Diane: *Mmm Hmm. All over the place, and then we just float around and coach them. Then on Fridays in December, they perform wherever they're at in their [music]; it may be eight measures and maybe as we get close to the concert it's the whole thing. So we can also monitor where they are and all that.* (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)

The students learn valuable skills that can help them be independent musicians through their leadership and participation in chamber ensembles. Diane and I talked later in the process, after one of the performance checks, while the students again split up to continue their ensemble rehearsals. She expanded on the goals of the project and the roles that the students assume through this project: director, coach, and performer.

Diane: *...[T]hey have...to be the band director, they have to be the ensemble coach, and they have to be the performer. It's interesting to see how they do it....You've got to learn how to do this, and you've got to learn how to form your ensemble. You've got to figure out who is going to play what part... Sometimes I've had to step in and say, "Let's try this instead." Then they have to do program notes, and they'll have to present it. And [when they perform] at the intermediate schools they'll have to talk about the instruments.* (Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes, November 29, 2018)

In addition to the three roles that Diane identified (band director, ensemble coach, and

performer), some students chose to add roles as arrangers or composers. About half of the performances at the Holiday Concert by these chamber ensembles consisted of music arranged or composed by members of the band. I reflected on the Holiday concert performances.

This was such a fun concert for the kids, because they had the freedom to choose their own music and seemed to really enjoy working with each other without a lot of oversight. They took great pride in their ensembles though, and the performances were very good. They especially seemed to enjoy the chance to arrange their own holiday pieces. Some fun and creative arrangements. (Holiday Concert Fieldnotes, December 11, 2018)

Thus, in addition to helping the students improve their individual musical skills and their ability to self-evaluate, Diane provided opportunities for them to exercise their creativity.

**Chamber music for all.** Diane believes in chamber music for all students, not just those in her top wind ensemble. The younger bands get a chance to see the chamber music process at work while they watch the wind ensemble performances at the Holiday Concert. Even though the younger bands do not get to participate in that project, they have a chamber music experience included as part of the curriculum during the spring semester.

*...[A]fter Christmas we start the Solo and ensemble process, so that continues for the top band, but then we bring in symphonic band, concert band and we do an ensemble project with the fourth band from January to the end of February and they do ensembles. (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)*

Chamber music participation replaces the time spent on the region band projects during

the fall and allows time for Diane and her team to develop independent musicianship in the younger students too.

Diane believes that all students need to be involved in the process of selecting their music because it helps them develop their individual musicianship and keeps creativity in the process. The school has a large library of solo and ensemble music, and she encourages the students to bring her choices. From those choices, she helps them think about which piece would be the best for them and why.

*They bring me choices. I let them choose, but they bring me choices and I'll go, "Think about this. Look at this section here." Because they have to learn how to pick music too. Because what a kid will do that doesn't know how to pick music. They'll pick a music that has the least amount of 16<sup>th</sup> notes, and they don't realize it's this huge lyrical piece that's incredibly hard, you know? They won't look at the ranges and they won't look at, "Oh, okay, well look, you've got this little fugue thing here." Well, a fugue is really hard in chamber music. So I let them pick it, but then they bring it to us and we walk them through: "Okay, why this is a good choice? Why this would not be good choice?" So that they can start looking for that when they start picking it themselves. (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)*

Throughout the chamber music projects, the students learn those skills that can suit them well as individual musicians. By learning to act as a band director, ensemble coach and performer, they learn how to select appropriate music, identify and rehearse problem spots, and evaluate their own performances. Diane believes that the chamber music experience, as she lays it out, enables the students to increase their skills and move on to the next step of independent musicianship.

## **Practice Episodes and Self Evaluation**

Another aspect of Diane's belief in the importance of building independent musicians is the way in which she often provides brief opportunities for (a) students to think critically about their performance through her use of questions; and (b) mini individual practice sessions during full ensemble rehearsals. Her experience is that in many large ensemble rehearsals in Texas, almost every direction comes from the podium and the students are given few opportunities, if any, to analyze their performance or rehearse anything individually. She works to make her classes different than that.

**Use of questioning to promote independent critical thinking.** According to Diane, she used to teach in much the same way as the large ensemble rehearsals where every direction comes from the podium. She felt that her ensembles performed well and that she was effective as a teacher, but as she interacted with her mentor, Mr. Loomis, she realized that she could be better.

*...[P]rior to that [working with her mentor] I think I was the best rote teacher in the world, you know? "Let's do it again. Let's do it again! Okay. That sounds good." I would give them the information, [but] I would not make them process and be able to give me the information. They weren't responsible for their own playing. They would do what I tell them to do to get better. (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)*

Diane learned from her mentor, Mr. Loomis, that she needed to make her students more responsible for their own playing. She needed to stop giving them so much information and ask them more questions to encourage them to think more critically about their playing and be able to evaluate it themselves without being fed every answer.

She said, “I learned how to give them the skills so that they could self-evaluate and make those decisions, which is what you should do as a musician anyway” (Interview 1, September 10, 2018).

Here are some typical questions that Diane has asked over the course of several observations:

*What is the basic goal of this activity?*

*Who has the melody here?*

*Is that the sound you want to play with?*

*Where are you going to breathe?*

*Which group did that section better – woodwinds or brass?*

*Which note had the worst articulation?*

*What does it feel like is happening?*

*What was the goal of this exercise the last time?*

*Who plays the root of the chord? Third? Fifth?*

(Fieldnotes, October 9, November 14, 29 and December 5)

The questions that Diane presents are not that difficult for students to answer, but represent different levels of thinking. Most are opinion questions without right or wrong responses, but they cause students to think about what just happened, listen across the band, and focus their listening. Some questions consider more technical aspects of playing or music theory concepts. Others require students to compare two things. In all cases, the questioning causes a different atmosphere than if Diane stopped the ensemble and just gave directions about what could be improved. The questions cause the students to listen, think, and evaluate their playing to assess what they think that they could

improve.

*We do that [make students evaluate their playing] by making them express their opinion. Any answer they give is never wrong...because that is what they are hearing. It is the opposite of "rote" teaching...where the teacher hears the problem and gives the answer... In our ensembles we want the students to find the answer. (Email Response #3)*

Diane now believes in working to instill and improve those skills in her students to make them better and more independent musicians. She often asks her students many questions to get them to think about and evaluate their playing. Her hope is that they can eventually learn how to ask those questions themselves so that they can evaluate their own playing. Diane said of the approach she and her fellow band teachers try to implement, “We ask them a lot of questions, and we force them to hear and think on a higher level” (Interview 2, September 24, 2018). The questions are usually fairly simple, but they get the students to actually think about their playing instead of just pushing buttons. She further elaborated on what it means to be responsible for their own playing and how that gets incorporated in the classroom.

*Making the students responsible for their own playing is taught through our methodology. We ask a lot of questions during rehearsals about what students are [hearing] and can hear...how they feel while playing....what their body (tongue) is doing...,etc. We want our students to be able to hear and diagnose things that are happening in their individual playing, in the ensemble playing, and in the music interpretation. (Email response #3)*

One of the chief goals of Diane’s approach is to give the students the tools that they need

in order to give those answers and evaluate their own playing.

Diane believes in utilizing this use of questioning to encourage self-evaluation with all of the bands in her program. The skill levels differ in each band, however, and as a result, she asks questions of the less advanced bands that are easier as she works to increase their knowledge and expose them to this way of teaching and learning.

*I feel like things have to move faster in concert two.... We still ask questions, but they're on a very basic conceptual level. The answers that they give us are more black and white and not so philosophical, I guess, as they are like in a Wind Ensemble class like that.* (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

Even younger students with little to no experience learn to articulate what they are hearing and that, in turn, helps them evaluate their own playing and gradually increase their skills. As the students' skill levels and knowledge increase, Diane strings questions together to help the students self-evaluate their playing. If the students need more guidance to figure out how to improve their playing, she will offer it.

**Mini individual practice sessions.** Through her use of questioning, Diane teaches the students in her band how to practice. She helps them figure out what kinds of questions *they* should be asking themselves in order to improve their own playing. As the students advance and are more comfortable knowing what kind of questions to ask and have more skill in self-evaluating their performances, she gives them small opportunities to use these skills in the midst of a large ensemble rehearsal with mini individual practice sessions. Diane trusts the students to make the changes to their individual performances without always telling them what and how to improve. The following is an account of part of an early season marching band rehearsal, and is typical of what often happens in

her rehearsals.

The students began entering the room up to 15 minutes before the class period started. This was the first class period after the lunch hour. On this day Diane came out and began class 7 minutes early. They ran part 4 of their marching show together. Next, Diane instructed them to review part 4 of their show on their own with their counting and berps (mouthpiece buzzing aids), concentrating on their new choreography. Many of the students appeared to have a recording of the show on their phones and used ear buds to listen and count/buzz along as they reviewed their movements within the band room. When she dispersed them to work on this individually, the students went right to work and kept rehearsing until she called them back. They were very focused and didn't waste time. (Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes, September 19, 2018)

I was struck by how focused the students were during these individual mini-rehearsals. There was very little wasted time. The students understood their job and what they were supposed to improve upon, and they were given the freedom to self-evaluate their performances and adjust based on their own assessment. This episode lasted around five minutes, and then Diane resumed the large ensemble rehearsal.

Diane often uses these individual mini-rehearsals to allow the students time and space to review for an upcoming quiz on scales or to explore and rehearse new material. The students receive minimal directions at the time because she has already trained them how to practice independently when provided an opportunity, even in the midst of the large ensemble rehearsal.

Following the brief announcement period, she gave them two minutes to review

their scales (concert D and concert A) for the upcoming quiz, look at the new dance tune they will be playing with the dance team, and to look at the five new pieces they just received. (Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes, October 9, 2018)

This episode was the second such one during this 90-minute rehearsal. These individual mini-rehearsals allow the students to take responsibility for their own playing and break up a long rehearsal to keep students alert and involved for the full class period.

Diane believes in the effectiveness of these individual, and sometimes small-group, rehearsal episodes. During one rehearsal just before the Holiday Concert, the students were unprepared for the memorization of “We Wish You a Merry Christmas.” Diane’s frustration was visible, and she had to adjust her plan for the day. She decided that the best way for them to get the piece memorized was to give them time to work independently. She told them to memorize the piece and put the final polishing on their ensemble music before the performances that would happen later in the period. She gave them 30 minutes to do these tasks and floated around to ensure that they were working and memorizing. She trusts the students in wind ensemble to make the changes and improvements needed and believes that they can effectively do it without her constant guidance because she has taught them how to think about and evaluate their own playing.

Diane floated around the room and checked on the students as they worked to memorize “We Wish You A Merry Christmas.” I am continually amazed by how much the students are working. Diane talked about how the students know it is an honor to be in this group, and it definitely shows in their behavior in class. They work hard and do not waste much time. After about 10 minutes of hearing primarily “We Wish You A Merry Christmas,” the cacophony of sound gradually

transitioned to their concert ensembles. It appeared that, at least from the student perspective, they were fairly close on their memorization and didn't require too much work. The students moved from individual work on that memorization to small ensemble runs of their concert work, and eventually on to practicing other music including audition excerpts and band music. As the time went on some of the students, especially clarinets, appeared to get off task a little bit. In fairness, their piece was memorized flawlessly and their ensemble was very good, too, so they were probably a little bit bored. They spent a lot of time on high notes from their march and were working on matching pitch on their highest notes. So, while this wasn't the assignment, they weren't really wasting time either and were definitely making those parts better. Diane was very precise in her timing and concluded the rehearsal time at exactly the time she initially indicated she would.

(Wind Ensemble Fieldnotes, December 10, 2018)

The episode with the clarinets moving to work on a section of the band music after completing their other tasks helps to illustrate the fact that the students are actively evaluating their own playing. They decided that their memorization was solid so they moved on to their ensemble piece. Upon being content with their rehearsal on their concert selection, they moved on to work on a difficult section of their band music using practice techniques that they had learned in class.

Each of these episodes reflect Diane's belief that students can and are able to rehearse their own music if given the proper instruction and preparation. She prepares them for this by asking questions and encouraging them to evaluate their own playing. She then provides small guided opportunities to practice those skills during individual

mini-rehearsals within the large ensemble setting.

## **Summary**

Diane believes strongly in the importance of developing each student as an independent individual musician capable of making musical decisions and self-evaluating his or her own performances. In order to develop independent musicianship in these students, Diane focuses first on evaluating the skills and deficiencies of each player. She uses the region band process to do this because it affords her the opportunity to assess individual student needs during the pass-offs and measure collective progress at the audition. She uses the etudes and prescribed music to help address any individual needs and increase the skills of each individual.

In addition to the region band process, Diane involves every student in some type of chamber music activity as another way to encourage and promote independent musicianship. As part of the chamber music process students have the opportunity to select their own music, rehearse their piece, perform in public, and evaluate their performances. They adopt roles such as band director, coach and performer, which help them think more independently.

Diane continues to develop these self-evaluation skills by asking questions throughout the large ensemble rehearsals in order to get the students to think more critically about their playing. As the students experience these rehearsals, Diane teaches them how to practice on their own by helping them to ask the right questions for self-evaluation. As the skills of each individual musician improve, they are better able to be responsible for evaluating and improving their own playing. Diane then gives them the

freedom to test their practice skills by giving them brief practice episodes where they can rehearse individually in the midst of the large ensemble. Diane's students become independent musicians capable of selecting their own music, making musical decisions, and evaluating their performances, thereby being prepared for lives of continued musical participation.

## **Chapter 7: Lifelong Learning from Mentors**

The previous chapters traced Diane's belief about building a culture of excellence, student ownership, and compassionate community as well as her belief in building independent musicians. In this chapter, I will explore another of Diane's beliefs: that lifelong learning must be a part of the students' experience. Specifically, Diane believes in (a) learning from mentors and experts; (b) exposing students and staff to experts in the field; and (c) mentoring student teachers. Diane is a master teacher who seeks to get better every day. She believes there is always more for her to learn from her mentors and other master teachers, so she regularly engages with them to improve her pedagogy and practice. Diane wants her students to grow as well and she believes that her students and staff also benefit from hearing different voices and learning from multiple expert clinicians, musicians and teachers. Diane provides opportunities for her students to engage with those individuals by bringing them to her classroom on a consistent basis. Finally, because of her relationships with collegiate band directors and the knowledge she has gained through continual learning, she believes in serving as a mentor for pre-service teachers, modeling her belief in lifelong learning. She helps student teachers by providing them the autonomy to make mistakes, while also giving them feedback that enables them to learn from their errors.

### **Learning from Mentors and Experts**

As Diane thinks about lifelong learning, she recalls experiences that she has had throughout her life. Chapter 5 described how Diane began to ask her students more

questions; this is an approach she learned from her mentor, Mr. Loomis. She believes that there is always more that she can learn and searches for new avenues for learning in familiar places. Even though she has been teaching for 32 years, she is not content to rest on her laurels and accomplishments. She constantly seeks to try new things and gain more knowledge so that she can be a better pedagogue.

*I am always learning something... So I still try and find stuff that makes me better and challenges me...I feel like I'm continuously pushing that envelope and growing... (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)*

Diane looks for ways to stay relevant and continue her learning even though she is an experienced teacher. This quest for learning often turns her toward the mentors and colleagues with whom she has built relationships over the years. She continually engages with experts in the field to gather new ideas and pedagogy from them.

*That's how we get better is being exposed to people that are better than us... So I'm like, I'll be like that... I'm going to bring that person out to do that, to teach us. (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)*

Diane continues to expand her knowledge, but she also believes their expertise will benefit her fellow teachers and students as the next section will elaborate.

Even when Diane was still in college, she started taking advantage of the opportunity to learn from great musicians and music educators in the field, which shaped her beliefs about learning from others and helped shape her into the teacher she has become. She attended a university in a relatively small town, so when well-known musicians came to perform with university ensembles or hold masterclasses on campus, Diane and her peers would often have the opportunity to hang out with them on a social

level outside of the classroom. She learned early on that unbelievable learning can happen through the personal networking and relationships that developed through those social experiences:

*[T]he university would bring in these guest artists all the time. Well, there was no other place for them to go but hang out. So we would—obviously they'd be here to play with us in our ensembles and stuff like that. But then, you know, they'd be [here] for three or four days and we'd be exposed to that [learning] on a social level too. So that was pretty amazing.* (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

When Diane was a younger teacher, she was sometimes intimidated by learning from her mentor, because it revealed her own weaknesses. She recalled a story about the beginning of her relationship with one of her mentors that illustrates her realization that there is always more to learn. She described her feelings during her first meeting with Mr. Loomis, a renowned and well-respected band director within the state of Texas.

*When I met Mr. Loomis, I had been teaching for 10 years already and realized, “Oh my gosh, I thought I was a good teacher.” But he taught me how to really be a good teacher and really to be an effective teacher. He said to me the first time we met, you know, because I was intimidated by him, and I [said], “I’m just amazed at everything I learned in my first session with you, and I hope someday I will be as good as you.” And he said, “No, you’re going to be better because you’ll get the best of me, and you’ll have the best of Mr. Eckert [her college director], and you’ll be better.”* (Interview 1, September 10, 2018)

Inspired by the confidence that Mr. Loomis had in her, Diane continues bringing out the best musicians and teachers to help her improve her pedagogy and musicianship.

Diane continues to learn from Mr. Loomis, as she invites him to clinic her group several times each year. She talked about the importance of staying sharp, as well as continuing to learn and grow as a teacher, so that she can provide a great educational experience for her students. She said, “I just try to stay one step ahead of them [the students (laughter)] because they’re really smart and really good” (Interview 1, September 10, 2018). She believes that students challenge her to be a better teacher and musician.

### **Exposing Students and Staff to Experts in the Field**

Not only does Diane seek continual growth through her relationships with her mentors, but she also believes that her students and staff will benefit from similar opportunities. Diane regularly invites her mentors, like Mr. Loomis, area college band directors, and outstanding band teachers into her classes so that they can share their expertise with her students. She describes the reasons that she brings these clinicians to her band hall for both her staff and her students.

*[N]umber one, I bring people like that in for my staff because it's really more an education and professional development for our staff, first and foremost. And then for the students, because again, if I can bring Mr. Connery [another well-known band clinician and college professor] in and he can do a masterclass and fix the clarinets when they're not taking private lessons, then I'm providing a service for our students. So that's why we do it: for two reasons, for our professional development and making sure that we're growing and getting better and better and better. (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)*

Diane hopes to inspire excellence in her staff and her students by providing opportunities

for them to continue learning with expert musicians and pedagogues.

When Mr. Connery does a masterclass for clarinets, Diane believes she is “providing a service” for her students that cannot take private lessons. She ensures that all students have access to quality instrumental instruction and further elaborates on her reasons for doing this:

*And for the kids that can't [afford lessons], otherwise they'd have no other outside experience than what they get from us and they need that. It's going to make them...better musician[s]. They need to hear it from people that aren't us [the Green Hill band directors], you know? And then, if I can get the best of the best, it's a win-win. And I only bring the best of the best. (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)*

Diane’s focus on learning from mentors is ultimately aimed at making her students better independent musicians, consequently, making the large ensembles better. In Chapter 6, Diane’s belief in building independent musicians through the region band process was discussed, but it resurfaces here because of the opportunity to learn from others at the region clinic. She finds that the region band clinic provides an additional opportunity for her students to experience learning from mentors. She talked about what students can learn during a region band clinic experience from both the conductor and other student participants.

*I think getting to play in a region band situation is important. That's why we spend a lot of time on that...Hopefully [there is] a great director different than your band director in front of you. You hear different things, you hear different philosophies, you get to play different music and then you're surrounded by*

*different people than the people you sit next to on a day-to-day basis. You get to talk to them about what their band experience is like. I think that's really important. I'm a huge region band person. I'm an advocate because I think that's a great experience... (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)*

Many students do not have the opportunity to have that region band experience because of the competitiveness of the audition. Diane provides for those students by bringing in mentors, college professors and clinicians who help her students grow while teaching the same concepts from a different perspective. The students may be more likely, in some cases, to take the feedback from the clinicians to heart because it is not coming from their own band directors. Diane explained how her students enjoy these classroom visits by the clinicians.

*They [the students] do, they do because you get bored of hearing the same thing from the same people all the time, you know? I can go, "Hey you guys, you guys are sounding so great." Well they say, "Yeah, you have to say that you're our band director." But when Mr. Loomis comes and says, "Oh my goodness, this is so different—or that's not cutting it." Then they say, "Okay," and they understand who these people are and they understand that they're also as much here for us.*

(Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

The students may be more responsive to the clinicians' feedback because it is a different voice than they hear on a daily basis. Similarly, Diane reiterated the benefits of those visits for her and her staff, too.

*Every time they come I learn something. Every single time they come I learn something. Every single time they come he learns something. I mean it's our staff*

*development too.* (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

Diane believes in the growth that these visits cause, for the development of her staff, the improvement of her bands, and the individual musicianship of her students. These are not just once a semester events or even occasional visits, but a regular part of the weekly classroom life. The following monthly calendar (Figure 7.1) demonstrates the constant stream of guests and clinicians that provide learning opportunities for staff and students in Diane's classroom. Her belief in the benefits of these engagements is evident. Seven different clinics or masterclasses occurred this calendar month by at least five different individuals. These clinics and masterclasses by expert musicians show how Diane exposes her students to a variety of voices and some of the best people in the field.

These visits by outstanding collegiate directors and clinicians provide not only expert knowledge and information to her students, but they also build relationships with them that often lead to a long-term connection and continued learning. I asked her about the clinicians who had recently visited her classroom, and she listed four additional collegiate professors.

Researcher: *So you had Mr. Loomis and Mr. Ashe [from Seaside College]?*

Diane: *And Mr. Connery, and later on I'll bring Al Allen from Mountainview University. [He] is going to come out and do wind ensemble. Dr. Timm's been out. Bob Mark from the University of South Fork is going to come and do trumpet sectional, and these are people that have now a relationship with our program. And so they've gotten to know the kids, and our kids have gotten to know them.*

(Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

**Figure 7.1:** Representative Monthly Calendar of Guest and Clinician Involvement with the Green Hill High School Band.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	31	1 Mr. Loomis Clinic (3 bands)	2 9:30 AM– 12 PM Wind Ens. Rehearsal/ Clinic with Mr. L.
4 Mr. G. masterclass during class <u>Mr. C. clinic</u> w/ C.B. 1 after school	5	6 3 – 5 PM Wind Ensemble Rehearsal/ Clinic with Mr. S.	7	8	9
11	12	13 TMEA Convention	14 TMEA Convention	15 TMEA Convention	16
18 Staff Development	19	20	21	22 UIL Solo/ Ensemble Contest	23 9:30 AM– 12 PM Wind Ens. Rehearsal/ Clinic with Mr. L.
25	26 3 – 5 PM Dr. A. Wind Ensemble Clinic – Mountainview University	27	28	1	2

Those lasting connections with collegiate directors often lead to other learning opportunities for Diane's students to learn from others. She believes that, in addition to

learning from the great teaching of others, her students also benefit from being exposed to great performances from some of the ensembles under the direction of those professors. They had the chance to learn through hearing and seeing exceptional performance groups.

*The kids were fortunate—the Central University band came and marched at a football game. They're going to get to see Seaside College at the end of one of our contests here...It's exposing them to those opportunities and those people that can talk to them... (Interview 2, September 24, 2018)*

Because of Diane's belief in lifelong learning from others and her many relationships with experts in the field her students can experience a variety of educational experiences that enable their growth as musicians.

### **Mentoring Student Teachers**

Because of the strong relationships that Diane has built with collegiate directors she often supervises one or two student teachers each semester. She values the knowledge and insight that she gains from the collegiate directors and they in turn entrust their students to her to hone their craft. Diane models her belief in lifelong learning and learning from others by devoting significant time and attention to mentor pre-service teachers as they grow and master the art of teaching. She entrusts her classes to student teachers each semester even while she continues to demand excellence. Diane explained why she does that...

*This is the future of our profession. When I retire—and I'm one of those old band directors that take the scooters down to TBA [Texas Bandmasters Association]*

*and all of that stuff—I want to know that the world of band that I've dedicated so much of my life to is getting better and better and better. So I think student teachers getting their experience early is really important, and you don't do that by simply watching.* (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

Diane believes that she can provide practical learning for these pre-service teachers that the universities cannot provide. She knows from her own experiences that new teachers have a lot to learn, and she attempts to bridge this gap. She talked about why it is important for student teachers to get experience teaching for their development.

*When you're in college and you're a senior in college and you're about to embark on your life, it's my experience that you think that you know everything. And then the minute you step in front of - and you think you're also going to walk into a 6A Wind Ensemble as your first group. And they don't. I don't think universities—any university—do a good job of preparing the students for what the reality really is going to be, which is the fourth band situation. That's going to be those kids' [student teachers'] first experience, and they can't walk in there and talk to them the way they would talk to a wind ensemble. They can't do that. They've got to know how that is. And they don't get experiences like that. So it's important for us to provide that.* (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

Diane believes there is much that her student teachers do not know and have to learn in order to eventually become successful band directors. She helps them discover what they do not know and where to find the resources and information to become effective teachers. Diane talked about their knowledge gap, saying, “It’s not okay to not know and not do anything about it. But it’s okay to not know. And as long as you have—

"we try to give them the resources to find out where to go when they do not know"  
(Beyond the Clef Interview).

Diane entrusts the student teachers to teach classes, offering them a great deal of autonomy. In my experience serving as a university supervisor for student teachers, many of them do not receive the degree of solo teaching opportunities or the freedom that Diane gives them. This autonomy gives the student teachers room to make mistakes and learn from them. I saw this many times as I visited her classroom.

Diane turned her rehearsal completely over to her student teacher and left the room for her office. I observed for a couple of more minutes, but then left since she was not present in the room. She seemed to have complete trust in her student teacher to execute the plan for the last half-hour of the class period and gave him the freedom to execute his lesson plan. I stopped by to thank her for her time and saw that she was observing him through the office window while answering some emails. (Concert Band Fieldnotes, September 24, 2018).

I was surprised at the trust and level of control Diane yielded to her student teacher. She explained her thought process as student teachers begin their time in her classroom.

*What we do when we first have a student teacher is—they'd observe for a little bit, and then we throw them into situations to see if they can handle learning how to do that. And in Mr. Goode's [current student teacher] case he was capable of doing that. So in his learning process it was important to go, "Okay, you've got to pick music for this band, you've got to figure out how to rehearse it, and then you've got to rehearse it, and then you've got to perform it." Because no one teaches you how to pick music for a band like this or what to look for, and you*

*can get really frustrated. And a lot of times he'd be out there rehearsing, and we wouldn't be out there because we don't want the kids to react differently, and we don't want him to be nervous. But I'm sitting here watching through the window and making notes and stuff like that. And then we debrief.* (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

While Diane gives the student teachers freedom to experiment and learn, she also demands excellence from her student teachers, just as she does from her students. Diane's beliefs about lifelong learning and her beliefs about excellence (Chapter 5) interact in this case. While the student teachers are instructing her students, Diane always monitors the classes so that the excellence in education for her students is maintained. She believes that her students can continue to learn and progress while she also mentors her student teachers. Diane demands excellence from both students and student teachers and encourages the student teachers to ensure that happens.

*And we monitor them [the student teachers] every class period. They would come to us at the end. We'd go, "Okay this went well; this didn't go well. We'll try again tomorrow." And they were great. And the kids did great and the band was successful, and they felt a part [of it], and the kids know that they're [just like one of the] staff members.* (Conversation with Educators Podcast)

By constantly having student teachers in her ensembles, Diane subtly shows her students the importance of lifelong learning and of learning from mentors. Diane's belief in lifelong learning even guides her to provide supervised teaching opportunities for her high school students so that they can model this learning for younger students. Diane supervises the high school students, but they learn a great deal from these teaching

experiences. She explained...

*For instance, we took all of the Wind Ensemble chamber groups down to the intermediate school. Well the junior high Wind Ensemble was there too. And we had this two-hour dead space of time. So I said, all right, junior high people get out your solos and ensembles. High school people, go teach them, go work on it with them.* (Interview 3, December 17, 2018)

The high school students have seen many examples of teachers before them in their large ensemble classroom and this opportunity gives them a chance to teach younger students in the way that they have been taught. For those students who are considering a music major, this is an invaluable chance to learn what teaching may be like.

## **Summary**

Diane mentors young pre-service teachers to inspire a new generation of teachers, sharing the expertise she has gathered through the years. As she does this, she continues to interact with her mentors, colleagues, and collegiate band directors, because she believes there is always more to learn. She believes in lifelong learning, and she often plans learning opportunities to improve her pedagogy, which will result in growth in her students' musicianship. Her belief in lifelong learning from mentors leads her to bring clinicians, educators, and collegiate directors to the band hall to work with her ensembles on a regular basis. She believes strongly that her staff and students can learn much through those interactions with experts and by witnessing the outstanding performances they lead. These interactions help her build the culture of excellence that she desires by helping students improve as independent musicians thereby providing a pathway to

continued participation.

## **Chapter 8: Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research**

### **Summary of the Study**

The purpose of this instrumental case study was to describe the beliefs of a high school band director regarding lifelong instrumental music participation and explore how those beliefs shape her daily preparation and practice. Fives and Buehl's (2012) understanding of teacher beliefs served as a conceptual framework for this study. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What, if anything, does one high school band director believe about lifelong instrumental music participation?
2. In what ways do one teacher's beliefs about lifelong instrumental music participation serve as filters, frames, or guides for action (Fives & Buehl, 2012)?
3. How do beliefs about lifelong instrumental music participation appear in one teacher's practice on a daily basis, including decision making, planning, establishment of classroom culture, and actions in the classroom?
4. How, if at all, are one high school band director's beliefs about lifelong instrumental music participation influenced by other contextual factors (other beliefs, school district, colleagues, musical history, teacher identity, etc.)?

### **Methodology**

This research used an instrumental case study design (Creswell, 2007) to explore the beliefs of one high school band director, Diane Snyder. Diane was purposefully

selected (Creswell, 2007) with recommendations from the University of Houston music faculty according to the follow criteria:

1. The high school band director led a program that regularly had alumni who were participants in collegiate ensembles, both as music majors and non-music majors.
2. The high school band director had at least 10 years of teaching experience and was in the *expert phase* of their teaching career (Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz, 2000). A teacher in the expert phase is self-reflective and constantly working to grow and get better, is attentive to student needs, and supports the educational growth of all (Steffy et al., 2000).
3. This band director was recognized by colleagues as an outstanding educator and a leader in the field.
4. The band director had a willingness to participate in the process of research through interviews, observations, and artifact collection.

I collected data through a variety of methods including three semi-structured interviews (Seidman, 2013), nine classroom observations, email responses, and artifact collection (Creswell, 2007). I ensured trustworthiness by collecting multiple sources of data and asking the participant to perform member checks. I analyzed the data first through in vivo coding and then used axial coding to group the prior codes in order to determine the emergent themes.

## **Overview of Findings**

While Diane thinks about continued participation and encourages her students to

continue their participation beyond high school, the emergent themes in this study focused chiefly on her core beliefs about teaching band: (a) creating a culture of excellence, student ownership, and compassionate community; (b) building individual musicians; and (c) learning from mentors. The first theme, the “Green Hill Way,” refers to the name of the high school and encompasses the entirety of the culture that she hopes to create. Secondly, she hopes to build independent musicians who are capable of evaluating and improving their own playing. Third, she believes in lifelong learning from mentors and mentoring student teachers, leveraging relationships for continued learning.

**The Green Hill Way: Excellence, ownership, and compassionate community.**

Ms. Snyder believes that the culture within her band program is vital for the success of not only her ensembles, but also of each individual musician and their potential for continued participation. She believes that excellence must be demanded in everything by everyone—even in non-musical actions, like bowing at concerts and completing homework for other classes. She believes that students must take ownership of their band program and believes that they will do that if given opportunities for leadership. She wants a culture that values the input of each person and that is open to all students regardless of their skill or their financial status. She believes that an important part of the culture of her band program is teaching students how to “be human” (Interview 2, September 24, 2018). She wants them to learn how to work together to be productive and compassionate so that they build community with each other while learning to appreciate music and its beauty. Diane’s goal is that the culture she builds will result in her students having a good band experience so that they value it enough to continue their participation and one day encourage their own children to be in band.

**Building independent musicians.** Ms. Snyder believes that one of her chief roles is to build independent musicians. She believes that individual musicians need to work consistently to improve, so she regularly evaluates them to assess their individual musical skills. She then addresses their needs through her daily teaching. She believes in the benefits of private lessons so much that she convinced the band boosters to offer scholarships to those who would otherwise be unable to afford them. She incorporates chamber music for all band members in every ensemble because of the benefits it provides as she works to build independent musicians. Finally, she believes in teaching students how to select music, rehearse and evaluate their own playing, developing them into independent players who are confident in their abilities and have the skills necessary to continue participation beyond high school.

**Lifelong learning from mentors.** Diane Snyder believes that there is always more to learn, and continually seeks out more information that will improve her pedagogy. She models this belief in lifelong learning by constantly engaging with her mentors and other experts in the field. She believes so strongly in lifelong learning from mentors that she consistently provides opportunities for her staff and students to learn from the best in the field. She regularly brings clinicians and collegiate directors out to her band hall so that students and staff can learn from them, too, and improve their individual skills. In addition, Ms. Snyder provides lifelong learning to others by serving as a cooperating teacher. She mentors pre-service teachers while modeling lifelong learning for her students, providing them additional opportunities to think about post-secondary band participation.

## **Conclusions**

In the previous section, an overview of Diane's three central beliefs was presented. The next section includes a discussion of the ways in which Diane's beliefs functioned as filters, frames, or guides (Fives & Buehl, 2012), a review of the way that Diane believes her students value their experience as a result of her core beliefs, and a discussion about the implications of Diane's beliefs for practice. This conclusion section considers the ways that Diane's central beliefs interact to provide her students with a positive band experience while also preparing them for the possibility that they may continue their participation after graduation.

**Emergent beliefs functioning as filters, frames, or guides.** Throughout my analysis of the emergent themes, I considered the conceptual framework which depicts beliefs functioning as filters, frames, or guides (Fives & Buehl, 2012). Fives and Buehl identified the filtering function of beliefs as a lens that teachers use to consider what information they should share with students and how it may be presented. Beliefs that function as frames help teachers with task analysis (Fives & Buehl, 2017) and serve as tools to define and solve problems (Fives & Buehl, 2012). Beliefs that function as guides lead directly to action (Fives & Buehl, 2012) and help "determine when and how to act" (Fives & Buehl, 2017).

My researcher bias led me to try to make beliefs about lifelong band participation the most important thing, even when the emergent beliefs about teaching band were more central. I tried to make Diane's statement that students should "go and at least play" at the college level (Interview 2, September 24, 2018) into the belief that filtered out everything else, leading to her beliefs about the Green Hill Way, building independent

musicians, and lifelong learning from mentors. Upon further analysis, while Diane does believe strongly that students should continue participation at the next level, and this belief often guides her action in various ways, it does not serve as the chief filter for all other beliefs. Rather, Diane's beliefs about creating a positive culture, building independent musicians, and encouraging students toward lifelong learning through mentors are central to her teaching. Those beliefs appear to function jointly as the filter that determines the entire direction of her band program—what students learn and how they are taught. Diane's three central beliefs work together to form the core of what she does on a daily basis. As described in Chapters 5 through 7, those beliefs influence the culture that she creates, who she hires as assistant directors, what music she chooses, how she structures each class period, and the clinicians she brings in to work with her ensembles. In short, everything that she chooses to teach to her students and the methodology that she utilizes to enable student learning is a result of her core beliefs. Together, her belief in excellence, student ownership and a compassionate community, combined with beliefs in building independent musicians and learning from mentors, work together to filter out other ideas and ways of teaching band. Diane's beliefs seem unique when compared to many Texas band directors who emphasize the group goals over musical independence and often include less teacher and student interaction during class sessions.

Diane's beliefs, while functioning jointly as a filter, also function individually as frames for solving problems and as guides for daily action within the classroom (Fives & Buehl, 2012). Fives and Buehl (2017), in a recent article, clarified the complex relationship of filters, frames, and guides by explaining that “the same ‘belief’ may serve

multiple functions within the self-system of the person” (p. 26). For example, Diane’s central beliefs could function jointly as a filter that eliminates activities and teaching strategies she regards as peripheral. At other times, however, her belief in building independent musicians frames the problem of how to help her students improve their musical skills and independence when they lack the money for private lessons. Diane’s belief in building individual musicians functions as a guide when she gives her students the freedom to form their chamber ensembles and select, rehearse and perform the music with relative independence. There are countless examples of how her three emergent beliefs about teaching band can function at different times as either a frame, or a guide, while working together jointly as a filter that crystalizes the importance of what is central to her teaching.

When Fives and Buehl (2012) developed the framework of filters, frames, and guides, they saw it as a linear process where ideas were filtered through beliefs, then framed by beliefs, and ultimately guided to action by beliefs, but more recently, Murphy (2012, as cited in Fives & Buehl, 2017) suggested an alternative model. She asserted that, “the three functions of beliefs were depicted to be of equal size and floating like olives in a martini glass shaped funnel that led to behaviors” (p. 29). Thus, according to Murphy’s conceptualization, any beliefs could lead directly to actions, regardless of whether they functioned as a filter, frame, or guide. I tend to agree with Murphy’s reframing of how beliefs lead to actions, as the findings of this study revealed that Diane’s central beliefs influenced her teaching behaviors directly, regardless of their function.

The question that remains is: what difference does it make how the beliefs are functioning? This is a valid question and important to answer. Researchers explore

teachers' beliefs because they see it as a "necessary and valuable avenue of educational inquiry" (Pajares, 1992 p. 326). Fives and Buehl (2012) note that it is important to explore the functions of beliefs so that we can see how they affect the way teachers interpret, apply, and implement new ideas and approaches. Researchers explore teacher beliefs because they want to see what effect, if any, they have in the classroom. Fives and Buehl (2014) tell us that "the more central the belief or belief subsystem, the more likely it is to guide actions" (p. 436). Each of Diane's beliefs guide her actions in multiple ways, as noted in chapters 5, 6, and 7. Since each of them guide actions, yet serve collectively as a filter, the function of each belief seems less important. In combination with Murphy's (2012 cited in Fives and Buehl 2017) alternative model, it appears possible that the centrality of the belief is more important than the function.

This conceptual framework did not turn out to be as helpful in interpreting the findings as I originally thought it would be, but it did help me think carefully about the results that emerged. I thought I might find some unique beliefs about lifelong band participation and how they functioned based on Diane's history of band alumni participating in collegiate band programs. What I found, however, primarily corroborated prior research. Diane, like many music educators throughout the last 100 years, holds a belief in lifelong musical participation (Fay, 1921; Rea, 1956; Leonard & House, 1959; Choate; 1968; Cavitt, 2005; Mantie, 2014; Pitts, 2016). Diane wants her students to continue their participation throughout their time in her program and after they leave. What is unique in this study is how that belief was supported by her core beliefs about teaching band and how those beliefs interact to help students value their band experience, which can in turn lead to continued participation.

**Valuing the experience.** Diane believes that when she successfully implements all of her core beliefs, her students will have a great experience and find value in it, and that this value may lead them to consider future participation beyond high school. She believes her students will value their experience in the band program because they collaborated with their peers to achieve excellence collectively, while also becoming independent musicians. They learned not only how to be better players, but how to interact within a compassionate community, leading to a sense of pride and ownership in the program. When all of these things happen, Diane believes and hopes that they will have an appreciation for music and all that it has to offer.

Diane knows that she demands a lot from her students in terms of time and effort. Her expectation of excellence is a big part of the Green Hill Way. Diane also understands that students get tired because of the time and work involved, but she always tries to be sensitive to their needs to ensure that they are having a good experience. She wants all students to have a good experience and look back at their time in band as worthwhile, hopefully continuing their participation at the next level. When asked about participation beyond high school she said, “I hope they [high school students] go and at least play” (Interview 2, September 24, 2018).

Diane believes in creating community within her band program that motivates her students to seek out another band to play in beyond high school. The sense of community is so strong that many times the students come back and share their post-secondary participation experiences because they value what happened when they were in high school. Through the Green Hill Way, Diane creates a band culture and community that results in a great student experience that includes connections to the best teachers in the

field, student confidence in their ability to play independently, and musical excellence that seems to encourage continued participation.

Ultimately, Diane believes that her students will look back on their time in her band program and value the experiences that they had. Diane wants her students to feel that their time in her program was worthwhile. One possible outcome of the students valuing their experience in that way is that they may pursue similar activities beyond high school and eventually encourage their children to participate in band.

**Discussion and implications for practice.** Diane's central beliefs in this study are a complex and interconnected web in the ways that they relate to continued band participation. Pitts (2016) encouraged educators to teach with future participation in mind, and Diane has stated that she wants students to "go and at least play" (Interview 2, September 24, 2018). The findings in this study revealed that Diane's central beliefs about teaching band constantly interact in a way that can lead to continued participation by (a) ensuring high school graduates have the skills they need to be successful in a post-secondary ensemble; (b) working to establish the personal connections with college band directors and clinicians that will provide encouragement toward lifelong learning; and (c) creating a culture that ensures a positive experience working with others and the will to continue.

Diane's beliefs seem to affect her practice in a number of ways that reflect the existing research on post-secondary participation, as explored later in this section. While the results of a single case study are not generalizable to a larger population, there do seem to be some ideas generated by the current study that are worth considering for current high school teachers interested in increasing post-secondary participation.

**Lifelong learning from others.** Diane's belief in lifelong learning from mentors means that she constantly engages with mentors and other experts in the field to keep improving her pedagogy and practice. She regularly models lifelong learning from others by engaging with clinicians who provide additional instruction for her students, as well as continued mentoring for her in her own teaching. She views those events as professional development opportunities for her and her fellow band teachers. The interactions often lead to higher levels of excellence and better pedagogy by the teachers and increased confidence and self-awareness from the students. Diane has even acknowledged that her beliefs about teaching and pedagogy changed based on her relationship with Mr. Loomis. She often taught by rote in her earlier teaching career, but now believes in a more Socratic approach that involves asking her students many questions and helping them to evaluate their own playing.

Diane's effort to connect her students to collegiate directors and studio teachers on a regular basis supports her belief in the importance of lifelong learning from mentors. Diane reaches out to the college directors and experts in the field, bringing in the best of the best. This practice seems similar to Burch's (2016) recommendation of forward recruiting that encourages the high school director to arrange the same kind of recruitment activities for their students with collegiate and community groups that high school directors would for middle school students. Diane has, "cultivated those relationships with those directors" (Interview 2, September 24, 2018) so that she could provide educational opportunities similar to Burch's (2016) forward recruiting. Because Diane hopes that students will continue their participation, she also strategically plans these visits to give her students time to interact with potential future college band

directors.

In prior research, college music students cited their high school interactions with collegiate directors as one of the reasons that they decided to continue their participation after graduating (Bowles, Dobbs, & Jensen, 2014; Tedford, 2014). If there are high school directors who have similar beliefs about lifelong learning and continued participation, it would seem that there is an opportunity for partnerships with collegiate directors or clinicians in the same way that Diane engaged with them. These partnerships may help to encourage high school students to continue their participation after graduating because of the interaction with collegiate directors while also benefitting the high school ensemble.

Looking at it from a different angle, collegiate and community band directors have a great opportunity to reach out to high school directors to develop those partnerships. For example, McDavid (2006) found that almost all students make a decision about continued collegiate participation while still in high school, with 93.7% deciding before the first day of college. High school directors who have an interest in encouraging post-secondary band participation for their students may relish an opportunity to work with a collegiate director, while discovering that connections with a college director may result in continued learning for themselves, as well. Research has also indicated that many high school directors do not view their bands as feeder programs for colleges in the same way that middle school bands are for high schools (Amundson, 2012; Woody & Parker, 2012); however, if the collegiate directors reach out with a genuine care for high school students and directors, there may be an opportunity to develop mutually beneficial relationships (Tedford, 2014). Perhaps a more proactive

approach from collegiate band directors could help high school directors think more intentionally about continued participation and inspire a larger percentage of high school graduates to continue their participation.

Diane also exposed her students to other opportunities to interact and learn from others. In the course of the year, her members witnessed the performance of two collegiate bands, something Moder (2013) suggested may be useful for encouraging participation. Her students also heard from alumni about their experiences in college band. Learning from role models about post-secondary participation is something that Pitts (2016) encouraged for increasing lifelong participation. Other former students also come back to visit Diane's classroom and talk about Tuba Christmas or community band involvement, and these experiences help her students to learn about ways that their participation could continue beyond high school graduation. These types of interactions—attending collegiate performances and alumni testimonies—were cited by Bowles, Dobbs, and Jensen (2014) as things that high school directors do that may encourage post-secondary participation.

There seems to be an important relationship between the retention of current students and their potential future participation within Diane's classroom. Previous researchers have indicated this important relationship as well (Stewart, 2007; Ng & Hartwig, 2011) if, for no other reason than that the potential pool of future participants is larger if more students are enrolled in high school ensembles. Diane looks at all of these opportunities to learn from others as a way to encourage retention and continued participation. These visits from mentors are aimed at helping her students learn, have a great experience, and build their musical independence. The role of the high school

director in providing these types of experiences is important as Bowles, Dobbs and Jensen (2014) note that 68 percent of non-majors currently participating remembered their high school director encouraging such continuation. Rohwer and Rohwer (2010) also suggest that communicating with students and educating them about future participation opportunities is something that could be done by the high school director, thereby removing one barrier to continued participation (Cavitt, 2005). The high school band director can model lifelong learning and do very simple things that may help encourage continued participation while also aiding retention. By encouraging alumni to come back and talk about positive collegiate participation experiences, inviting collegiate and community directors to work with the group, or taking students to witness local concerts the high school director can gently encourage continued participation while also providing learning opportunities that support educational goals.

Diane's belief in lifelong learning from others ensures that she provides her students with vital connections to people who are involved in post-secondary participation. These personal connections allow her students to see models and develop pathways that lead to continued musical participation (Pitts, 2016). It seems that the more pathways and connections that students experience during their high school years, the more likely they will be to consider the next "logical step" (Milton, 1982 p. 180) after graduation to be continued participation. High school band directors can reflect on the connections that they provide for their current students and whether those connections create pathways into post-secondary participation.

***Building independent musicians.*** Diane's belief in building independent musicians supports her belief that students should go on to play at the next level. Diane

works to build independent musicians that have the skills and confidence to pursue continued participation. This is important, because earlier researchers found that students often cease participation at the collegiate level because they feel their musical skills are inadequate (Mantie & Dorfman, 2014) or they fear auditioning (McDavid, 1999).

As Diane talked about building individual musicians, she explained that she hopes to create students who are well-rounded so, “they get exposed to every single idiom in music education, not just one or the other” (Interview 2, September 24, 2018). Students within her program can potentially participate in marching band, concert band, chamber music ensembles, solo performances, and full orchestra. Researchers in the past (Busch, 2005; Lamont, 2011) have noted that those who have been exposed to a wide range of experiences have a foundation that could lead them to continued participation. Chiodo (1997) reported that those who did go on to a life of continued participation were involved in a variety of experiences over the years. Diane is not even content with the experiences that she currently provides and wishes that she could provide even more options for her students saying, “I wish we’d had room in our schedule to do a jazz band” (Interview 2, September 24, 2018).

As teachers reflect on their current musical offerings, they can consider whether they are providing a variety of experiences that may prepare their students for continued participation beyond graduation. While time restraints and the pressures of competitive high school programs can make it difficult to do this, Diane’s example shows that music teachers can offer a variety of musical experiences while still producing an outstanding product. Wall (2018) suggested expanding outward even further to appeal to more students and allow them more time for creativity by including popular music ensembles,

electronic music ensembles, or improvisation ensembles. The goal of these ensembles would be to help more students get involved in music that they like in the hopes that they would continue to participate following graduation. While Diane does not offer these types of popular music ensembles, her wind ensemble students are free to compose or arrange pieces for the chamber music project at the Holiday Concert, thereby experiencing an opportunity for creativity.

One particularly important aspect of Diane's belief in building individual musicians was her approach to chamber music. She used chamber music experiences as a way to help her students become independent and mature musicians who were capable of selecting, rehearsing, and evaluating their own musical performances. In some cases, she even allowed them to arrange and compose their own ensemble selections for the Holiday Concert. Throughout this process, Diane and her team served in more of a facilitator role, allowing students to rehearse and lead, but monitoring their progress and being available to them when they needed help. Myers, Bowles, and Dabback (2013) argued that teachers acting in a facilitator role lead to future participation because they emphasize collaboration, which is often an important component of lifelong musical participation. The opportunity for students to engage in different roles such as band director, ensemble coach, performer, and composer may also be key component of helping them to develop their musical identity (Rohwer, 2017), thereby providing more pathways into a lifetime of participation.

While Diane worked to build individual musicians through the chamber music experiences, she also worked to build musical independence through the way that she taught on a daily basis. Several scholars note the importance of students developing

musical independence if we want them to continue to post-secondary participation (Arasi, 2006; Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2011; Mantie & Tucker, 2008; Rohwer & Rohwer, 2010).

Diane hopes to create musicians who can evaluate their own performances and know how to practice and improve. Her pedagogy and approach to teaching is central to building this independence and is one way in which she encourages continued participation. Diane rejected “rote teaching,” as she called it, where the director corrects every single mistake in a large ensemble setting, and opted instead for a more conversational style in which she asks students questions and helps them direct their listening so that they can evaluate and improve their own playing.

As teachers think about the ways in which they help students grow as musicians, there may be several takeaways from this study in regards to post-secondary participation. Students who go on to participate in collegiate or community ensembles need to feel confident in their musical skills (Mantie & Dorfman, 2014) so that they can overcome the fear of auditioning, if one exists (McDavid, 1999). In addition to providing opportunities for chamber music participation, Diane builds individual skills by hearing students individually through the region band process and encouraging private lesson involvement, sometimes providing financial support through scholarships from the band boosters to help students in need. An increase in individual skills may help students approach collegiate participation with the confidence and skills they need to be successful. High school directors may consider fundraising to provide private lesson scholarships for students in financial need. Providing financial support for underprivileged students could be a way of supporting and building those individual musicians while fighting against exclusivity (Mantie, 2013; Pitts, 2012). Diane also

facilitates chamber music involvement where students take the leading role. High school directors may want to examine their current chamber music practices and see if they are encouraging continued participation by enabling collaboration and increasing musical independence. Finally, Diane emphasizes a pedagogy that focuses on helping students learn how to evaluate their own playing by asking questions to help them direct their listening. High school directors could consider observing teachers with a similar focus on directed listening and a Socratic style to see if they can find ways to be more collaborative while also helping students increase their ability to evaluate their own musical performances and improve them.

Diane's belief in building independent musicians helps her prepare students by giving them the confidence, musical independence, and self-evaluative skills needed. These skills, combined with the personal connections to collegiate directors and studio teachers, provide the ability and confidence for a potential pathway into continued participation.

***A culture of excellence, ownership, and compassionate community.*** Diane believes in creating a positive band environment where excellence is the norm, students feel ownership because their opinions are heard, and where all are welcome and valued as part of a compassionate community that works together. A focus on excellence is not uncommon, especially in band programs within Texas. Sometimes, however, when the excellence is focused on competitive results, students may be turned off by music programs (Kellet, 2016). While Diane does not shy away from having her students participate in competitions, receiving high scores and rankings are not her chief focus or aim. Diane has created a culture in her band program that focuses on valuing every

performance, no matter the venue, and making each performance better than the last. Individually, all students are expected to achieve a 95 percent on playing tests during region band projects, but students are given individualized feedback to improve and multiple attempts to reach the standard. Music is carefully selected so that students can achieve the lofty standards set by the directors. High school directors may want to examine their focus on competition to see if they have a healthy balance that encourages excellence while focusing on growth without alienating students. Collegiate directors may want to highlight the non-competitive nature of their bands when recruiting high school students, as some researchers have noted that students enjoy the low-stress atmosphere of collegiate bands (Cumberledge & Acklin, 2019; Isbell & Stanley, 2011).

In fact, many high school students cite burnout as a reason to cease their participation upon entering college (Stewart, 2007). Diane believes that burnout happens either because students have a bad experience or because their directors have not valued their time as a result of being overly focused on competitive results. As she creates a culture that values students, she constantly considers the workload that her students encounter. She uses fewer than the maximum number of hours allowed by the state for marching band, gives her students time to go to tutorials for their academics, and regularly talks to her students about the difference between being tired and being burned out. High school band directors should consider revisiting their rehearsal and event schedule to determine if they are valuing their students and their time while also providing the best musical and educational experiences possible.

Diane also strongly believes in creating a positive culture in which the students' voices are heard so that they feel an ownership and investment in the program. This part

of the culture is evident in the pedagogy discussed earlier, but also in the large student leadership team. Diane's leadership team includes both elected and appointed members from all bands within the program who convene weekly to discuss any issues relating to the bands. The student leaders set goals for the program and aid in all aspects of the band program. Even at the holiday concert, students served in roles that are often filled by a director as they composed and read concert notes to introduce various pieces to the audience. High school directors may want to consider how their student leadership structure could help support post-secondary band participation by helping students build ownership in their band program.

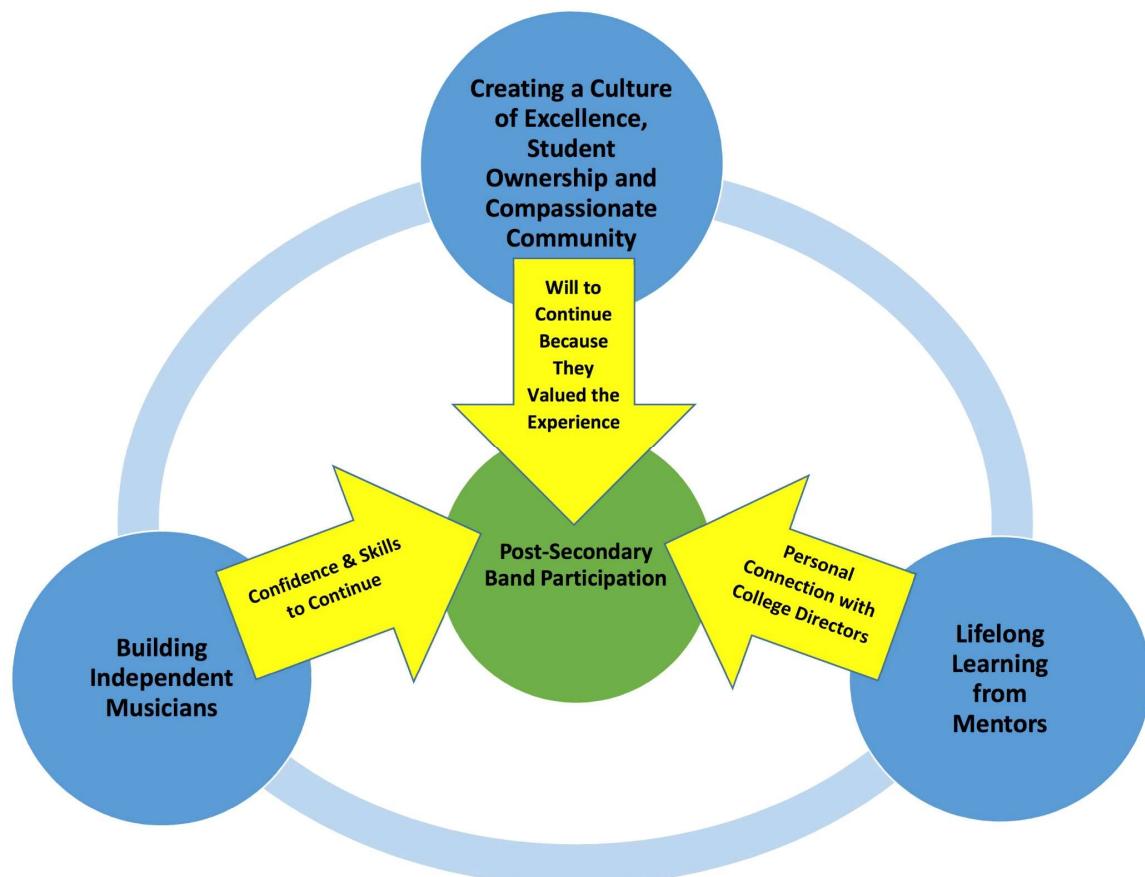
Diane works very hard to create a community within her band program where all may participate and all are valued. She expects her students to act with compassion in their interactions with each other and learn how to work together. She works to build a social network by sponsoring fun events and spirit nights in addition to rehearsals. She sees this as an important part of her role as she tries to help her students understand what it means to "be human." She works to build students who can get along despite their differences. She models this in her interactions with her colleagues. High school band directors may want to consider the social activities that they promote within their group as a way to build a positive culture. They could also examine their student population and observe the interactions to see how well their students learn together and work to promote unity in whatever way possible.

Several authors have written about the significant impact of a positive high school experience on those who went on to participate in collegiate band programs (Delano & Royse, 1987; Milton, 1982; Moder, 2013). Sometimes a negative experience with a

conductor is all that it takes for a student to cease participation in musical activities (Bures, 2008; Pitts, 2012). Diane works diligently to know her students and care for them every day in every way. Her core beliefs help create a worthwhile experience that may inspire students with the will to continue their participation.

**Summary.** Diane stated continued participation as one of her goals, but it did not emerge as one of her three central beliefs. In spite of this, her three core beliefs and many direct actions within Diane's program provided her students encouragement or a pathway that could lead to continued participation, as displayed in Figure 8.1 below. Diane's three

**Figure 8.1:** The Interaction of Diane's Central Beliefs and Continued Participation



central beliefs are connected together with a blue ellipse to show that they all interact in a way that could support and lead to continued participation. The yellow arrows show possible outcomes of Diane's core beliefs that lead toward continued participation. Each of the yellow arrows is attached to a specific core belief in order to signify the primary (but not necessarily exclusive) way in which that belief could lead toward post-secondary participation.

Diane believes in creating a positive culture that is marked by excellence, student ownership, and a compassionate community, and when that occurs she believes that her students will value their experience. Students who enjoyed their high school experience are more likely to continue (Delano & Royse, 1987; Milton, 1982; Moder, 2013), so that belief provides the will and motivation that may lead to continued participation.

Diane also believes in building independent musicians. Students who have musical independence have the confidence and skills needed to play at the next level (Arasi, 2006; Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2011; Mantie & Dorfman, 2014; Mantie & Tucker, 2008; McDavid, 1999; Rohwer & Rohwer, 2010). Finally, Diane believes in lifelong learning from others. By modeling lifelong learning, she encourages student growth while establishing connections with collegiate directors that may enable continued participation. Students who have established connections to collegiate directors are more likely to continue their participation beyond high school (Bowles, Dobbs, & Jensen, 2014; Tedford, 2014).

Diane's excellent high school band teaching, based on her three central beliefs, provides her students with a positive experience, builds musical independence and confidence, and establishes connections with collegiate directors, all things that can pave

the way to continued participation.

## **Considerations for Future Research**

The current research investigation focused on the beliefs of one high school band director. The prolonged time in the field and engagement with a single director provided an opportunity for intense study of the given case. Because the study was focused on continuing participation beliefs and most of the collegiate audition preparation and help occurs during the spring semester, it would be interesting to see how the results might change if the classroom observations occurred during that time instead of in the fall. I think that it is possible that more concrete examples and communications about help with collegiate auditions may have occurred in the spring. However, most of the conversations about audition preparation are private in nature, occurring during individual interactions that are hard to capture. The fact that support for Diane's central beliefs and support for continued participation were found in the observation data that is present, seems to confirm that these beliefs are strongly held.

## **Opportunities for Future Research**

The current research raises more questions than it answers, so there are several opportunities for further investigation. Both quantitative and qualitative studies are needed to continue to explore this important topic.

1. A quantitative study exploring factors related to teachers' beliefs about encouraging post-secondary participation based on existing research, while also asking about some of the ways that Diane introduced a pathway into post-

secondary participation for her students.

2. A multiple-site case study involving multiple teachers to see how beliefs about post-secondary participation vary based on teacher and location.
3. A case study with a teacher and several of her alumni who participate at the collegiate level that explores the teacher's beliefs from both perspectives and probes the students' reasons for continued participation at the collegiate level.
4. A longitudinal case study of students within a high school band program to see how their beliefs about continued participation change from semester to semester and whether they continue in their high school ensembles all the way through or drop out along the way, eventually culminating with participation or non-participation at the collegiate level. This study would demand a large amount of time over many years, but may provide a wealth of information about how students' thoughts about participation change over their time in high school.
5. A closer look at the pedagogy and methodology of Diane, and others like her, to see how their use of questions and directed listening affect students' abilities to evaluate their own playing.

### **Closing Thoughts**

The current investigation of one high school band director's beliefs about lifelong band participation provided us with insight into how one teacher approached this issue. Diane believes in continued participation at the high school and the collegiate level. Diane's central beliefs of creating a culture of excellence, ownership, and compassionate

community, building independent musicians, and lifelong learning from mentors combine and interact as they support the goal of continued participation. In the end, Diane is an excellent teacher who cares deeply for her students and wants them to love music and each other. Her teaching prepares students for the possibility of continued participation by providing them a positive band experience that was worthwhile, the ability to work with others, musical independence and confidence, and multiple connections that can help them establish a pathway to continued participation.

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## **Appendix A: Recruiting Letter**

Dear band director,

My name is Michael Staub and I am a doctoral candidate in music education at the University of Houston. Because of your history of leading a high school program which regularly produces participants in collegiate bands, I would like to invite you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this case study will be to describe the beliefs of a high school band director about promoting post-secondary band participation and explore how those beliefs shape daily preparation and practice.

I understand the enormous responsibilities entrusted to band directors as I continue to teach while I am working to complete my doctoral degree. Because of those commitments, the time required to participate in the study will be low. The total time commitment will be about five hours. You will be asked to complete a brief writing activity to explore your beliefs about being a band director. I would also interview you for one hour on three separate occasions to explore your thoughts on teaching and band participation. In addition, I would like to observe your class on several occasions so that I can put your comments in context of your teaching. Participation in this research study is voluntary. This project has been reviewed by the University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (713) 743-9204.

While there is no monetary compensation for your participation in this study, you will be contributing to the knowledge base so that future high school band directors have a better idea about how their beliefs may shape their practice and the future participation of their students.

Thanks for your consideration. I will be contacting you by phone and email to solicit confirmation as to whether you are willing to participate in this study.

Michael Staub

[msstaub@uh.edu](mailto:msstaub@uh.edu)

## **Appendix B: Consent Form**

### **UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

#### **Promoting Band Participation: A Case Study of One High School Band Director's Beliefs**

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by Michael Staub, a doctoral music education student at the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston. This project is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Julie Derges, Assistant Professor of Music Education.

#### **NON-PARTICIPATION STATEMENT**

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any question.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this case study is to describe the beliefs of one high school band director about promoting post-secondary band participation and explore how those beliefs shape daily preparation and practice. This study will require five hours of your time.

#### **PROCEDURES**

A total of one subject at one location will be asked to participate in this project. You will be the sole participant in this study.

The purpose of this case study is to describe the beliefs of one high school band director about promoting post-secondary band participation and explore how those beliefs shape daily preparation and practice. This study will require five hours of your time.

As part of this research, you will undergo three one-hour interviews on your campus in a distraction-free room of your choice. The researcher will conduct these interviews over the course of one month separated by at least one week in between. You will be asked about your early musical experiences, your families' musical participation, your beliefs about teaching, and about post-secondary band participation.

In addition, the researcher will observe your teaching on several occasions, at your convenience, to provide context for the interview. Your teaching will not be evaluated in any way. The observations will enable the researcher to get a glimpse of your rapport with students, how your beliefs may be evident in your everyday practice, and provide needed background information that may inform the interview questions. The field notes will be coded to look for emerging themes and related to relevant literature on the subject.

Finally, you will be asked to do a short writing activity that will be another way to explore your beliefs about teaching and post-secondary band participation.

The total time commitment for you to participate in this study will be approximately 5 hours.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your participation in this project. Each participant will be given a pseudonym by the principal investigator. This pseudonym will appear on all written materials. The list pairing the participant's name to the assigned pseudonym will be kept separate from all research materials and will be available only to the principal investigator. Confidentiality will be maintained within legal limits.

#### **RISKS/DISCOMFORTS**

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this study.

#### **BENEFITS**

While you will not directly benefit from participation, your participation may help investigators better understand teachers' beliefs about post-secondary band participation and ways in which those show up in preparation and daily practice. This information will add to the body of research and may help high school and college band directors collaborate on ways to increase collegiate and post-secondary band participation.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

Participation in this project is voluntary and the only alternative to this project is non-participation.

**PUBLICATION STATEMENT**

The results of this study may be published in scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations.

**AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF VIDEOTAPES**

If you consent to take part in this study, you agree to be videotaped and agree that those videotapes may be used in publications or presentations. If you elect not to be videotaped then you will be unable to participate in this study, as the only alternative is non-participation.

I agree to be videotaped during the interview.

I agree that the videotape can be used in publication/presentations.

I do not agree that the videotape can be used in publication/presentations.

I do not agree to be videotaped during the interview.

**SUBJECT RIGHTS**

1. I understand that informed consent is required of all persons participating in this project.
2. I have been told that I may refuse to participate or to stop my participation in this project at any time before or during the project. I may also refuse to answer any question.
3. Any risks and/or discomforts have been explained to me, as have any potential benefits.
4. I understand the protections in place to safeguard any personally identifiable information related to my participation.
5. I understand that, if I have any questions, I may contact Michael Staub at [msstaub@uh.edu](mailto:msstaub@uh.edu). I may also contact Dr. Julie Derges, faculty sponsor, at 713-743-4547 or [jdderges@uh.edu](mailto:jdderges@uh.edu).

6. Any questions regarding my rights as a research subject may be addressed to the University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (713-743-9204). All research projects that are carried out by Investigators at the University of Houston are governed by requirements of the University and the federal government.

### **SIGNATURES**

***I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions to my satisfaction. I give my consent to participate in this study, and have been provided with a copy of this form for my records and in case I have questions as the research progresses.***

Study Subject (print name): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Study Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***I have read this form to the subject and/or the subject has read this form. An explanation of the research was provided and questions from the subject were solicited and answered to the subject's satisfaction. In my judgment, the subject has demonstrated comprehension of the information.***

Principal Investigator (print name and title): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix C: Interview Questions**

### **Teacher Interview 1 - Life History (Grand Tour Questions)**

How did your musical participation begin and what are some of your first memories of personal musical participation?

Describe the musical environment in your home as a child.

What memories or experiences, if any, do you have of family members or friends participating in instrumental music as adults?

What experiences are most memorable about your time as a band student?

What music teacher was most influential to you?

Why did you decide to continue to play after high school?

What attracted you to a career as a band director?

## **Teacher Interview 2 – Contemporary Experience**

What is your philosophy of music education?

What are your core beliefs about teaching band?

What impact, if any do those beliefs have on your planning on a daily/weekly/long-term basis?

What does a typical day in the life of your classroom look like?

What other influences affect your decisions about daily activities and curricular (literature) choices?

What goals do you have for your students both short and long term?

What is your ultimate goal for one of your band students upon graduation?

### **Teacher Interview 3 – Reflection on Meaning**

What does it mean to you to be in the position to have a lifelong impact on these students' musical lives?

How do you explain your teaching beliefs based on your musical experiences throughout your life?

What has influenced your philosophy of teaching band?

What do you want your students to know/remember when they leave your classroom?

How do you want your students to look back on their time in your band room?