2016

Perceptions of musical self-beliefs among high school band students and directors in Arkansas that participate in competitive music performance events

Maggio, Peter Anthony

http://hdl.handle.net/2144/14572

Boston University
BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Dissertation

PERCEPTIONS OF MUSICAL SELF-BELIEFS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL BAND STUDENTS AND DIRECTORS IN ARKANSAS THAT PARTICIPATE IN COMPETITIVE MUSIC PERFORMANCE EVENTS

by

PETER ANTHONY MAGGIO
B.M., Henderson State University, 2005
M.S.E., Henderson State University, 2008

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
2016
Approved by

First Reader
Kinh T. Vu, Ph.D.
Lecturer in Music, Music Education

Second Reader
Karin Hendricks, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Music, Music Education

Third Reader
Andrew Goodrich, D.M.A.
Assistant Professor of Music, Music Education
Dedication

This document is dedicated to my beautiful wife, Amanda, for without her constant support and reassurance, none of this would have been possible.

To my parents, Mike and Lori, for supporting my musical endeavors and teaching me the value and importance of a college education.

And finally, to my grandmother, Joanne Stolp, who played the French horn and dreamed of earning a college degree in music: This is for you, with all of my love.
Acknowledgements

It is virtually impossible to remember all of those individuals who supported and helped me through this process, but here it goes:

First, I would like to acknowledge all of my participants and their directors, for without their help and honesty, I would not have been able to complete this document.

Second, to my committee members Drs. Kinh T. Vu, Karin Hendricks, and Andrew Goodrich: Your guidance and support have been paramount to the completion of this project; my heartfelt thanks to all of you for taking the time to read and comment on my numerous drafts and for guiding my research.

Finally, to my dear friend, Barry Kohr, Sr.: If you had not pushed me to continue this process, I don’t know if I would have ever seen its completion. Thank you for your guidance, friendship, and swift kick in the rear end.
PERCEPTIONS OF MUSICAL SELF-BELIEFS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL BAND STUDENTS AND DIRECTORS IN ARKANSAS THAT PARTICIPATE IN COMPETITIVE MUSIC PERFORMANCE EVENTS

PETER ANTHONY MAGGIO

Boston University College of Fine Arts, 2016

Major Professor: Kinh T. Vu, Ph.D., Lecturer in Music, Music Education

ABSTRACT

Musical ensembles’ attendance at competitive music performance events (CMPEs) is a mainstream characteristic of the music education paradigm in many states. One problem with this current system is that we do not know the extent to which the results of these events impact the musical self-beliefs of the individual participants and those of their ensemble as a group.

A total of ninety-one students and three directors from three different high school band programs in Arkansas participated in this research. The purpose of this study was to (a) examine students’ perceptions of their musical self-beliefs as related to their ensemble’s ratings at competitive music performance events (CMPEs), (b) gain clarity into how the educational ideology of the director might affect the self-efficacy beliefs of his or her students, and (c) open a dialogue into potential discovery of the sources of group efficacy beliefs in a band setting as related to individual self-efficacy beliefs. More specifically, I sought to discover students’ and directors’ perceptions of the results of CMPEs through their own words and experiences in order to offer suggestions for music educators to benefit them and their students when they participate in CMPEs. I used a
holistic, multiple case study design as detailed by Yin (2014).

Analysis of participant statements about their experiences at and ensemble results from CMPEs yielded a greater understanding into how these particular participants from Arkansas view CMPE results in terms of their overall musical self-beliefs. Furthermore, through the analysis of data, I was able to posit the Framework for Understanding the Formation of Group Efficacy Beliefs of High School Band Students which included three criteria: (a) Unity, (b) Cognizance of Function, and (c) Introspection.

In addition to the proposed framework, findings suggest that band directors may be able to foster positive efficacy beliefs in their students and their ensembles by (a) framing the CMPE as a part of the learning process, not a means to an end; (b) encouraging students to set and pursue their own personal musical goals; (c) develop a culture within their ensemble of shared values, beliefs, and goals, awareness of each individual’s role in the performance; and (d) foster the ability for individual students to reflect and improve their own performances for the benefit of the group.
Table of Contents

Dedication iv
Acknowledgements v
Abstract vi
Table of Contents viii
List of Abbreviations xiii

Chapter 1: ESEA and Assessment in Education 1
  Overview of Competitive Music Performance Events in Arkansas 6
  Theoretical Framework 9
  Statement of the Problem 10
  Purpose of the Study 11
  Rationale for the Study 11
  Significance of the Study 12
  Case Study Questions 13
  Propositions 14
  Orientation of the Study 14
  Summary 15

Chapter 2: Review of Literature 16
  Utility of Educational Assessment 18
  Competition and Music Education 19
  Ensemble Assessment and Music Program Efficacy 22
  Measuring Musical Achievement 24
Rubrics

Human Fallibility Factor

A Burgeoning Issue

Student Motivation

Extrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic Motivation

Passion

Self-Efficacy Theory

Background

Efficacy Beliefs in Music

Achievement Goal Theory (AGT)

Mastery Goals

Performance Goals

Performance-Approach Goals

Performance-Avoidance Goals

AGT and Academic Achievement

AGT and Music Education

Group Efficacy Theory

Summary

Chapter 3: Method

Rationale for Case Study Design

Design of the Study
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study Questions</th>
<th>60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Propositions</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units of Analysis</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection Procedures</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Survey Instrument</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Focus Group Participants</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director Interviews</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Privacy and Confidentiality</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis Procedures</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic for Linking Data to the Propositions</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for Interpretation and Issues of Validity</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter 4: Sunny Brook High School**  
73

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Sunny Brook Pride</th>
<th>74</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet Jane</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings for Sunny Brook High School</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter 5: Rolling Hills High School**  
91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Pride of Rolling Hills</th>
<th>93</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet Wesley</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings for Rolling Hills High School</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: ASBOA Marching Assessment Rubric</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: ASBOA Concert Assessment Rubric</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C: IRB Waiver of Written Parental Consent</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D: Student Survey Instrument</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E: Focus Group Interview Protocol</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix F: Director Interview Protocol</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Vitae</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Figures

Figure 1: Diagram of the framework for understanding the formation of group efficacy beliefs in high school bands. 149
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABA</td>
<td>Arkansas Bandmasters’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADE</td>
<td>Arkansas Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGT</td>
<td>Achievement Goal Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASBOA</td>
<td>Arkansas School Band and Orchestra Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMPE</td>
<td>Competitive Music Performance Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESEA</td>
<td>Elementary and Secondary Education Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESSA</td>
<td>Every Student Succeeds Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB</td>
<td>Institutional Review Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCLB</td>
<td>No Child Left Behind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1: ESEA and Assessment in Education

I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged and a wood, and I –

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

- Robert Frost

The adoption of Public Law 107-110 on January 8, 2002, also known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), required schools and teachers to more rigorously assess students on at least an annual basis. It was not new legislation, but rather, Congress’ reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The original legislation in 1965 was one of the most comprehensive education bills ever passed by President Lyndon B. Johnson and the 89th United States Congress as part of the administration’s Great Society movement and was a concerted effort to drastically reduce the number of families living in poverty (Osborne, 1965; Thomas & Brady, 2005); however, the reauthorization in 2002 came with some steep student assessment requirements for schools. Essentially, beginning in 2002, schools had to earn their Federal ESEA funds by meeting or exceeding yearly standards in math and literacy or, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Should schools fail to meet their AYP, they risked loss of Federal funding (Thomas & Brady, 2005). NCLB has since undergone two more revisions, most recently in 2015 as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). As of the
publication of this dissertation, the ramifications of ESSA are not yet known.

To date, a majority of U.S. states have not yet required public school music educators to submit their students to annual rigorous formal examinations, similar to their colleagues who teach courses in math and literacy, because the requirements of NCLB have not yet spilled over into the music departments of public schools. This could be because some state music education organizations with a strong ensemble focus already have some semblance of an assessment process in the form of contests and festivals. It appears that music educators in certain areas of the country have been able to convince their administrators that the concert festival ratings an ensemble earns at competitive music performance events (CMPEs) are accurate representations of student musical achievement; therefore, we are beginning to see more and more school administrators place importance on CMPE results.

Critics of NCLB have questioned the pervasive use of standardized assessment as holistic measures of student achievement (Thomas & Brady, 2005). Additionally, some researchers have also suggested that there are some latent negative effects on both students and teachers as a result of such an exhaustive practice (Amrein-Beardsley & Barnett, 2012; Colwell, 2002). While by no means a comprehensive list, the potential consequences for teachers, students, and society that could result from administrative pressure to raise student achievement may be as follows:

1. Unnecessary anxiety and stress thrust upon students as a result of cultural discord and the implicit social and educational hierarchies which result from assessment outcomes (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1994; Friere, 2000).

3. “Teaching to the test,” or in the case of music ensemble performance, selecting music that has the greatest chance of earning the highest rating (Humphreys, 2010).

4. Additionally, music educators may experience increased stress and may be coerced into modifying the instrumental curricula (Barnes & McCashin, 2005).

The perceived poor reputation educational assessment has in social, political, and educational circles notwithstanding, not all educators view assessment as detrimental to student learning expectations. In a recent study examining secondary teachers’ perceptions of assessments, Ndalichanko (2015) found 50.9% of teachers believed that assessment data should guide decisions about teaching and learning. Educators’ interpretation of assessment data is essential to improving planning and practice in the classroom. Additionally, the same study also found that 13.3% of teachers used assessments to help motivate their students. The prevailing thought these teachers had was that students would not be actively engaged in a lesson if they thought they would not be tested on the subject matter.

Regardless of one’s stance on assessment in public education, the practice of assessing students is not an exact science; flaws of the practice manifest themselves in both random and systematic errors. The culpability of poor assessment results lies in one’s failure to acknowledge the existence of such errors in the assessment process and
account for them when analyzing the data. Amrein-Beardsley and Barnett (2012) assert that by failing to recognize fallibilities and working with them when interpreting test score data, “[evaluators] are contributing to the victimization of schools and teachers alike” (p. 372).

In an authoritative text on self-efficacy theory, Bandura (1997) contrasted the public’s preference to measuring academic achievement with that of teachers. He asserted that, while teachers preferred a more “subjective” measurement system, the public at large desired a more “objective” approach (p. 244). Therefore, the requirements that have been placed on teachers as a result of such objective requirements could have negatively affected their self-efficacy beliefs. The author’s argument lends credence to the notion that a focus on competitive performance perhaps emerged in music education as a result of the public’s desire for a more criterion-referenced style of measurement in competitive performance scenarios; however, it may still be unknown to scholars what effect such a demand has on both the efficacy beliefs of the students, of the music educators, and of the ensembles.

Moreover, Bourdieu and Passeron (1994) asserted that not only is an assessment of student knowledge one of the most precise indicators of what a culture values, it is also a political ploy that is used to dominate the educational system by forcing an organization’s students to submit and adhere to rigorous deadlines, fostering anxiety among students regarding the unpredictability of assessment results, and providing evidence of “a social definition of knowledge and the way to show it” (p. 142). Bourdieu and Passeron asserted that assessment is “one of the most efficacious tools for the
enterprise of inculcating the dominant culture and the value of that culture” (p. 142). Humphreys (2010) concurred, “Some see education as being not about what children need, but instead about the perceived needs of society” (p. 131). Therefore, one could conclude that assessment exists as a means to pacify the dominant social population’s desire to track, evaluate, and, if necessary, alter what students are supposed to learn in school.

These authors’ comments on the sociological issues that are inherent to educational assessments are indicative of a dichotomy that exists in public education today: Society spends so much time focusing on the test that it fails to recognize the needs of the individual students. In other words, remediation for students who do not meet their learning expectations (much of which does not focus on the students’ deficiencies or barriers to learning), labeling of schools that are not meeting expectations as “failing” in the press, and funding cuts for schools that are not meeting standards all trump the students’ beliefs in their ability to learn the material. Examination and emphasis are placed on the results themselves instead of elevating the students’ self-efficacy beliefs in learning and applying the subject material. Moreover, Apple (2003) asserted that the cultural need to assess student learning is the direct result of the constituency’s “fundamental mistrust of public schools” and consequently, the need to make our education system “more efficient and competitive” (p. 3).

These social scholars have issued an indictment on the current system of education and its structure. They assert that the very act of classifying students based upon whether or not they have attained learning objectives in math and literacy and then
punishing the schools that fail to meet AYP by revoking essential funding has created a struggle among the social classes and pushed our education system to the brink of disaster. While President Johnson’s intent of ESEA was to reduce the number of families living in poverty in the United States by substantially increasing the Federal funding of education, subsequent administrations, in an effort to continue educational reform, have begun using the results of these assessments as a litmus test to determine which schools, which teachers, and ultimately, which students receive Federal monetary aid.

The same could be said of competitive music performance events. While competition in and of itself can be healthy, educational, and even essential to the growth and development of children, our society’s pandemic desire to examine, measure, and compare various subjects to other schools and dismiss those that do not measure up has permeated into our music programs. If school districts are fortunate enough to have a music program, its director may be required to participate in the state’s music performance assessments and most athletic and community events. Bands get ranked and rated by judges at performance assessments; community members compare the community’s bands from the area schools and form a ranking of their own. Similar to Apple (2003), I would argue that the practice of music education most likely gets lost in the need to assess via competitive scenarios.

**Overview of Competitive Music Performance Events in Arkansas**

When the rigorous examination requirements of NCLB were presented to the public schools in 2002, it seemed to be a logical step for music educators in Arkansas to include their results at CMPEs (known in the NCLB vernacular as “performance
assessments”) as measurements of their students’ success in the music classroom. After all, music ensembles in the state had already been competing at concert and marching festivals for a number of years; if music educators volunteered these results as a portion of their evaluations, they could help assuage the potential discussion of a state-wide assessment in music. As a result, music educators in Arkansas began to offer their ensemble’s ratings at CMPEs as part of their justification to their administrators of student achievement in the music program.

CMPEs in Arkansas occur year-round on a voluntary basis. Similar to athletics, bands in Arkansas have seasons: Marching season occurs between the months of August and November, which coincides with the American football athletic season, and concert season includes the months of December to May. Various contests and assessments are offered during each respective season. While there is only one region marching assessment and one region concert assessment offered annually by the Arkansas School Band and Orchestra Association (ASBOA), any band, school, or organization can offer marching or concert invitational festivals at any point during the school year and during their respective seasons. The plethora of offerings during the school year means that bands can go to as few or as many contests as they desire (or none at all, but this is rare). Furthermore, bands and orchestras are not required to participate in the region assessments offered by ASBOA, but through conversations with other colleagues, it is rumored throughout music education circles in the state that because of the perceived connection to other state standardized assessments, most are encouraged by their administrators to do so.
Standards of musical performance achievement in Arkansas. As stated in the ASBOA Constitution and By-Laws, Article VIII, Section C, Number 1, bands and orchestras are rated according to the following “standards:’’

The rating system of adjudication will be used for all region and state assessments, with five honor ratings. Each competing soloists [sic], ensemble or organization shall be assigned a rating designating the excellence of its performance, as follows:

(a) DIVISION I - (Superior) - Represents the finest conceivable performance for the event and the class of participants being judged, worthy of the distinction of being recognized as being among the very best.

(b) DIVISION II - (Excellent) - Reflects an unusual performance in many respects, but not worthy of the highest rating due to minor defects, yet is a performance of distinctive quality.

(c) DIVISION III - (Good) - A good performance but one that is not outstanding. The performance shows accomplishment and marked promise, but is lacking in one or more essential qualities.

(d) DIVISION IV - (Fair) - A performance that shows some obvious weaknesses. These may reflect obvious weaknesses in complete sections of the ensemble or lack of rehearsal time.

(e) DIVISION V - (Poor) - A performance which reveals much room for improvement. The director should carefully check his/her methods of instruction.

(ASBOA Constitution and By-Laws, VIII.C.1, p. 8)
ASBOA has also published rubrics that the adjudicators are required to use for both marching and concert assessments. Those rubrics can be found in Appendices A and B, respectively.

*Adjudicator selection process in Arkansas.* As time passed, however, some directors in various regions around the state began to accuse one another of selecting judges that would confer a biased rating on their ensembles in an effort to bolster their ensembles’ ratings at CMPEs. Therefore, in 2011, the members of ASBOA voted to allow one person, the Executive Secretary of ASBOA, to select the judges for every state-sponsored CMPE in each of the nine regions in the state (ASBOA Constitution and By-Laws, VIII.A.1, p. 8). This action was thought to enable a more uniform assignment of adjudicators to each of the CMPEs that were occurring across the state.

In addition, the membership of ASBOA also voted to create an adjudicator training course to allow the opportunity for any director to apply to be on the list of approved adjudicators after they have completed five years of teaching bands in Arkansas public schools. However, while many directors successfully completed training, the adjudication panels around the state consistently included the same individuals, one of whom was asked to judge in two different regions in the same year. These practices have thus spawned a fantastic debate in the state about the appropriateness of these events and the ethical issues with how the adjudicators are selected for each of the CMPEs throughout Arkansas.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study consists of the analysis of data through
the lenses of self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977) and group efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977, 1997, 2000). In summation, the theory of self-efficacy proposes that the quality of beliefs one has in oneself to accomplish a task-specific goal or objective are the best predictors of whether or not those objectives will be accomplished. Similarly, group efficacy theory is a theoretical construct that surmises that, similar to the beliefs of an individual, the collective beliefs of a group can predict how effective that group will be at accomplishing its mutual goals. Additionally, some findings have shown that by improving the efficacy beliefs of the individual, the efficacy beliefs of the entire group can be increased as well (Gibson, 2001; Gibson & Earley, 2007).

**Statement of the Problem**

There appears to be a disconnect between theory and practice. On the one hand, self-efficacy theory (e.g., Bandura, 1977) dictates that essentially, success on a task-specific objective (such as earning a chair into the all-region band) will foster the belief in oneself that the same task could be repeated again with a similar outcome. The same could be said of task-specific objectives for a group of individuals, such as a musical ensemble, as suggested by group efficacy theory (e.g., Bandura, 2000). On the other hand is a practice of music education in the State of Arkansas which appears to all but disregard many of the ideas the authors of these theoretical constructs suggest.

The problem for this study lies in the notion that (a) there is no standard purpose for an ensemble’s participation at CMPEs in Arkansas: Some directors use the results as feedback to help improve their ensembles while other use the ratings as a way to compare their band’s abilities to those of their peers’; (b) assessing individual students on the
ensemble’s results earned at a CMPE may not be an accurate measurement of individual musical aptitude; and (c) we do not yet know how the ramifications brought forth by how students perceive their own musical abilities based upon the results their ensemble earns at a CMPE.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to (a) examine students’ perceptions of their musical self-beliefs as related to their ensemble’s ratings at competitive music performance events (CMPEs), (b) gain clarity into how the educational ideology of the director might affect the self-efficacy beliefs of his or her students, and (c) open a dialogue into potential discovery of the sources of group efficacy beliefs in a band setting as related to individual self-efficacy beliefs.

**Rationale for the Study**

Several scholars have been critical of the social and political shortcomings of the modern American education system, with some calling into question the validity and reliability of high-stakes examinations (Amrein-Beardsley & Barnett, 2012; Colwell, 2002), and others seeking to improve the designs of those examinations through empirical validation and reliability studies (Brown & Wilson, 2011; National Research Council, 2001).

Consequently, scholars in the field of music education have taken note of these perceived deficiencies in secondary education, and in an effort to improve assessment in the field, they have attempted to establish a standardization of performance characteristics for evaluation (Bergee, 1995; Johnson & Geringer, 2007; Kinney, 2009);
empirically validate consistency in adjudicator reliability (Hash, 2012); and design and pilot-test more valid and reliable ensemble evaluation tools as compared to other common measurement instruments (Norris & Borst, 2007; Saunders & Holahan, 1997; Smith & Barnes, 2007). However, although their findings add an important perspective into the continued improvement in musical assessment, these studies do not examine the impact of assessments on the self-efficacy beliefs of the individual band members and how the individual self-efficacy beliefs affect the group efficacy of the band as a cohesive performance unit.

In addition to finding variances between “gender, orchestra placement, instrument group, and relative number of same-school peers” (p. ii) at an orchestra festival, a study by Hendricks (2009) suggested that individual students’ self-efficacy beliefs were positively affected by feedback from the director and positive interactions with other students. While this study asked questions about how participants’ ensembles’ ratings at CMPEs affected their individual musical self-beliefs as a result of their efforts, I sought to add to the body of scholarly literature by postulating a framework regarding how these perceptions of self-belief may tie into the beliefs of the group as an ensemble.

**Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because it (a) focuses on CMPEs in the band ensemble as a domain for self-efficacy research, (b) attempts to articulate and define a perceived relationship between the efficacy beliefs of the individual students and those of the group, and (c) offers a framework for understanding the formation of group efficacy beliefs in band ensembles. Assessment research in the field of music education has mainly been
focused on the standardization of assessment criteria (Bergee, 1995; Johnson & Geringer, 2007; Kinney, 2009), adjudicator reliability (Hash, 2012), and the validity and reliability of performance evaluation tools (Norris & Borst, 2007; Saunders & Holahan, 1997; Smith & Barnes, 2007).

Yet, there are very few studies that examine how the assessment process affects the self-efficacy beliefs of the individual musicians; many recent studies that offer this line of inquiry focus on gender (Hendricks, 2014), examine other assessment procedures in performance settings, (Hewitt, 2015; Miksza, 2015), or use other musical ensembles other than the band as the unit of analysis (Hendricks, 2009). Additionally, there are even fewer studies that focus on group efficacy in the wind ensemble setting (Matthews & Kitsantas, 2007, 2013; Schmidt, 2007), and no theoretical framework exists that codifies the relationship between the efficacy beliefs of the self and those of the group as offered by Bandura (1997, 2000) in that genre.

**Case Study Questions**

I addressed the following research questions regarding the effects of CMPEs on individual self-efficacy beliefs and group efficacy beliefs in this study. Within each participating ensemble:

1. What are students’ perceptions about their musical self-beliefs as related to their ensemble’s ratings at competitive music performance events?
2. How are the musical self-beliefs of the students and the educational ideology of their director related?
3. How are the students’ perceptions of their musical self-beliefs related to the efficacy beliefs of their ensemble as a group of performers?

**Propositions**

This study makes the following propositions with respect to the case study questions: (a) Music performance event results can alter the participants’ perceptions of their musical self-beliefs. (b) In band ensembles, individuals’ self-efficacy beliefs and the efficacy beliefs of the ensemble as a whole are intertwined.

**Orientation of the Study**

This study is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction to the research inquiry and includes background information, rationale, purpose, case study propositions, and the research questions. Chapter Two is a literature review of the pertinent research available to inform this study. Those areas include a background of assessment practices in music education, specifically competitive music performance events, and current research on self-efficacy theory, group efficacy theory, and goal theory as it relates to assessment practices in both general education and music education. The third chapter describes the qualitative methods used in this study using procedures adapted from Yin (2014) pertinent to holistic case study designs.

In Chapters Four, Five, and Six I present the data collected through student questionnaires, director interviews, and student focus group interviews from each of the three participating high school bands, respectively, and describes the emergent themes present through the analysis of those data. In Chapter Seven I present a cross-case analysis of the emergent themes that were presented in the previous three chapters and I
offer a new theoretical construct for describing the relationship between the self-efficacy beliefs of the individual members of a high school band and how they affect the efficacy beliefs of the ensemble as a group. This study concludes with Chapter Eight in which I offer suggestions to how these findings may help music educators.

Summary

Critics of the NCLB legislation have objected to strenuous formal examinations, because we do not fully understand the effects such situations can have on the students. However, there is credible research that also suggests that assessments are a valuable tool for educators because they can provide appropriate feedback that can be used to improve student achievement. In this research I use a multiple case study approach to observe how the results of competitive music performance events (CMPEs) affect participants’ self-efficacy beliefs and how those beliefs may interact with the efficacy beliefs of the ensemble as a whole group. This study is significant because it (a) focuses on CMPEs in the band ensemble as a domain for self-efficacy research, (b) attempts to articulate and define a perceived relationship between the efficacy beliefs of the individual students and those of the group, and (c) offers a framework for understanding the formation of group efficacy beliefs in band ensembles.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

When I heard the learn’d astronomer,

When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,

When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,

When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,

How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,

Till rising and gliding out I wander’d off by myself,

In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,

Look’d up in perfect silence at the stars.

- Walt Whitman

At a recent meeting of the International Symposium for Assessment in Music Education (ISAME), one presenter declared, “We value what we assess” (Haaf, 2015). Under NCLB and its subsequent reauthorization as the Every Student Succeeds Act in December of 2015, math and literacy remain the focus for schools and academic achievement because the Federal government values the extent to which its citizens can read, write, and perform arithmetic. In this chapter I focus on assessment in music education, specifically, competitive music performance events (CMPE) because of their use throughout the United States as a valued practice for evaluating students of music by some stakeholders in music education.
I first argue that music educators have allowed their ensembles’ performances to be assessed by panels of fellow music educators in the hopes that their success would continue to demonstrate that public school music education is a valuable practice to both the culture of the school district and community. These performances are usually veiled under the guise of competitive music performance events. Second, I offer background on how music programs’ efficacy may be measured by other types of musical assessment, particularly by assessing student musical growth instead of through the one-shot group performance events offered through CMPEs. Third, I suggest through a review of literature that, if we are to continue measuring our students’ musical abilities, we must set consistent standards by which our students will be measured so as to reduce the human fallibility factor during live CMPEs.

Fourth, when we examine student experiences at CMPEs through the source of enactive mastery as suggested by Bandura’s (1977) self-efficacy theory, we can surmise that students who experience success on their instruments also experience an increase in their confidence that they can achieve continued success as performers. Finally, the cooperative nature of the musical performance activity in an ensemble setting requires an examination into the efficacy beliefs of the group as a whole, especially those that may affect the quality of the ensemble’s performance. In this chapter, I outline studies that demonstrate the use of assessment and competition in music and education, and also discuss how the theoretical framework of self-efficacy and its sources might relate to this phenomenon in music education.
Utility of Educational Assessment

Many scholars concur that assessment has an appropriate place in the classroom. When used properly, the data generated from these assessments may give teachers and administrators useful information to help guide teaching and learning objectives (Ndalichanko, 2015; Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, J., & Chappuis, S., 2004; Weinstein, 1983) and keep parents informed of what students are learning in the classroom (Conway & Jeffers, 2004). Findings also suggested that student effort is paramount during the assessment process. Additionally, students perceived the classroom environment, positive interpersonal relationships with peers, and the appropriateness of learning objectives as factors in achieving gains in learning, while “friction, apathy, and disorganization” (Weinstein, 1983, p. 300) were cited as having a negative effect on student learning. The author also noted that students form their perceptions of personal ability based on feedback from teachers and comparisons with peers. These findings have also been corroborated with other literature in group efficacy theory in that (a) the cohesiveness of the group is essential to the group achieving its goals and objectives and (b) positive relationships with peers have been shown to promote both individual and group effectiveness (Bandura, 2000, 2012; Gibson, 2001; Gibson & Earley, 2007).

Another study showed that parents of students enrolled in instrumental music classes had a favorable view of the use of assessment in the music classroom. Conway and Jeffers (2004) surveyed and interviewed beginning instrumental music students, their parents, and their teacher regarding the use of an explicitly-detailed assessment process in the classroom. The researchers conceded that the focus-group interview process for the
students did not yield significant results to be included in the analysis; they hypothesized that the results were due to the relatively young age of the students, and they had no frame of reference for which to compare their experience in the beginning band ensemble. However, the study also revealed that the parents of instrumental music students welcome detailed and specific feedback regarding their students’ musical progress, and the data gave valuable insight to the teacher about the merit of careful, deliberate assessment in music.

**Competition and Music Education**

It is possible that a place for music education in public schooling has been secured through competitive music performance events. In a survey of band directors and principals (N = 421), Rogers (1985) found statistically significant (p > .05) differences between band directors’ and principals’ emphasis on musical contests. Principals tended to place more emphasis on the outcomes of the contests than the directors did, but the directors saw the potential educational value of contest participation as contextualized by increases in student motivation and positive public relations. The emphasis on competitive outcomes appeared to motivate students to work harder to increase their ensemble’s status as compared with their peers, while the public began to demonstrate more pride and ownership of their school’s band program as a result of such competitive outcomes.

A sole emphasis on public relations as a primary concentration in a school music program (as opposed to the musical benefits of such a program) may, however, be problematic. Directors who care more about the public’s perception of their performing
ensembles rather than the learning taking place during their rehearsal time are likely to prioritize performance at these events over ensuring all of their students are learning the fundamentals of music and appropriate performance techniques on their instruments. Furthermore, scores and rankings do not offer directors or the public at large a complete picture of the quality of their school music program. Colwell (2002) noted that “ratings at contests and festivals and student satisfaction have been primary assessment indicators in music; [however,] these do not reveal current program strengths and weaknesses and provide only partial answers in any assessment endeavor” (p. 1130).

How much competition is too much? Do we lose our focus on the music as we strive to achieve a score or rank? Miller (1994) suggested that competition in music should be used as a tool and not merely for the sake of competing for a subjective score. According to this author’s argument, music educators should use the competitive nature of music performance events to objectively assess how proficient their students are on their instruments; the rank or score is superfluous. Moreover, Miller further postulated that the very essence of competition in music has stifled the creativity of the artist: “Creativity and individualism are the opposite of competition because the very nature of creativity is to originate something new that defies standardization” (p. 32). Essentially, this suggests that the very act of attempting to evaluate a performance according to a measurable standard is disingenuous to the art of creative musical performance. The author asserted that musical performance should be about the student experience, and not about director ego or school prominence.

Perhaps because of a fear of not earning top ratings, many directors have come to
the point where they dictate to students every musical nuance during rehearsal—
“crescendo here, play fortissimo there, bring out this note here” —in an effort to achieve
high honors and at the expense of labeling the musical performers to winners and losers.
Allsup and Benedict (2008) posited that directors’ and administrators’ compulsion to
continuously evaluate and compare their school ensembles’ performances to their
contemporaries fostered a disconnect between creativity, inspiration, and education in the
classroom. These authors further asserted that the totalitarian style of leadership and
teaching engendered a culture of fear and intimidation in the rehearsal hall that did not
contribute to a shared musical experience:

Issues of control are always connected with fear, and fear [we] contend is
unexamined and out of balance within the band tradition. Fear permeates our
college wind ensembles and high school auditions; it frames the private studio,
the juries we require, and those high-stakes, end-of-year recitals. First chair
winners and last chair losers, numerical ratings, good years and bad years,
statewide rankings: Where is education in this compendium? What educational
function—beyond winning and losing—do these hierarchies and categories serve?
As leaders in this field, we need to accept that fear is our responsibility and
something we can change. (Allsup & Benedict, 2008, p. 164)

I assert that music educators have somewhat blindly followed their
contemporaries in participating in competitive performance events without critically
examining the perceived effects those results may have on their students and at times,
themselves as ensemble directors. Related to Allsup and Benedict’s (2008) critique of
competition, perhaps out of fear of disappointing their stakeholders or themselves, many music students and their directors seem to submit themselves to evaluation in order to verify the music program’s efficacy as compared to others. However, competition in and of itself is not an enemy of musical ensembles; rather, it is the emphasis the director places on the results of that competitive performance event. When the score or rank becomes the only achievement that is important to an ensemble, the ensemble’s director may have lost sight of how well their students are learning the process of making music.

**Ensemble Assessment and Music Program Efficacy**

Evaluation of ensemble performances is important for the health and sustained growth of music programs. In fact, several authors commented on the role that ensemble assessment plays in evaluating a music education program. Cooper (2004) suggested that it is necessary for band directors to evaluate their ensembles’ musical performance in order to isolate areas that are problematic (i.e., pitch, rhythm, tone, balance, blend, etc.) and work toward their resolution. Moreover, the author concurred with Colwell (2002) that a more longitudinal and systemic approach to evaluating an entire musical program, usually performed by the director and his or her staff at regular intervals throughout the school year, is more efficacious than a one-shot competitive event in promoting continuous and sustained student musical achievement. Amrein-Beardsley and Barnett (2012) agreed that “a more holistic system of measurement that provides educators with practical, formative and improved feedback” (p. 376) was a more reliable approach to assessment because the evaluator observes a more complete picture of how the students are learning across time.
Other scholars in music education have also commented that a longitudinal approach to assessment may have greater impact on the motivation of music students than sporadic types of assessment such as chair tests and music performance events. Maehr, Pintrich, and Linnenbrink (2002) mentioned that, in terms of continued student motivation, music educators should emphasize musical growth instead of “overall abilities” (p. 365). Furthermore, in what has evolved from Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), “dynamic assessment” (as cited in Miller, 2011, p. 195) is a construct of assessment that suggests educators measure and evaluate students and their knowledge periodically across time rather than use a solitary evaluation model.

While not directly related to the field of music education, the construct of dynamic assessment may help music directors by offering a more longitudinal approach to assessing their students. Moreover, Maehr, et al. (2002) noted that “the proper evaluation tool can influence students’ interest in the activity as well as their own musical goals” (p. 365). Therefore, the frequency of assessment and the evaluation instrument are both critical to promoting students’ individual musical achievement as well as their continued participation in the ensemble.

The ability for students to evaluate their own performances without input from others may also be essential to helping students cope with an undesired score or rating at a music performance event. In fact, the idea of having students evaluate their own progress in an effort to measure both pedagogical efficacy and help boost students’ agency beliefs is an approach that many music educators currently utilize as a method of assessment in music education. Miksza (2015) found that music students who were given
opportunities to regulate their own practice sessions, set their own goals, and evaluate their own performances made significantly greater gains in achievement than those who merely received instruction by watching a video of expert performers and attempting to emulate their performance techniques. While the study was limited to sight-reading performance only, further research into this method of assessment using other performance media such as instrument-specific etudes or even wind or string ensemble literature could potentially add a significant body of research into methods of music performance assessment.

**Measuring Musical Achievement**

Having standards by which music educators can evaluate their students’ performance makes it possible to offer musicians relatively unbiased feedback as to their level of musical achievement. This may particularly be the case when those standards are consistent between music educators and adjudicators throughout the assessment process (McPherson & Shubert, 2004). Bandura (1997) argued that people could not measure their effectiveness or capability in a given activity without an agreed-upon standard with which to compare their performance. Because of the potential effects on the individual students’ self-efficacy beliefs and those of the group as a whole, it is vital that adjudicators and the ensemble’s director know, understand, and implement consistent standards throughout the ensemble assessment process.

Some scholars have noted that the measurement moniker itself serves no useful purpose until a population assigns a label that signifies its importance. Amrein-Beardsley and Barnett (2012) stated, “measurements function much more like language—they are
essentially arbitrary designations that have no inherent value” (p. 370). In terms of music performance events, the results themselves are not inherently important; rather, it is the value that the stakeholders place on those results that can become problematic for students and directors.

This seemingly arbitrary designation can appear to the students and directors to be very subjective, especially when the panel of adjudicators do not use consistent standards for evaluation or fail to fully explicate their reasoning to the participants at these music performance events. Although numerous studies have indicated that the reliability between adjudicators can be measured and is usually consistent across time (Hash, 2012; Kinney, 2009; Saunders & Holahan, 1997), numerous variables, such as adjudicator experience, the validity and reliability of the assessment tool, the experience or ability level of the performing organization, and the performance repertoire have the potential of invalidating an ensemble’s rating (McPherson & Schubert, 2004). As such, there may be too many variables adjudicators must attempt to compensate for while they are evaluating an ensemble’s performance.

The formidable task of balancing the human fallibility of the adjudicator with evaluating an ensemble, however, has not deterred scholars from attempting to standardize the criteria for musical performance. Conway and Jeffers (2004) called on music educators to determine what musical performance criteria can and should be assessed in an ensemble setting. Bergee (1995) answered that call and sought to unify the conceptual definitions of performance criteria such as tone quality, intonation, balance, blend, and musical expression; other researchers have tried to tackle the daunting task of
creating rating scales specific to each criterion of evaluation in order to balance adjudicator consistency (Saunders & Holahan, 1997; Smith & Barnes, 2007).

Rubrics

One way that scholars and festival administrators have attempted to empirically standardize performance criteria in an effort to help adjudicators be more consistent in their evaluations is through the use of a rubric. Rubrics have been used in other academic courses to help remove some of the subjectivity from the grading process and give students specific criteria by which they will be evaluated on a particular assignment. A discussion on rubrics is necessary for this study because the current system of ensemble evaluation in Arkansas requires its adjudicators to evaluate ensemble performances according to a rubric (see Appendices A and B).

Colwell (2002) noted that the use of a rubric is quite prevalent throughout secondary education in various other subject areas; however, Colwell is critical of the use of a rubric in music education because it is rarely subjected to pilot-testing in order to verify its validity and reliability. He declared:

Rubric construction in music has not had any rigorous scrutiny and at present is usually an inappropriate evaluation measure. Acceptance in assessment has been based on the power of the descriptions and whether these descriptions appear to differentiate quality in products and tasks. (p. 1135)

In fact, Colwell (2002) warned that a rubric’s “misuse is potentially damaging to the assessment profession” (p. 1129).

In contrast, Saunders and Holahan (1997), found “direct evidence” (p. 270) that
rubrics improve the reliability of the adjudicator. Furthermore, Barry (2010) noted that, although rubrics may be difficult to create, the potential feedback that they offer to students can be quite useful: “A well-written rubric is also quite useful as a way of communicating performance expectations to those individuals charged with judging the performance” (p. 252). Essentially, according to this author, the rubric is a tool that can standardize the performance assessment process, allowing adjudicators to be more accurate in their evaluations, a finding which corroborated with the assertions of Saunders and Holahan (1997) that the use of a rubric in performance assessment increases reliability.

Barry (2010) also offered his own ideas on creating a tool for evaluating musical performances. In the author’s guide for creating a musical assessment instrument, he suggested that adjudicators (a) agree on the dimensions that will be measured in a musical assessment and only use those which are important to measuring the objective; (b) articulate unambiguous descriptions for each of the measurement criteria; (c) pilot test the tool for its utility for adjudicators, clarity for students, validity, and reliability; and (d) make adjustments to the instrument whenever the perceived need arises. The author’s suggestions add merit to the idea that a well-designed musical performance assessment instrument can provide students with appropriate feedback that will help them become better musicians.

Rubric design and employment are not without their own inherent flaws, however. Despite the perceived benefits to employing a rubric in performance evaluations, Amrein-Beardsley and Barnett (2012) and Colwell (2002) agreed that
accuracy and validity in measurement are of paramount importance. Good (2015) asserted that inter-rater reliability is better demonstrated by adjudicator agreement and not the rubric itself. The author suggested that, while developing a rubric for assessment, directors and adjudicators should focus on the clarity of the descriptions of the categories by which each group will be assessed, build a quorum of consensus, and repeat the process until the group reaches 80% agreement. Good (2015) further cautioned that rubrics need to be modified to reflect the age level of students who will be performing, and that there should be at least two adjudicators evaluating each performance to help reduce the appearance of a subjective evaluation.

*Human Fallibility Factor*

No method of musical evaluation can escape the human fallibility factor. In the end, most assessment tools for music performance evaluation must be used by a human being, and as such, the results are prone to imperfection. Nevertheless, this fact has not stopped scholars from trying to quantify adjudicator consistency in utilizing evaluation instruments. For example, Hash (2012) found a “moderately-high level” of inter-rater reliability ($\alpha = .75$) “meaning that individual adjudicators were reliable in how they determined final ratings” (pp. 92–93). Moreover, a finding which indicated a significantly higher level of “internal consistency” ($\alpha = .89$) suggested that the score items comprising the evaluation instrument were also consistent.

Hash (2012), however, did find discrepancies between the participating ensemble’s ability and achievement levels, repertoire selection, and subsequent adjudicator ratings. In addition, he noted that the adjudicators in his study awarded an
inordinate number of Division I and Division II ratings as compared with Divisions III, IV, and V. This finding was problematic and could suggest that the results, although consistent, could have been skewed in that these adjudicators may have awarded some ensembles higher ratings than was reflected in their quality of performance.

Other research into the area of inter-rater reliability of testing instruments has not been as revealing. Using the many facet Rausch model in which a researcher attempts to account for invariances in results, Wesolowski (2015) asserted that inter-rater reliability is invalid if the assessment tool or protocol does not control for leniency and severity in individual rater scoring. This means that a measurement tool or system may not be accurate if it does not account for the subjectivity of each individual adjudicator.

In addition to the issues of reliability and validity of music performance and education assessment, another central problem is the notion that student desire or motivation to achieve or perform well on examinations is a variable that cannot be controlled in the assessment process (Amrein-Beardsley & Barnett, 2012; Brown & Wilson, 2011; Colwell, 2002; Hash, 2012; Saunders & Holahan, 1997; Wasserman, 2001). Essentially, even assessments that have a demonstrated measure of reliability and validity may not accurately represent actual student achievement.

Not all studies examining adjudicator consistency revealed similar findings. Although Hash (2012) found inconsistencies in some data and conceded certain issues in validity in the instruments he studied, Saunders and Holahan (1997) found that judges were consistent in assigning ratings to performing ensembles. Additionally, Kinney (2009) found a relationship between adjudicator training and experience and consistency
in evaluation. In essence, Kinney found that an adjudicator’s number of years of experience as an educator is positively related to the consistency of his or her evaluation of an ensemble.

The variations in the aforementioned studies and the number of potential variables suggest that the human factor plays a significant role in adjudication reliability and validity. This research may indicate a need for contest festival hosts, measurement designers, evaluators, and music educators to attempt to remove as many confounding variables from the assessment process as possible. Additionally, music educators may be able to promote positive student self-efficacy beliefs by thoroughly scrutinizing evaluation tools.

A Burgeoning Issue

With the continuing widespread emphasis on festival and contest ratings as measures of student achievement (Hash, 2012; National Association for Music Education, 2012), it is necessary to call into question the methods used in ensemble adjudication. Although some scholars have made headway developing an assessment tool that is valid and reliable and documenting the inherent issues related to using humans to administer such an instrument (Barry, 2010; Bergee, 1995; Hash, 2012; Kinney, 2009; Norris & Borst, 2007; Saunders & Holahan, 1997; Smith & Barnes, 2007), music education organizations are quite far from implementing an accurate solution. With teachers’ perceived fears about loss of employment (Baker, 2004; Barnes & McCashin, 2005; Burnsed, Hinkle, & King, 1985) and reduced perception of student and teacher capabilities as musicians and educators (Boyle, 1992; Burnsed, et. al, 1985; Conrad,
2003), the consequences of failing to recognize these inconsistencies may be detrimental to the music education profession.

In 2015, the United States Congress included all of the arts, as well as music, as “core” subject areas with the reauthorization of NCLB as the Every Child Achieves Act (National Association for Music Education, 2015). This landmark legislation ensures that all students in the United States will have access to a music education. Given the American government and public’s widespread demand for standardized evidence of student academic achievement, however, I assert that music education’s continued existence in the public school system may be justified by some sort of measurement of musical achievement. Although our profession has made strides in ensuring continued access to music education for all students, the current emphasis on testing in schools (Amrein-Beardsley & Barnett, 2012), coupled with noted inconsistencies in adjudicator rankings for ensemble performance assessments (Hash, 2012; Wesolowski, 2015), suggest that it is necessary to examine this notion of musical evaluation. In this study, I observe how musical evaluation affects students’ musical motivation and self-beliefs and how competitive music performance events affect the group efficacy beliefs of students in ensembles.

**Student Motivation**

Ames (1992) cautioned educators to consider that many assumptions regarding student motivation are rooted in the idea that improvements in student motivation are analogous to measurable changes in assessment scores or total time engaged in the learning process. There is actually little evidence to suggest a relationship between
assessment scores, level of student motivation, or the total amount of instructional time spent in the classroom. Indeed, some researchers have suggested that student motivation is more about the quality of student experience as learners than it is about tangible rewards or consequences (Hancock, 2002; Lind & Miyamoto, 1997; Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005). As music educators, it may be more beneficial to our programs and our students to concentrate on our students’ experience as musicians rather than strictly adhering to a standard of performance.

Researchers in motivation have revealed two distinct types of motivation for students: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Miller, 2011; Ormrod, 2003; Standage, 2012). Moreover, scholars suggested that there must be a balance between extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors. For instance, Kao (2013) found that students who were motivated by a variety of stimuli, both extrinsic and intrinsic, noted a greater utility for testing than those students who were not. According to the author’s data, when administered appropriately and under the correct conditions, examinations can effectively measure student learning when considering students’ motivational characteristics. Kao further suggested that educators work to “reinforce the elements that promote learning while eliminating the byproducts that hinder it” (p. 67). Implications of this research suggest that music educators need to find a variety of ways to motivate their students. For example, if an educator relies strictly on the competitive paradigm (extrinsic) or practice and performing for the sake of music (intrinsic), students may not be effectively motivated to continue their study of music. Students may have a more positive experience, learn more from the examination results, and such results may be more
accurate if the students exhibit both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational characteristics.

*Extrinsic Motivation*

Students who are extrinsically motivated tend to participate in activities for their external benefits such as earning grades, engaging in social activities with classmates, or sometimes receiving other tangible items like apparel (e.g., tee-shirts, hats), school supplies (e.g., pens, pencils, notebooks), and even food. Although the following list is not comprehensive, in terms of music education, music students are extrinsically motivated to participate in the activity if they are especially concerned with the social aspect of the music program (e.g., participating for social approval, spending time with classmates, or meeting new acquaintances through inter-musical participation in honor bands or concert festivals) or other post-secondary considerations like earning a music scholarship to a college or university music program (Standage, 2012). Some music scholars have suggested that an over-emphasis on extrinsic motivational factors in the music program, including assessment, may actually be detrimental to students’ development of intrinsic motivation to participate in musical activities (Maehr, Pintrich, & Linnenbrink, 2002); however, results may differ for music students at the elementary levels (see Austin, 1988, 1991).

Clinkenbeard (2012) coined a model of classroom structure that encompassed a number of student motivation variables that may be directly within the teacher’s control. This TARGET model utilizes an acronym that stands for the variables of “task, authority, recognition, grouping, evaluation, and time” (p. 626). The model was formed in an effort to assist educators in helping students develop life-long learning motivation, depth of
learning, mastery learning goals, and connections between academic subjects. This model may offer insight in how to better structure music lessons so music students stay motivated to learn, and thus persist, as students of music.

**Intrinsic Motivation**

Students who are intrinsically motivated exhibit a particular behavior or participate in a given activity due to their inherent interest in the subject matter and the value such participation or behavior brings to their lives (Martin & Dowson, 2009; Tollefson, 2000; Wigfield, 1994). An ensemble’s success at music performance events may not dictate students’ levels of motivation or individual musical achievement because music performance events constitute a small portion of musical performance possibilities. Some researchers have suggested that student motivation related to classroom academic achievement does not correlate with success on standardized examinations but instead may coincide with the expectations and requirements of the classroom (Budai, 2010; Wentzel, 1989; Zorigan, 2013).

In a study that compared students with high, medium, and low scores on the SAT, Wentzel (1989) found that students scoring high on the SAT were not concerned with social goals when compared to their peers, and that a causal relationship may not exist between the level of student performance and the adoption of an individual goal or goals. These findings can have profound ramifications for the profession of education in that students may be motivated to perform at a level insisted upon by their teachers: “The interactionist perspective guiding this research suggests that the motivational characteristics of students will be related to their academic success to the extent that these
characteristics match the motivational climate of the classroom” (p. 140).

Wentzel’s (1989) findings also indicated that students’ motivation in relation to academic achievement matched the classroom’s motivational requirements. In addition, students’ pursuit of both social as well as personal goals is “potentially relevant” (p. 139) to explaining their academic performance; both points are important factors in differentiating between high- and low-achieving students. Perhaps most importantly, the author’s findings also suggest that a student’s failure to achieve is not necessarily due to a lack of the student’s motivation, and vice-versa. In other words, Wentzel found that high achievers were not interested in comparing their achievements with that of their peers, that the level of student achievement may be related to classroom expectations, and that a student’s lack of motivation may not be a predictor of future achievement. These findings are important to music educators because some students in an ensemble may not be interested in comparing their band’s success with others, which may essentially discount the competitive process.

While Wentzel (1989) suggested that the expectations of classroom teachers may relate to student motivation, a recent study by Zerihun, Beishuizen, and Os (2012) found that student experience was more important in the learning process than that of teacher performance. The authors noted that learning is more likely to occur because of the students’ experiences in the process of learning, and even asserted that student engagement is a more valuable measure of teacher efficacy in the classroom. In the case of music, this might suggest that the experience music students have at a competitive music performance event may have a greater impact on what they learn than the teaching
effectiveness of their ensemble’s director.

Band students who have positive experiences participating in various musical activities may begin to view the study of music as a worthwhile endeavor. According to expectancy-value theory (Eccles, Adler, Futterman, Goff, Kaczala, Meece, & Midgley, 1983), this view fosters an intrinsic desire to study the subject, and thus, students are more likely to seek out extra opportunities for learning and advancing their skills. For instance, in a study of Singaporean adolescent students’ motivation to study music in school, Koh (2011) recommended that teachers foster positive classroom musical experiences coupled with differentiated instruction (contextualized according to the diverse motivational profiles of the students) in order to increase enrollment and interest in school music instruction.

Koh’s (2011) suggestions paralleled those of other literature addressing the reasons why students from various cultures around the world chose to study music and the effects such a choice had on students’ other academic subjects (McPherson & O’Neill, 2010; McPherson & Hendricks, 2010). In a similar study that analyzed responses from students in grades six through twelve in the United States, McPherson and Hendricks (2010) noted the necessity for those who advocate the study of music as an academic subject to deemphasize the importance of competition and “promote opportunities for autonomous music learning within the school setting” (p. 201). I submit that the most meaningful music learning focuses on the performers’ experiences in the moment, not on the efficacy of their director, comparison to one’s peers, or the rating, ranking, or score earned.
Passion

One’s passion for a particular activity may be indicative of the level of his or her motivation. Vallerand, et al. (2003, 2008) codified two different types of passion: harmonious passion and obsessive passion. According to Bonneville-Roussy, et al. (2010), when a person has harmonious passion for an activity, he or she “freely chooses to engage in an activity for the pleasure derived from it, without external or internal pressure” (p. 124). In essence, the person participates in the activity for the joy of the experience and demonstrates a somewhat overzealous affinity toward the activity.

Conversely, obsessive passion is characterized by an external desire for acceptance or other internal desires such as competition with peers or a fear of failure, albeit with the same overzealous affinity for the activity in question. While these individuals have a fondness for their chosen activity, their passion is derived from sources other than the simple experience of the activity itself. Using these authors’ suggestions, we can characterize the construct of passion, whether harmonious or obsessive, as an intense form of intrinsic motivation.

Considering this theoretical concept, it is possible in the case of music that repetitive experiences at competitive performance events could trigger an obsessive passion in one or more students in the ensemble, especially when those students are attempting to avoid the failure and potential embarrassment of a low rating. Furthermore, Elliot and Harackiewicz (1996) noted that the very prospect of failure triggers autonomic responses in the body that grossly undermine intrinsic motivation. If ensemble directors are attempting to facilitate an intrinsic motivational desire in their students to love music
through potential success in competitive scenarios, the very stimulus that they use to keep their students interested in the musical activity may in fact be undermining their efforts.

Given the number of school activities vying for students’ attention, it is important for music educators to consider how to facilitate the development of harmonious passion (i.e., an intense form of intrinsic motivation) for the study of music in their students. Research has been inconclusive in determining the efficacy of either extrinsic or intrinsic motivational factors (Bonneville-Roussy, Lavigne, & Vallerand, 2010; Maehr, Pintrich, & Linnenbrink, 2002; Nordin-Bates, 2012; Standage, 2012). While it appears as though many directors use competitive performance events to motivate their students, some findings indicate that the extrinsic nature of competition may, in fact, undermine students’ intrinsic motivation (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996) and arrest the emergence of harmonious passion for music (Bonneville-Roussy, Lavigne, & Vallerand, 2010). The existence of harmonious passion may be an unequivocal indication of a student’s true interest and motivation to study music. Finally, the findings of some scholars suggest that it may be necessary for music educators to focus more on the students’ experience in the classroom than on other motivational factors (Budai, 2010; Kao, 2013; Koh, 2011; Zerihun, Beishuizen, & Os, 2012).

**Self-Efficacy Theory**

Self-efficacy theory, first posited by Albert Bandura (1977, 1997), is tangential to social cognitive theory and based upon the notion that individuals are not merely puppets to the circumstances of their environment, but that they can determine when and how they react to the stimuli in their environment and utilize their locus of control to act as
agents in their own destiny. With the prevalent nature of competitive performance events now permeating our music programs, however, there is relatively little evidence that demonstrates what kind of effect such results from competition have on music students’ self-efficacy beliefs. Furthermore, as other scholars have demonstrated that the students’ experience in the learning process may be paramount to subsequent achievement (Zerihun, Beishuizen, & Os, 2012), it is then even more essential that we examine the student experience at competitive performance events and how the results of those competitive scenarios impact their self-efficacy beliefs in music.

**Background**

Bandura (1977) theorized four sources of efficacy expectations: “performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal” (p. 195). Additionally, a recent review of literature by Hendricks (2015) clarified these four sources of self-efficacy and offered implications for music educators: First, performance accomplishments, also known as *enactive mastery experience*, are when individuals base their self-efficacy beliefs on previous successful experiences (e.g., music students who learn to play one scale believe that they can successfully repeat that or a similar behavior). Second, *vicarious experience* is when individuals believe they can accomplish and objective after seeing another, usually a peer, successfully perform the same task (e.g., if he can learn to play that difficult scale, so can I). *Verbal persuasion* occurs when one person attempts to influence another’s actions by suggesting he or she can overcome situations that were obstacles in the past. Verbal persuasion is often used in the classroom as a means of helping students complete a goal or objective. Although verbal persuasion
can be as effective as the other three sources of self-efficacy beliefs, Bandura (1977, 1997) has cautioned that it could be a weaker source of efficacy beliefs for an individual because there may be little experience of accomplishment to support what the persuader is attempting to suggest. Finally, the fourth source of self-efficacy is an awareness of physiological and affective states, or how individuals’ physical and emotional state of mind affects confidence in their ability to accomplish a given task. These four sources of self-efficacy work together to form an individual’s complete self-efficacy profile.

Bandura (1997) suggested that this belief in one’s abilities is more predictive of achievement than “level of cognitive ability, prior educational preparation and attainment, gender, and attitudes toward academic activities” (p. 216). In fact, the author suggested that the more the aforementioned variables influence self-efficacy, the greater impact they have on individual achievement. Students’ self-efficacy beliefs have been found to be paramount to the achievement outcomes in academic settings involving children (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996), occupational expectations of children (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001), and college students (Brady-Amoon & Fuertes, 2011). The opposite effect has also been observed: The less individuals believe they are capable of exerting influence over their environment, the greater their feelings of helplessness and futility at the inability to act as agents in their lives (Bandura, 1982).

Efficacy Beliefs in Music

Although Bandura’s theory of self-efficacy spans many disciplines, there are specific variables that need to be examined through the specific lens of music education.
Some research has suggested that the variables of persistence and helplessness, quality of director feedback, and competitive performance may affect some forms of motivation in music students. In this section, I discuss each of these variables with corresponding music education research.

**Persistence and helplessness.** According to Bandura (1997), people tend to continue participating in activities at which they feel they are successful and achieve some sort of self-gratification. The author used a humorous, albeit somewhat uninformed, analogy of playing a tuba in order to illustrate this point: “[T]here is nothing inherently gratifying about playing a tuba solo. To an aspiring tuba instrumentalist, however, a performance that fulfills a hoped-for standard is a source of considerable self-satisfaction that can sustain much tuba blowing” (p. 219). For Bandura, achievement in an activity increases one’s self-efficacy perception in that activity, and motivates one to continue participation. This would imply that music students who have low musical self-efficacy beliefs may have the greatest chance of leaving the music program, as Bandura states that students in general “are left anxious by repeated failures when they view [the failures] as due to personal incapabilities” (p. 236).

Music educators can help students feel better about an upcoming performance examination by encouraging them to work on the musical passages with which they are most comfortable. Doing so increases students’ enactive mastery experience and thus their self-efficacy beliefs. Indeed, a study by McPherson & McCormick (2006) implied that teachers can help their students better prepare for performance examinations by encouraging them to begin with the passages in which their students feel most
comfortable at attempting. The researchers further suggested that music educators be
cognizant of how well their students are mastering their instruments and work with them
to not only correct their deficiencies but also elevate their confidence in their abilities.

**Quality of director feedback.** The quality of feedback directors give their students
can also have an effect on musical self-efficacy beliefs. In a mixed-method study of 45
middle school band students ranging from grades six through eight, Martin (2012) found
that participants viewed negative comments from their directors and a toxic classroom
culture as most damaging to their sense of musical self-efficacy. Furthermore, the author
found that students with low self-efficacy beliefs “tend to dwell” (p. 57) on negative
experiences more than those with high self-efficacy beliefs. The author’s findings
confirm Miller’s (1994) assertions and indicate that classroom culture, feedback from the
director, and student experience are most important to helping protect students’ musical
self-efficacy perceptions. They also support Schmidt’s (2007) findings in that the amount
of effort a student expends in a musical performance predicts their quality of efficacy
beliefs in music.

**Competitive performance.** It is imperative that we evaluate how competitive
performance events affect the self-efficacy beliefs of music students because there is still
insufficient literature that demonstrates the relationship between the student experience
and those beliefs in both scenarios of success and failure in ensemble performance. While
some research has shown that musical competition can be motivating to students (Austin,
1988, 1991), other scholars found that the learning experience itself may in fact have a
greater effect on student achievement than the quality of teacher feedback alone (Zerihun,
Beishuizen, & Os, 2012). However, due to the cooperative nature of ensemble performance, it is necessary for scholars to examine how the student experience, self-efficacy beliefs, and the efficacy beliefs of the group interact within the context of competitive performance events. Furthermore, Hendricks (2014) found that, overall, students reported a steady increase in self-efficacy beliefs throughout an honor orchestra festival. However, girls who placed in the top half of honor orchestra attendees reported a delayed increase in self-efficacy beliefs after initial placement, in comparison to all boys and to girls who placed in the lower half of attendees. The author suggested that directors remain mindful of girls who “may require more initial encouragement until they have had an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve” (p. 361) as well as students with little experience, as they do not have the repeated history of success to boost their self-efficacy beliefs.

Additional findings indicate that students can mitigate the negative effects of self-efficacy if they foster positive interpersonal relationships with their peers (Bandura, et al., 1996). This suggestion, in turn, lends credibility to the idea that the efficacy beliefs of the individual can be influenced by those of a larger group of individuals. Some research suggests that music educators should foster positive interpersonal relationships between their students and provide supportive musical activities that increase students’ self-efficacy beliefs.

**Achievement Goal Theory (AGT)**

An *achievement goal* is a measurable objective one sets to improve mastery in a specific area of his or her life. Elliot and Harackiewicz (1996) frame the construct “as the
reason for or purpose of competence-relevant activity” (p. 461). According to Nordin-Bates (2012), there is a movement throughout the performing arts to emphasize goals that focus on the improvement of the individual as opposed to those driven by a competitive paradigm that advocates excellence as compared to one’s peers. Such emphasis on improvement rather than performance has become known as Achievement Goal Theory (see Ames, 1992), or AGT.

AGT is closely related to both self-efficacy theory and collective agency; Bandura (1977) first posited that individuals can motivate themselves to achieve more complicated tasks, which in turn, prompt an increase in the individual’s self-efficacy beliefs. Conversely, a failed attempt to meet a prescribed goal fostered corrective behavior commensurate with that event. He stated:

Both the anticipated satisfactions of desired accomplishments and the negative appraisals of insufficient performance thus provide incentives for action. Having accomplished a given level of performance, individuals often are no longer satisfied with it and make further self-reward contingent on higher attainments.

(Bandura, 1977, p. 193)

Various concepts of AGT have undergone some modification since the theory’s mainstream inception. Regardless of the nomenclature used, most scholars agree on two types of achievement goals: mastery goals and performance goals. The performance goal category is further split into the two subcategories of performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals (Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996;
Mastery goals. One of the central tenets of a mastery goal is the concept of competence and task mastery (Elliot & Church, 1997), in which individuals work toward proficiency and command of a particular task for the benefit of exhaustive learning. In addition, the outcome of a mastery goal is proportionate to the amount of effort expended by the individual, and accomplishment tends to foster a continued involvement in the activity that leads to further achievement. Furthermore, when teachers monitor students’ progress toward a goal and combine it with feedback, they might observe an increase in student motivation. In terms of self-efficacy, mastery goals may also have positive effects on other aspects of perceived ability (Elliot & Dweck, 1988; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Gibson & Earley, 2007; Pelpel, 2012).

In a continuation of their previous research, Elliot and McGregor (2001) postulated another apportionment of the achievement goal categories, this time with that of the mastery goal category. They asserted that the issue of competence must be called into question, and that it was necessary to tease apart the mastery goal construct into separate mastery-performance goal and mastery-avoidance goal categories. The authors noted that one could have a goal to attain competence, but instead focus on the avoidance of failure; hence, the mastery-avoidance goal construct was necessary. The results of their study yielded “strong support” for their new conceptualization of “both the new framework and the new [mastery-avoidance goal] construct” (p. 514). While this study was limited to undergraduate students in two separate psychology classes, their findings
suggested a need to examine this construct in other disciplines.

**Performance goals.** Researchers have conceptualized performance goals as those achievement goals which are central to the outward demonstration of one’s ability as compared to one’s peers, focused on maintaining or improving an individual’s self-worth and competence, and succeeding without a great deal of effort. Performance goals have also been positively associated with a decrease in intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy belief, avoidance of particularly challenging objectives, and judgment of one’s abilities accompanied by performance (Bonneville-Roussy, et. al, 2010; Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Dweck, 1988; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Lacaille, Koestner, & Gaudreau, 2007; Wentzel, 1989). However, a recent study indicated performance goals may actually increase student achievement more dramatically than mastery goals (Senko, Hulleman, & Harackiewicz, 2011).

Additional scholars have bisected performance goals into separate constructs of their own: performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals, with the former described as an outward exhibition of competence and the latter as an avoidance of failure (Bonneville-Roussy, et. al, 2010; Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Lacaille, Koestner, & Gaudreau, 2007; Rinthapol, 2013). Some scholars, however, have indicated a dissatisfaction with the empirical distinction between performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals (Midgley, Kaplan, and Middleton, 2001).

**Performance-approach goals.** First conceptualized by Elliot and Harackiewicz (1996), as previously stated, performance-approach goals are characterized by one’s need to appear competent when compared to others. Ames (1992) mentioned that
performance-approach goals can make learning appear as though it is a vehicle to attain a desired outcome, as opposed to the actual objective. Furthermore, a number of studies point to the deleterious effects that performance-approach goals have on motivational factors, an increase in performance anxiety, and a decrease in enjoyment in the activity.

Elliot and Church (1997), Elliot and Harackiewicz (1996), and Elliot, McGregor, and Gable (1999) found that performance-approach goals are grounded in a desire to perform well, avoid failure, and achieve high levels of efficacy; they do not seem to affect levels of intrinsic motivation, but are positively correlated with graded performance.

**Performance-avoidance goals.** Performance-avoidance goals are associated with the avoidance of failure or the appearance of incompetence. Researchers have linked performance-avoidance goals to lowered self-efficacy perceptions, diminished intrinsic motivation, increased performance anxiety, and decreased achievement. In fact, some scholars indicated that performance-avoidance goals are not easily reconciled in terms of academic achievement; they are the most pervasive of achievement goal varieties (Bonneville-Roussy, et al, 2010; Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Lacaille, Koestner, & Gaudreau, 2007; Rinthapol, 2013).

Furthermore, another study noted that performance-avoidance goals were attributed to a lack of depth of understanding of concepts and poor performance on assessments (Elliot, McGregor, & Gable, 1999).

**AGT and academic achievement.** While the concept of AGT may have originated in sports psychology, other authors outside of sports have found similar findings in
relation to the setting and striving toward goal accomplishment. Bandura and Schunk (1981) found that students who had assistance from teachers in selecting subgoals targeting areas for improvement in mathematics demonstrated an increase in perceived self-efficacy beliefs in their abilities to solve mathematical problems, increased performance in solving math problems, and increased intrinsic interest in mathematics. Likewise, findings of a study of 102 students in grades nine and ten suggested that students’ self-efficacy beliefs and academic goals work together to improve academic achievement (Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). These authors’ findings suggest that to retain intrinsic interest in the study of music and increase both student performance and self-efficacy beliefs in performance, music educators should strive to help their students select their goals.

Additionally, Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) noted that teachers should help students set and strive to achieve educational goals in the classroom, but those goals should be general enough to allow the students some “flexibility” (p. 95) in working toward their achievement. Furthermore, the authors’ meta-analysis revealed that feedback is also essential to helping students maintain their trajectory toward accomplishing their academic goals. The authors suggested that teacher feedback should be “corrective...timely...specific...inclusive” (pp. 96–99). This means that when it comes to students setting goals, not only is the teacher’s feedback essential to keeping the students in pursuit of their academic goals, but it may be necessary to ensure that students are included in the process of setting academic goals.

Moreover, the students should be included in the feedback process and assist in
keeping track of their accomplishments. The feedback from teachers and inclusion of the students in the process work in tandem to help students get a complete picture of their progress. Almost a generation later, Hale’s (2015) presentation at a symposium on assessment in music education concurred with the authors that collaboration between director and students is essential to helping students achieve their musical goals.

Marzano and colleagues (2001) also postulated that goals can be too specific in nature to the point where students inadvertently disregard pertinent information not directly related to accomplishing the stated goal. For instance, if a music teacher sets a goal for his or her students to be more proficient at reading pitch notation, according to Marzano and colleagues, those students may be so engrossed in improving their pitch notation accuracy that they may unknowingly allow their knowledge of rhythmic notation to wane. If subsequent research on the topic continues to support the researchers’ findings, application of those results could drastically affect how educators view goal setting in the classroom.

In a study that emphasized autonomy in decision-making, student effort, and a supportive learning community among other variables, Orkin (2013) sought to determine what interventions could alleviate self-imposed performance-avoidance goals of 24 struggling readers ages 7 to 10. The researcher utilized a control group, experimental group design. The findings indicated that by encouraging intrinsic motivation, altering learning goals, and improving students’ self-efficacy beliefs, educators could decrease the frequency of misbehavior and reduce the amount of performance-avoidance, thereby fostering the development of independent learners, cooperative learning peer groups, and
the improvement of student skills that increase independent student achievement.

There is also evidence indicating that mastery goals also have an observable effect on exam performance. Elliot and Church (1997) sought to examine the relationship between goal orientation and graded performance. The authors noted that the assessment of participants only took into account their grades on multiple-choice examinations; the evaluation for the class was based upon a grading scale of A through F. Results indicated that those participants who trended toward mastery goals showed “high competence expectancies” and a greater facility with respect to intrinsic motivation, but said goals had “no reliable effect on graded performance” (p. 228). These results match previous data indicating that the pursuit of mastery goals facilitates an individual’s intrinsic motivation, continued desire for learning, persistence, and increased effort. Although these results were later replicated in a similar study by Elliot, McGregor, and Gable (1999), Senko, Hulleman, and Harackiewicz (2011) found that students adopting a mastery goal orientation may not reach higher achievement levels than students who do not utilize mastery goals.

According to self-efficacy scholars, assessing students’ levels of achievement according to an individual’s growth or objective accomplishment is more effective at raising one’s self-efficacy belief rather than focusing solely on the level of achievement as compared to others (Zimmerman, 1995, 2000). However, in an honor orchestra festival where a placement audition was followed by a weekend of rehearsal leading up to a final concert, in terms of musical performance, Hendricks (2009) found that “the ability to impress others” was more “relevant” (p. 306) to the students at the time of chair
placement; this emphasis gradually waned as the weekend progressed. Her findings may indicate that some students focus more on comparing themselves with their peers’ abilities when faced with a competitive situation than on the execution of specific musical characteristics of their performances.

Furthermore, other research findings indicated that neither feedback from experts nor goals by themselves were enough to increase an individual’s motivation; however, self-dissatisfaction with performance coupled with high self-efficacy beliefs may facilitate an increase in effort (Bandura & Cervone, 1983). Two decades later, Bandura and Locke (2003) concurred with these earlier findings and posited that self-efficacy beliefs and personal goals contribute to an individual’s level of motivation and achievement. Some researchers have also alluded to the idea that the goal one selects prior to a performance impacts the cognitive, behavioral, and affective functioning of the individual (Lacaille, Koestner, & Gaudreau, 2007).

**AGT and music education.** When viewed within the context of music education, music students who work toward achieving a mastery goal would be theoretically more likely to persist in the activity, improve through their musical practice, and feel as though they were effective and accomplished musicians. Lacaille, Whipple, and Koestner’s (2005) assertion parallels this assumption. They asserted that in a context such as music, individuals would be better served in “focusing on intrinsic goals that had nothing to do with achievement, but that instead focused on enjoying the experience” (p. 14). Likewise, Lacaille, Koestner, and Gaudreau (2007), found that the pursuit and subsequent accomplishment of mastery goals fostered premier performances for both athletes and
musicians, with musicians excelling at goals aimed at concentrating on the musical experience. Results also showed that mastery goals allowed musicians to adapt more readily to public performance, exhibit an increase in life satisfaction, and experience less attrition from the activity.

In competition scenarios, Bonneville-Roussy and colleagues (2010) found that those who set goals to best others in a performance or avoid poor performances actually played worse than their peers who did not set such goals. Additionally, Kleingeld, van Mierlo, and Arends (2011) found that when the performance of the group took precedence, the individual’s personal goals should be structured so they contribute to the objectives of the group. They also found that when the goals are competitive in nature, such as in sales targets, those goals actually weaken the performance of the group as a whole. Murayama and Elliot (2012) also suggested that the competition paradigm is a double-edged sword: The authors found that competition of any kind tends to facilitate both performance-approach and performance avoidance goals, which in turn both enhance and undermine the quality of performance respectively. These three studies suggest that goals related to competition outcomes may in fact undermine the objectives of both the individuals and the group.

**Group Efficacy Theory**

Also within the realm of social-cognitive theory and emerging tangential to self-efficacy theory is group efficacy theory. In further expanding upon his theory of self-efficacy, Bandura (2012) postulated three types of agency: personal agency, whereby individuals act on their own, within their locus of control, to produce their desired
outcomes; proxy agency, when individuals influence others to act on their behalf to obtain preferred results; and collective agency, where individuals work together as a group to accomplish mutual objectives. Because of the nature of the ensemble performance setting, it is necessary to examine the synergy between the self-efficacy beliefs of the individual members of an ensemble and the efficacy beliefs of the entire ensemble as a group working toward accomplishing one performance goal.

The construct of group-efficacy is also known as collective agency (Bandura, 1997, 2000), collective efficacy (Matthews & Kitsantas, 2007, 2013), or collectivism (Gibson, 1999), and is a theoretical construct used to identify the latent beliefs behind a group’s work ethic (or lack there-of) toward achieving its desired goals or objectives. Although most researchers have observed student participants, some earlier literature focused more on the group efficacy of teachers (Gorrell & Capron, 1988). Schmidt (2007) noted that, with respect to instrumental music ensembles, the construct of collective efficacy “addresses the nebulous concept of esprit d’ corps” (p. 10). Additionally, some researchers suggested that the emergence of a collective consciousness within a group is a complex mechanism (Gibson, 1999) and a cumulative sum of communication and pattern of behaviors that has evolved over time (Gibson & Earley, 2007).

The ensemble as a group will not be successful if its individual members do not believe in the efficacy of themselves or their peers. For example, Bandura’s (1997, 2000) observations indicated that an individual’s actions and subsequent outcomes are at least partly related to their efficacy beliefs about themselves, group members’ beliefs in their
fellow peers, and the potency of the group as a unit. Additionally, Bandura (2000) further declared, “A collective system with members plagued by self-doubts about their capabilities to perform their roles will achieve little” (p. 77). Therefore, it is the belief in greatness that creates greatness, not the exhibition.

Some efficacy belief studies may have important implications for music education. Musicians’ self-efficacy beliefs and the efficacy beliefs of the ensemble may have a symbiotic relationship, as positive interpersonal relationships between individual members are important to promulgating positive group efficacy beliefs. Moreover, group effort toward accomplishing a common goal may foster a positive increase in group efficacy beliefs. Empirical studies conducted within the context of business settings have demonstrated support for these claims. For instance, Gibson (2001) and Gibson and Earley (2007) found that groups with a task-oriented mindset (e.g., mastery goal) experienced an increase in individual self-efficacy beliefs, group efficacy beliefs, group cohesion, and cooperation.

Gibson and Earley (2007) offered a theoretical model regarding the praxis of group efficacy in the business workplace. The emergent patterns indicated that group efficacy and group members’ self-efficacy beliefs were interdependent, group members’ positive relationships and cooperation with one another yielded more positive group efficacy beliefs, and the persistence toward mutual group goals and objectives increased group efficacy beliefs. The researchers further found that group members’ positive relationships with one another interacted with their perceptions of past performances to produce an increase in group efficacy beliefs.
Individuals with positive beliefs in self-efficacy may experience a perceived increase in personal success, thus increasing the perceived overall effectiveness of the group. In support of this point, Gibson (2001) found that individual members with high self-efficacy beliefs had increased individual effectiveness and, similarly, groups with high group efficacy beliefs had an overall increase in the effectiveness of the entire team. Essentially, the efficacy beliefs of the individuals comprising a group coalesce to form the efficacy beliefs of the group and can affect the extent to which the team accomplishes its objectives.

Schmidt (2007) studied the relationship between intrinsic-mastery motivation and achievement within a group setting of instrumental music students. The author found a relationship between group efficacy and mastery motivation in students, indicating that students who are motivated by the desire to improve as opposed to being competitive experience greater satisfaction when working toward mutual objectives within a group. These findings corroborated previous research on this topic (Sandene, 1997; Schmidt, 2005; Smith, 2005).

Not all empirical studies on collective agency have yielded similar results. When conducting a field study using teams of nurses, Gibson (1999) was able to gather evidence that empirically supports the value of a construct such as group efficacy, but also found that, “contrary to previous research…a strong belief within a group regarding group effectiveness is not always an asset” (p. 151). The author found that the collective beliefs of the group alone may not accurately determine the group’s effectiveness at accomplishing a given task; the specificity of the task to be completed and the cultural
context in which the group was operating were suggested to be variables affecting group effectiveness. However, other research has been inconclusive as to the importance of task specificity and cultural context on group effectiveness. For example, contrary to Gibson (1999), Bandura (2000) suggested that the collective beliefs of the group were paramount to effectiveness:

The findings taken as a whole show that the higher the perceived collective efficacy, the higher the groups’ motivational investment in their undertakings, the stronger their staying power in the face of impediments and setbacks, and the greater their performance accomplishments. (p.78)

While there are a number of studies examining group efficacy beliefs within the context of business employees (Gibson, 2001; Gibson & Earley, 2007), nurses (Gibson, 1999), and teachers (Gorrell & Capron, 1988), there are very few which examine group efficacy beliefs within the context of music education. Furthermore, these music studies may be limited to the study of intrinsic motivation in relation to group efficacy (Schmidt, 2007), prediction of conductor support in an ensemble setting (Matthews & Kitsantas, 2007), and shared performance cues on the motivation of ensemble students (Matthews & Kitsantas, 2013). There is insufficient literature that examines exactly what relationship, if any, exists between the self-efficacy beliefs of music students and how those beliefs affect the efficacy beliefs of the group.

**Summary**

When examining band students in a competitive context through a lens of motivation, self-efficacy theory, and group efficacy theory, a clear pattern begins to
emerge: It may be that band students hold themselves responsible for their band’s success (or lack thereof). In other words, the ensemble’s success or failure according to its ratings at competitive music performance events may influence how the individual members perceive their own worth as musicians.

Yet the very nature of ensemble performance leads us to also question how individual students’ self-efficacy beliefs impact the efficacy beliefs of the group as a whole. Some researchers do suggest that group efficacy beliefs are amalgamations of the individual members’ self-efficacy beliefs (e.g., Bandura, 2000). This idea leads us to consider that an ensemble’s earned rating or score at a competitive music performance event may not be an accurate representation of the musical abilities of the individuals in the group, but rather a loose measurement of perceived collective efficacy as a function of the quality of the ensemble’s performance. While there are a number of studies that examine the construct of group efficacy in various settings, there is insufficient literature on the topic of group efficacy in the field of music education. Moreover, that which exists is sparse at best. I hope the findings of this study add to this body of literature.
Chapter 3: Method

“Even if you get a low rating, you still did something, you still made something, completely, pretty much from scratch, you know; had a bunch of people come in like, ‘Oh, what are we doing this time?’ And you do something and you all get on the same page, and that's just really fun.”

-Jen, a student at Sunny Brook High School

The purpose of this study was to (a) examine students’ perceptions of their musical self-beliefs as related to their ensemble’s ratings at competitive music performance events (CMPEs), (b) gain clarity into how the educational ideology of the director might affect the self-efficacy beliefs of his or her students, and (c) open a dialogue into potential discovery of the sources of group efficacy beliefs in a band setting as related to individual self-efficacy beliefs. A total of ninety-one students and three directors from three different high school band programs in Arkansas participated in the study.

Using qualitative surveys and engaging in focus group interviews with band students, I collected data in the form of responses and descriptions about participants’ personal thoughts, feelings, and perceptions regarding (a) their personal experiences in adjudicated music event scenarios, and (b) their own musical abilities as a consequence of such events. I also interviewed their band directors in an attempt to compare their responses to those of their students and form a picture of the philosophy of musical assessment embraced by each of the three participating school’s band programs and
relative communities. The methodology for this study was designed according to the case study design and analysis techniques discussed by Yin (2014).

**Rationale for Case Study Design**

Yin (2014) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 16). Because the purpose of this study was to examine a phenomenon (i.e., students’ and directors’ self-efficacy beliefs) within the context of music performance events (a real-world phenomenon), I determined that a case study design was the most appropriate design for this study.

Use of case study as a research design is not without its own complications, however. For instance, Yin (2014) noted that some case study researchers do not follow specific systematic procedures, fail to report all of the evidence completely and fairly, attempt to generalize findings from case studies to larger populations, and design case studies that take too long and are too involved to complete in a timely manner. In this chapter I address how I accounted for these concerns when designing this study.

**Design of the Study**

The design of this study is multi-case and holistic (Yin, 2014). I studied the responses generated from surveys and interviews taken from three separate groups of band students and ensemble directors from three different schools in the State of Arkansas. I used replication logic and followed the exact study, interview, and analysis protocols for each case.
Case study questions. I sought to address the following questions in this study:

1. What are students’ perceptions about their musical self-beliefs as related to their ensemble’s ratings at competitive music performance events?
2. How are the musical self-beliefs of the students and the educational ideology of their director related?
3. How are the students’ perceptions of their musical self-beliefs related to the efficacy beliefs of their ensemble as a group of performers?

Propositions. According to Yin (2014), propositions are used in case study research to help define the scope of inquiry, as the case study questions alone may not be sufficient enough to serve this purpose. This study makes the following propositions with respect to the case study questions:

1. Competitive music performance event results can alter the participants’ perceptions of their musical self-beliefs.
2. In band ensembles, individuals’ self-efficacy beliefs and the efficacy beliefs of the ensemble as a whole are intertwined.

Units of analysis. The participants for this study, selected through voluntary purposive sampling (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p. 78), consisted of 91 students and three directors from two public high school bands and one private high school band in Arkansas. From this sample, I employed complete collection sampling (Teddlie & Yu, p. 81) and used the data from the surveys to determine the participants for the focus group interviews.
Recruitment. I have taught in Arkansas for almost ten years and am well acquainted with most of the directors in the state. I recruited three high school band directors for the study during the period of July 2014 through October 2014. Initial potential interest was gauged via informal conversation with band directors at an annual state bandmasters’ convention. I compiled a handout that contained information about the study’s purpose, rationale, and participant selection processes and handed them out to all interested directors at the Arkansas Bandmasters’ Association (ABA) convention held in Little Rock, Arkansas from July 30, 2014 through August 2, 2014. One month after the convention, I sent all interested directors an email requesting that they contact me at their earliest convenience if they were still interested in participating in the study. Four directors responded to my inquiry and said they were still interested; however, one director had to recuse himself because of scheduling conflicts.

As a practicing music educator myself, the logistics required to align the director participants’ busy performance schedules with my own proved to be problematic. Additionally, regulations pursuant to the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibited my direct contact with student participants or their families. Because of these two areas of concern, I decided it would be best to enlist the help of my director participants in obtaining consent and assent from student participants and their parents prior to the date of initial data collection, while also receiving a waiver of the requirement to obtain written documentation of parental consent from the Boston University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix C).

I asked the directors to determine their students’ interests in participating in the
study and distribute the informed consent, assent, and requisite paperwork to their students for them and their parents to review. I then requested that they collect the student statements of assent (or consent if the students were 18 years of age or older) prior to my first visit to the school. Due to circumstances beyond my control, only one director out of the three who participated in this study was able to provide her students with the consent paperwork before my first visit to collect data. As a result, I provided the students with additional copies of the appropriate consent and assent paperwork and went through it with them prior to collecting data. I told them that if they chose to participate in the study by signing the assent form and their parents objected to their participation by refusing to sign the consent form for parents and guardians, they could contact me and I would strike their responses from the data set. No participant’s parent or guardian ever contacted me to object to his or her child participating in this study.

As a director myself, one of my chief concerns when a researcher approaches me about participating in a research study is protecting my students. As the one responsible for my students’ welfare, I want the researcher to tell me the purpose of the study, what topics will be discussed on the survey instrument and during the interview process, and confirm that my superintendent and principal have full disclosure regarding the researcher’s intentions. Therefore, in an effort to give the volunteer directors full disclosure, I ensured that they each had an opportunity to ask me questions and address any concerns they had prior to participation in my study.
Data Collection Procedures

While I intended to gather data during the marching contest season in Arkansas, time and the availability of the participants’ schedules coupled with my professional commitments required me to alter my data collection method. Because my research interest was related to student self-beliefs about band assessment in general and not tied to one particular band season, I decided that my original method would also work for concert season assessments. In the end, one school was able to accommodate my request during marching season while the other two participated during concert season.

Student survey instrument. In their study on the intricacies of group efficacy belief, Gibson and Earley (2007) noted, “A popular alternative method [for gathering data] focuses on capturing sharedness using an average of members’ individual estimates of group efficacy, thus making estimates of within-group agreement possible” (p. 452). By comparing group discussion techniques with individual responses, the authors were able to estimate their participant organization’s collective efficacy. Based on this understanding of Gibson and Earley’s approach, I designed my survey instrument to include the following questions:

1. Please describe how your band’s ratings at contest influence your personal feelings about yourself as a musician.

2. Please describe how you feel about your personal musical abilities after your band earns a favorable rating at contest.

3. Please describe how you feel about your personal musical abilities after your band earns an undesired rating at contest.
4. Describe your personal musical goals. How do you feel about yourself when you accomplish these goals? How does accomplish your personal goals affect your experience as a member of your band? (see Appendix D).

The survey was pilot-tested for reliability and validity on November 4, 2014 by 28 students at a local high school in southwest Arkansas. During this process, I read the questions aloud to the participants while they looked at the questionnaire, asking them if they understood what I was asking them to do and if the questions were specific enough to illicit an accurate response. The findings of the pilot study indicated that it was not necessary to make major adjustments to the survey itself; rather, it was only necessary to provide the participants with verbal clarifications of the words “favorable” and “undesired” during the introduction and explanation of the instrument to the student participants.

Student focus group participants. In an effort to collect greater detail in participant responses and to uncover possible “unexpected findings” (Orcher, 2005, p. 131), student surveys were followed by focus group interviews. The focus group at each school consisted of three students, one of whom (a) enjoyed the ensemble assessment process, (b) was ambivalent to the ensemble assessment process, and (c) disliked the ensemble assessment process. I determined these three categories based upon the student participants’ responses to the questions on the initial survey. For instance, if students wrote or said phrases like, “It makes me feel good about myself when we do well at assessment,” I surmised they “liked” the assessment process; conversely, if students wrote or said phrases such as, “I feel bad about myself when we do poorly at
assessment,” I concluded that they did not enjoy the assessment process. I viewed statements such as “Contest ratings do not affect how I feel about myself as a musician” or “I just enjoy playing my instrument” as ambivalence toward contest assessments.

The interview process with the student focus groups generally lasted no more than 10–12 minutes each. In addition, I also interviewed the directors of each band to determine how the results their bands earned at competitive performance events affect their self-beliefs as music educators. Appendix E contains the protocol I used in conducting the focus group interview.

There were some extenuating circumstances that prevented me from precisely adhering to the methodological procedures for selecting the student participants for the focus group. For instance, when I arrived at my first school to conduct the focus group, the director mentioned that one of my student selectees was not in attendance; with about five minutes left before she had to begin class, we agreed to pick three students together based upon my knowledge of their confidential responses to the initial survey and her experience with them as members of her ensemble. I originally thought that this sudden change in participants would be reflected both in the data and my subsequent analysis; however, I believe that the students who were chosen for the focus group sessions still offered candid responses to my questions, as most offered their own opinions about their likes and dislikes of music performance events. As a result, my subsequent analysis still included the thick description I was hoping to obtain through my focus group selection method.
**Director interviews.** Although the primary purpose of this study was to examine student perceptions in regards to ensemble assessment, the literature on the topic of group efficacy indicated to me that it was prudent to also interview the leader, since individual members’ personal self-efficacy beliefs may align with that of the larger group (See Bandura, 2000; Gibson, 2001; Matthews & Kitsantas, 2007; Schmidt, 2007). Therefore, similar to the student focus groups, I also interviewed directors to query their personal views of themselves as music educators in relation to their ensemble’s assessment ratings. The interview protocol I used in conducting the director’s interview can be found in Appendix F.

**Protocol.** Because the purpose of this study was to evaluate student perceptions of ensemble assessment, it was important to conduct the initial survey and participant interviews as soon as possible following any marching assessment event, preferably after the directors have discussed the ensemble ratings with their students. The immediacy of this process was important because the experience was still fresh on the participants’ minds; this enabled the participants to explicate their responses as completely as possible. However, it was impossible to conduct the initial survey with most participants immediately following a marching assessment event, mostly due to the logistics of scheduling. To compensate for this, I asked the students to think about their most recent contest and how they felt after they heard their ratings announced over the loudspeaker. Furthermore, although I determined from the pilot process that this procedure should not take this long, I requested that the directors allow at least 20 to 30 minutes for the participants to complete the open-ended questionnaire so they could answer all the
questions fully and completely. This proved to be ample time for this process.

While I concede that the students’ responses to the questionnaire and focus group protocol may have been influenced by their director’s discussion of the results with them, I believed it was necessary to allow the ensemble’s director to have the opportunity to clarify the implications of the adjudicators’ critique and commentary about their performance. This opportunity would allow the students to understand how the adjudicators arrived at the group’s rating and compare that reasoning with their feelings about the rating. This procedure permitted the students to form their own individual responses to the questions from a similar point of reference.

The data collected on the questionnaires were transcribed within 24 to 48 hours and the paper responses were stored in a locked filing cabinet. All data, paper or electronic, were to be destroyed after seven years. Using the literature presented in Chapter 2 on educational psychology, goal theory, and motivation, I was able to compile a list of probable codes prior to coding. The \textit{a priori} codes for this study were Self-Efficacy: Increase; Self-Efficacy: Decrease; Goals: All-Region/All-State; Goals: Musical Growth; Group Efficacy: Increase; Group Efficacy: Decrease.

After interviewing the participants and transcribing the recording (also within 24 to 48 hours of the interviews), I emailed the directors a copy of their unique transcript session via email and asked them to respond within 48 hours if they saw any discrepancies between what they remembered they said during the interview and the transcript. I sent the transcript of the directors’ portion of the interview to the directors themselves for verification. No director responded to my query for corrections to the
interview transcriptions. Due to FERPA privacy and IRB confidentiality regulations, I was neither able to contact students directly nor send transcripts to them through their teachers to conduct member checks.

The transcribed data were then open-coded by myself and another band director with a master’s degree in music education who was not involved with the study. The outside individual either confirmed my initial coding or offered clarifications of his own. After the initial coding, I compiled the open-coding results into HyperRESEARCH to further analyze the data in order to help solidify thematic results; I followed up with directors after my initial analysis.

**Participant privacy and confidentiality.** Protecting the privacy of all participants is of paramount importance. Therefore, I ensured that all data collected were kept confidential by using pseudonyms for all participants and their schools. The master key containing the list of participant names and their pseudonyms was stored in a password-protected file accessible by no one except me. Any results and subsequent analyses reported in this document use pseudonyms for participant and school identification purposes.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

**Logic for linking data to the propositions.** Yin (2014) noted five types of logic that case study researchers can use to link the data to their propositions: (a) pattern matching, (b) explanation building, (c) time-series analysis, (d) logic models, and (e) cross-case synthesis. While an in-depth explanation of each of these types of logic is beyond the purview of this study, I believed that its design warranted utilization of three
out of the five: (a) pattern matching, (b) explanation building, and (c) cross-case synthesis. I define and provide a rationale for each of these logical techniques below, with analyses presented in greater detail in Chapter 4.

According to Yin (2014), pattern matching logic is “one of the most desirable techniques” to use in case study analysis; it “compares an empirically based pattern—that is, one based on the findings from your case study—with a predicted one made before collect[ing] data” (p. 143). Because this study sought to compare the effects of music performance event results to participants’ self-efficacy beliefs, pattern matching was an essential choice to use as a logical comparison.

Two of the three questions for this case study attempted to explain the phenomena of (a) music performance event results and their perceived effects on participants’ self-efficacy beliefs; and (b) the perceived relationship of participants’ self-efficacy beliefs to the efficacy beliefs of the group as a whole (if such a relationship existed). Yin (2014) noted that these “how” (p. 147) questions are best addressed using explanation building in case study analysis, and as such, it has been utilized in this study’s analysis of data.

The final logic technique I used in the analysis of this data was cross-case synthesis. As a multi-case, holistic case study, it was necessary to conduct an analysis between the cases in order to strengthen reliability and find similarities between all units of analysis. I used the same analytical procedure for all three studies.

**Criteria for interpretation and issues of validity.** In accordance with Yin (2014), the interpretation of the findings from this case study were based on (a) the similarities or differences between cases revealed during the cross-case analysis and (b) the findings’
ability to contradict rival explanations. Additionally, as with other research designs, four types of threats to this case study’s validity are possible: (a) construct, (b) internal, (c) external, and (d) reliability. I address how I accounted for each of these threats in the design below.

*Construct validity.* This type of validity deals with the research design itself, in that the data collection and analysis procedures are appropriate or effective in answering the case study questions or confirming the propositions. To account for this kind of validity, Yin (2014) suggests that case study researchers use multiple sources of data through triangulation and ensure that participants have the opportunity to examine transcripts of interview sessions for accuracy. This study’s design obtains its data from three different sources: (a) student surveys, (b) student interviews, and (c) director interviews. In addition, each participant in the interview had the opportunity to check the transcriptions for accuracy.

*Internal validity.* Threats to internal validity occur when the researcher tries to substantiate a causal relationship between two events being examined, when in fact the event or events may be caused by another factor outside the purview of the research problems. In the design for this particular study, I have accounted for threats to internal validity by addressing plausible rival explanations to the findings in Chapter 5, as suggested by Yin (2014).

*External validity.* External validity refers to the ability to generalize the findings of a study to a larger population outside of the pool of participants. The threat to external validity was accounted for by using analytic generalization in the analysis (Yin, 2014).
Analytic generalization is the process of examining data collected from case studies and “(a) corroborating, modifying, rejecting, or otherwise advancing theoretical concepts referenced in designing [the] case study, or (b) [offering] new concepts that arose upon completion of [the] study” (Yin, 2014, p. 41). I examined the data for themes that suggested how competition results affected participants’ musical self-beliefs and examined them through the lenses of the theories of self-efficacy and group efficacy. Moreover, the multi-case approach called for a replicated design, whereby each case in this study utilized the exact same data collection protocols.

Reliability. Yin (2014) wrote that threats to reliability are the most common threats in research design. One of the best ways researchers can account for the threat to reliability is to utilize a protocol for each case in a multi-case design such as this study. Therefore, I created a specific protocol (as outlined throughout this chapter) for conducting each of the three case studies and then ensured that I followed the protocol precisely during the data collection process. In addition, I also created a case study database in which the separate raw data of the student answers to survey questions, focus group audio recordings and transcriptions, and the director interview audio recordings and transcriptions were kept separate from this report.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine students’ perceptions of their musical self-beliefs as related to their ensemble’s ratings at competitive music performance events (CMPEs). In addition, I sought to open a line of inquiry into the interplay between the self-efficacy beliefs of individual musicians and the group efficacy beliefs of the
ensemble, if such a relationship existed. Because of the nature of my case study questions and propositions, in that I desired to investigate a phenomenon in a real-world context, I determined that the most effective design for this study was a multi-case holistic design as discussed by Yin (2014). Furthermore, I was diligent in designing a study that attempted to address potential threats to validity and that logically and thoroughly analyzed the data for its findings. I present the data from each case in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, followed by a cross-case analysis in Chapter 7.
Chapter 4: Sunny Brook High School

*A band is made up of individual musicians, so when a band performs well at contest, it is because the individuals in the band perform well. When our band does well, it makes me proud to be an individual whose contributions to the group helped earn a favorable rating.*

-A band student from Sunny Brook High School

At the time of this study, Sunny Brook High School is a private Christian school located in an affluent area of central Arkansas. Although the lush landscape, luxury automobiles, and state-of-the-art technology gave the appearance as if the parents of the students who attended this school had unlimited resources, according to their band director, Jane, the reality was somewhat different than how they looked to the outside world.

The student demographic at Sunny Brook consisted of primarily middle class students whose parents were professionals who, Jane reported, worked hard and made short-term sacrifices to send their children to a private school. Most families had multiple children attending Sunny Brook, so as opposed to public schools, the costs added up quickly. Consequently, because their families sacrificed to provide a private education, most students at Sunny Brook did not have cars of their own as many of their peers in public school did.

At the time I collected data, Sunny Brook High School had an enrollment of 365 students in grades 7 through 12, with the high school band providing instrumental music
ensembles to students in grades 8 through 12; grade 7 had an ensemble class unto itself and those students were not asked to participate in this study because their ensemble did not participate in adjudicated events. The students at Sunny Brook consistently performed well on norm-referenced exams like the American College Test (ACT) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), had a very high acceptance rate into post-secondary institutions of higher learning. The school’s academic rigor had yielded two National Merit Scholarship Finalists in 2015 alone, one of whom was a student in the band program. Out of 55 possible band students, 28 from Sunny Brook chose to participate in this study.

The Sunny Brook Pride. The Sunny Brook Pride was the 55-member marching band for Sunny Brook High School. The Sunny Brook Pride marched students in 8th through 12th grades. According to Jane, approximately half of the students in the Sunny Brook Pride took private lessons from local instrumentalists, mostly professors at a local university. They regularly attended both region marching and concert contest festivals, and in the five years prior to this study, had quickly made a name for themselves as a top-rated band in the state. They had earned numerous “Outstanding In-Class” awards at assorted invitational marching contests and several “Superior” ratings in both region marching and concert band adjudicated events.

Meet Jane. Jane was in her second year as Sunny Brook’s band director but in her eighth year of teaching overall. I had the privilege of knowing Jane through professional associations for a number of years. Through our professional collaboration, I had seen first-hand Jane’s struggles and triumphs as a music educator, and she had seen mine. We shared kind of a unique camaraderie. When she spoke about her experience as
a director, she mentioned that directors already knew what musical nuances might have needed improvement throughout their performances even before the ensemble’s scores were announced. She noted:

As the director, I always see the flaws in the performance. When you get to that point of assessment, you have heard it so many times, you know what it’s supposed to sound like, you know every little detail of the music, and so you know when something wasn’t right.

I administered the questionnaire and conducted the director interview with Jane in November of 2014. Before the data collection, I briefly discussed with all the participants the Assent/Consent form, participants’ rights to confidentiality, and the procedure for the focus group portion of the study. The focus group interview with the students was held during my second study visit in February of 2015.

**Findings for Sunny Brook High School**

The data were collected by using a combination of qualitative questionnaire (see Appendix D), student focus group (Appendix E), and individual director (Appendix F) interview sessions. In this section, I will present the findings for SBHS. To substantiate the emergent themes, the data have been triangulated across the three data sources of student questionnaires, the student focus group interview, and the director interview, as recommended by Yin (2014) in order to substantiate construct validity.

The participants from SBHS reported a range of feelings about adjudicated performance events from “disappointed” to “it was my fault” when their band earned poor ratings, and “satisfied” to “great” when their band earned good ratings.
Additionally, less than half of the students indicated that they were indifferent or unaffected by the ratings (e.g., “It doesn’t really affect my opinion about myself,” “The ratings do not influence my feelings because contest is about how we play as a whole and not as an individual”). The five most salient themes in the Sunny Brook results are as follows:

1. “Band is a group effort;”
2. “I am only disappointed with myself if I feel that I messed up and caused the bad rating;”
3. “I feel as if I did not give it my all, which encourages me to do better;”
4. Students who have personal musical goals and accomplish at least one of those goals mentioned that they felt better about themselves as musicians.
5. The goal itself is not important; that the students are working toward one is.

1. “Band is a group effort.” The most common theme from Sunny Brook was the student perception that the quality of their individual performance contributes to that of the entire band. “I feel that every musician in the band contributes to the ratings we receive,” wrote one student on the questionnaire; “When we get the rating, I think about my contribution and how I can make it better.” Another student’s response indicated the same idea, going so far as to imply that the group as a whole is only as good as its individual players:

A band is made up of individual musicians, so when a band performs well at contest, it is because the individuals in the band perform well. When our band does well, it makes me proud to be an individual whose contributions to the group
helped earn a favorable rating.

Several other students also commented on what they termed a “team” concept; every person had a role, but no one member was more important than the group:

I feel like we were very accomplished. Everyone has a role, and for our band to [get] a good rating, each member’s role had to have been good. It’s a team game, and we all have to work together to succeed. I feel like a better musician after we do well, because that probably means I did alright too.

One student said that the ratings his band earned did not affect his own beliefs about himself as a musician because he was only a part of the success: “The ratings do not influence my feeling because a good rating means everyone did well. It’s like in sports: It takes a good team to succeed and not just one person.”

This camaraderie and team concept appeared to help students during high pressure situations, like adjudicated events, where they felt comfortable knowing that it was perfectly acceptable to make mistakes during a performance, and that their peers would still be accepting of them as a member of the group.

After earning a favorable rating at a contest, I can always feel better about my music abilities, because even if I made mistakes while playing, I had my peers there with me who could back me up. Band is a group effort.

The students’ belief that band is a group effort was also echoed in the students’ responses to an undesired rating. Many students noted that they would not feel bad about themselves as individual musicians if their band earned an undesired rating, because it was the fault of the group as a whole.
If the band earns an undesired rating, it’s always disappointing, but I try not to let it discourage me about my personal music abilities. Band is a group effort—there will not be one individual winner and one individual loser. Everyone in band contributes their best.

The students who participated in the focus group session largely confirmed responses they had given on the initial questionnaire, including the idea that these particular students valued, almost needed, cooperation with their peers. Since we were discussing an ensemble-based activity where the objectives of the group as a whole can be derailed by the poor performance of just a few individuals, it was no surprise to me that a discussion about band assessments turned into a conversation about student interpersonal relationships. A majority of the interview centered on this topic. The students indicated that it was necessary for all members of the band to cooperate with one another to achieve the group’s objectives, and they recognized that the quality of their individual performance contributed to that of the entire group.

When the students in the focus group were discussing their feelings about adjudicated band events, Lisa, an 11th grade flutist, said she was unaffected by the band’s ratings:

Personally, they don’t really affect me. You know, I’m happy that the band did well as a whole, but it’s very much a team effort, and a reflection on the band as a whole isn’t really a good reflection on the individual player.

Jen’s response focused more on how the ratings can indicate “room for improvement:”

It helps working together. It definitely boosts everybody’s confidence knowing
that together you created something so great if you get a good rating. And the bad ones just help you know that there’s always room for improvement no matter what.

Tim concurred:

Definitely if you get a bad rating, the mood of the band as a whole would be more sad and stuff. Even individual players would be a little like, ‘Okay, is there something I could have done better to help the rating?’

The discussion about good and bad ratings eventually turned into one about success and failure. Lisa was very direct in her response when she and her peers were talking about how they defined “success” as members of their band.

I think that knowing that your contribution to the band helped the overall positive outcome. Knowing that I, you know, I did something to help everyone else.

Working together.

And, almost as a reciprocal of the previous statement, the students agreed that “failure” in band was a lack of cooperation within the group.

Researcher: Okay, how do you guys define ‘failure’ in band?

Tim: Not doing your part.

Jen: Yeah, not pulling your weight. I think that’s more of a personal thing. Like, it’s based on individuals and not the whole group. I don’t think the whole group could fail unless everyone just didn’t want to be there.

Likewise, the director of the Sunny Brook Pride, Jane, also noticed the cohesive way her students interacted with one another. In fact, she attributed their reactions to
earning good ratings to “teamwork,” but conceded that her students’ ability to cooperate well with one another may have been related to their familiarity with one another, having attended a small, private school together for many years.

“…There’s a lot of yelling and cheering and clapping and high-fives, and that sort of thing. I think it’s due to the teamwork. I mean, these kids have grown up together, a lot of them since [grades] K–3. They know each other’s family, they’ve bonded in ways that maybe public school kids [do] in a small town…I think the reaction comes from that bond of, ‘Hey, we did this together and we’re super proud.’

In a group effort to improve results, Jane also noted that her students appeared to be readily willing to point out one another’s successes in the performance:

They’re real quick to point out each other’s successes: ‘Drumline: You really tightened up the second movement, and the visuals are really getting better; the flute solo sounded awesome.’ I love to hear them compliment each other because I think it means even more than coming from me.

One of Jane’s students also commented in her questionnaire on the students’ tendency to support one another through critique:

I feel bad of course [if we get a bad rating]. If I did something wrong, I feel worse. But I always reassure the person who messed up (since we’re a small band, we tend to just tell each other).

Regardless of the means to which the students at SBHS developed their camaraderie and teamwork skills with one another, the findings indicated that the
students and their director viewed these qualities as essential to the function of their program.

2. “I am only disappointed with myself if I feel that I messed up and caused the bad rating.” Students’ comments were mixed regarding how the results their band earned at adjudicated events affected their beliefs about themselves as musicians. About half of the students surveyed at Sunny Brook noted that they were “disappointed” with themselves when their band earned undesired ratings; however, just as many students indicated they “don’t think any less” of their musical abilities, and attributed that feeling to the camaraderie within the group. “I do feel a little disappointed,” wrote one student, “but I still am confident and enjoy band a lot.” Another student said, “If my band gets a poor rating at a contest, I don’t feel like that score was my fault. We all play together, so we should be judged together.” “Unless I did really bad in that particular run, I don’t think any less of my musical abilities,” said yet another student. “Band is a team sport and the success of the performance rides on the backs of all the members, not just me.”

However, not all students had the same sentiments when it came to their personal feelings about earning poor ratings. A few students were very critical of themselves and their performances; one student even said he was “scared for the next contest.”

When the band receives a bad rating everyone is upset. [You’re] beating yourself up even through it wasn’t your fault. I personally start doubting. I’m scared for the next contest and worried what people will say.

While one student expressed his fear about the next performance, another noted that he was the only person to blame for the poor ratings.
I would probably blame myself a lot for our band’s bad scores. We work hard for contests, and for us not to do well is saddening. I feel like I’m not reading my potential. I’m a competitive person. When we lose, you can’t really blame anybody but yourself.

Still another student insisted that his mistakes caused the poor rating. “I am only disappointed with myself if I feel that I messed up and caused the bad rating.”

Jane saw her success or failure as a director in the ratings her ensemble earned, and equated poor ratings with naïveté; however, she conceded that the event was still “a snapshot” of one day and one performance.

I think you can’t help but judge yourself on it sometimes. The experience of having a little success has helped me to validate that I was teaching hard; I was doing a lot of good things before. But being young, I didn’t know if I was doing it right or not. I just knew I had not been successful. I think it’s only natural to judge yourself on it, but you have to keep in mind it’s a snapshot of one day of how they sounded; it’s not everyday.

These responses indicated a dichotomy of sorts: For the students, when their band earned great ratings, the students said that the success was related to the effort of the entire group, and not themselves as individuals; however, their feelings appeared to be quite mixed when their band’s results were not so great. More students at Sunny Brook were apt to blame themselves for their band’s poor ratings than to view them within the same context as when the band did well. This seemed to indicate that while they agreed that they all contributed as individuals to a great performance, a few members were more
critical of their individual performances, placing more blame upon themselves for the band’s poor rating.

3. “I feel as if I did not give it my all which encourages me to do better.”

Irrespective of how the students at Sunny Brook viewed the results their band earned at adjudicated performance events, most understood and articulated that they used the judges’ comments as a springboard for improving their own musicianship. One student wrote:

The ratings at contest make me happy if it’s a 1st division, but also make me want to work harder. If it is a 2nd division, I’m okay with it, but I still think I need to get better.

Another student noted that the band’s ratings “definitely” influenced the feeling she had about her own musical abilities, but also said that the “people around her” motivated her to improve:

When my band plays well I feel good about myself and about the people around me because it makes me know that they worked hard to get there. I think when everyone plays great it especially makes me happy and it motivates [me] to work a lot harder. I think my band’s rating definitely influences my personal feelings as a musician.

Furthermore, similar to the SBHS findings presented thus far, the results the Sunny Brook Pride earned at adjudicated performance events helped its students see the value in teamwork and strive toward individual improvement. “I feel that every musician in the band contributes to the ratings we receive,” wrote a member of the ensemble; “When we
get the rating, I think about my contribution and how I can make it better.”

While the data showed that the students of the Sunny Brook Pride worked to improve their individual musicianship no matter what ratings the ensemble received, this need to improve was especially prominent when the students wrote about their feelings about themselves if their band earned an unfavorable rating. For example, one member wrote:

When our band gets an undesired rating it makes me pretty upset but I try to look for the positives. It makes me want to wake up at 5 in the morning get to the band room and practice. It makes me feel like it’s my fault, then I hear all the embarrassing things other people have done and I realize it’s not all my fault. Practicing harder and more frequently seemed to be a few students’ answers to their band not achieving its desired rating. On his questionnaire, one student stated that he was “disappointed” but wanted to make sure the group did “better the next time:”

When we receive an undesired rating, I am disappointed, and I thought that we should have done better, and that we should do better the next time. So we practice till we do it the best [that] we can.

Another student expressed that she could “tell” whether or not the band earned a bad rating and uses those results to improve her performance. She stated, “I usually can tell that we got a bad rating before we get it. I know what I did wrong personally, and I pursue to correct it.” Similarly, her peer said, “I feel as if I did not give it my all which encourages me to do better.”

The data from the focus group session about this theme were no different. In one
of their first responses, Lisa and Jen spoke about the judges’ comments and how they viewed them as essential for their band program.

Lisa: The judges’ comments at assessments help us to become better as a band.

Jen: They just help us improve a lot. They tell us what we need to be doing, like, they just generally help. Sometimes they catch things that we don’t really catch because we do it all the time.

Jane also spoke about improvement as a goal for her ensemble; in fact, she said it was the “most important” goal for her as a director. “I think the most important goal has to be for them to improve. Because you can be a first-division band and be pretty stagnant.” Jane’s words appeared to imply that, just because a band earned a first-division, it did not necessarily mean that its membership was being challenged and that the band members were working to consistently improve. Although she expressed her frustration about not earning the rating she thought her students deserved, she noted that the adjudicated event was a “measured” part of the “growth process” for her students.

So, my experience early on was pretty frustrating. I would work, work, work really hard and feel like I was doing the best I could to get the group prepared. I would leave pretty much feeling proud of the kids’ performance and how much they had improved through the process. So, I think the process is good, because you do get to see that growth in sort of a measured way.

4. Students who had personal musical goals and accomplished at least one of those goals mentioned that they felt better about themselves as musicians. While the students indicated a variety of goals that ranged from having none to earning a spot in the
all-region and all-state bands, nearly a third of responses indicated that students who had personal goals and accomplished at least one of their goals felt better about themselves as musicians. For instance, when talking about “finally” earning a chair in the top all-region band, one student exclaimed:

I always try to make all-region band. I set my goal on making first band. When I practiced for hours and finally made first band I felt incredible! I went to band the next Monday with my head held high. I was so happy.

One of this student’s peers had apparently been making all-region for quite some time, raising her standards after every successful audition:

In seventh grade I made 1st band 5th chair; 8th grade I made 1st band 3rd chair; this year as a 9th grader I plan to make 1st band 1st chair clarinet. At senior high, I would want to make all-state. I feel amazing when I accomplish [these goals]. It affects me greatly. It boosts my confidence.

Even those students who were not considering pursuing musical endeavors after high school had apparently seen some value in pursuing their own musical goals:

I do not plan to make a career out of band or anything music-related, but I’ve had goals in music before. I’ve made all-region and that always makes me feel good when I’m representing the band. Accomplishing a goal like this helps to grow me as a band member.

In the focus group conversation, Lisa also stated that she made it a point to pursue the goal of annually making the all-region band:

My personal goal every year is to try to at least make the all-region band. I would
like to make all-state, but I’m not really planning on going into any musical
career, and so I don’t put as much time into it.

While many students set their sights on a chair in an honor band, one student took
a more benevolent stance with his goals, wanting to be viewed as a member on whom his
peers can count:

I want to be a distinguished leader of the band. I just would like people to look up
to me. Setting goals really helps me strive for my full potential. I’ve always
wanted to see how good I could actually be. It’s hard to measure experience, but
(in my opinion) it has a lot to do with success. When the band succeeds, I feel like
I succeed too. I want to help the band do better and get better.

More than half of the SBHS students mentioned that they desired to get better and
improve themselves as musicians for their band, themselves, or their future endeavors.
One student wrote, “I hope to become an excellent musician and incorporate music into
my future career. Being in band and working hard is helping me to accomplish those
goals.” Another student had three goals that ranged from persisting in music to learning
challenging pieces of music:

My personal music goals are to stay in band all through high school, to be 1st
trumpet at least once, and to master some fun songs that are challenging.

Whenever I complete a goal, I feel that I have put in the effort and success is the
goal. By accomplishing these goals, I feel that I am becoming better in the band.

The type of goal the students chose notwithstanding, time and again the band
students of Sunny Brook High indicated that they had a marked increase in positive
feelings about themselves as musicians as a result of accomplishing one of their musical goals. The students in the focus group made this evident during one exchange about the proclivity for students to pursue a chair in the all-region and all-state bands:

Researcher: What is significant about all-region and all-state in your minds?
Lisa: Well, it allows you to play in a band that’s composed of a lot of talent. There’s something about seeing your name on that list and seeing how your hard work helped you to accomplish that, and that makes me feel really good.
Jen: Especially if it’s one of your goals!
Lisa: Right, right!
Jen: To accomplish [the goal], you know, it’s great!

5. The goal itself was not important; that the participants were working toward one was. While examining the data collected on participants’ goals, one very important observation emerged: Holistically, the type of goal (e.g., making all-region, improving as a musician, working toward the future, having fun) did not seem important to the participants; that they were working toward some measurable degree of improvement was. I was able to draw this conclusion based upon the evidence that, according to my transcripts, no participants felt bad about themselves if they were working toward a specific musical goal.

For instance, one student said, “My only goal as a musician is to play to the best of my ability. Knowing I have done the best that I can do makes me feel satisfied,” while his peer noted, “My goal is to become better every day at band. It makes me enjoy band a lot more.” It can be said that both of these participants had the same goal (to become
better musicians) and in doing so they were “satisfied” and “enjoy band.” While their goals were not as specific when compared to some of their peers, the results were the same. For example, one of their peers wrote that her goal was:

    to be able to make a beautiful sound and be able to play higher on the scale. I feel overjoyed! For instance, I finally figured out how to do good vibrato and have a more rounded sound. It makes my experience better because I enjoy [playing more].

All three participants noted positive feelings about accomplishing their goals regardless of what those goals were, or how simple or complex they were. Therefore, it was not what the band students at SBHS were working toward, it was that they had a direction and were steadily making their way to that destination.

    Just because students set goals did not mean they would complete them successfully. What goes through one’s mind when this happens? Even though the specific objective was not accomplished, did this mean that all of that hard work was for naught? Without me asking the focus group these questions directly, Lisa offered a glimpse into how she felt once after she did not accomplish one of her goals: making the all-region band.

    Lisa: I’ve been there, and it’s very disappointing. And you kind of feel like, ‘Uh! I wasted all that time practicing the music.’ Despite her disappointment she maintained a positive attitude and was able to articulate some benefits of her hard work:

    Lisa: But you know, there is no practice time that is necessarily wasted. And even
when the band as a whole maybe doesn’t get that rating they wanted, the practice
time you put into it isn’t wasted. You’re still working together and playing the
same music.
While Lisa’s disappointment may have been about the time she “wasted” practicing, her
focus centered on the fact that she was not selected to the all-region band; however, it is
likely – if her practice time was effective – that her practice time was not wasted. While
her self-efficacy beliefs appeared to be affected because she did not accomplish her goal,
in fact, Lisa may have been a better player overall because of her dedication to working
toward a specific musical objective. During our interview, she noted that she did, indeed,
earn a chair in the all-region band the following year.

Summary

The findings from Sunny Brook High School revealed that the participants (a)
believed that participation in band is a group effort; (b) blamed themselves for poor
ratings if they believed they were the cause; (c) were encouraged to expend more effort if
they feel that they did not participate fully; (d) felt better about themselves as musicians
if they are able to accomplish personal musical goals; and (e) had higher indications of
self-beliefs if they were working toward a personal goal. These findings will be
expanded and discussed further in Chapters 7 and 8.
Chapter 5: Rolling Hills High School

*I think as a band director, my focus is on the individual musicianship...I try to make my goal for every kid to be able to play their instrument really well. And then if they’re a good enough individual musician and we get them enough ensemble playing, then the ensemble will come together.*

-Wesley, Director at Rolling Hills High School

Rolling Hills High School is a suburban district of approximately 1,300 students in West-Central Arkansas. The district serves Pre-K through twelfth grade students, with an average of about 85 students in the graduating class each year. Rolling Hills is unique in that its property tax base is composed of mostly retirement homes worth several millions of dollars, while the student population it serves is mostly low income to poverty level. According to the National School Lunch Program, its annual free-reduced lunch rate hovers at or around 50%, slightly below the state average of 55.4%.

RHHS is nestled just outside an area of the state rich in culture and tradition for Arkansans. As a result, this area is a prime tourist region. This part of the state also attracts many retirees from around the country, mostly due to the lower tax rates and steady property values. In fact, the majority of the tax revenue comes from those who have retired and moved into the district: generally the demographic that tends to not have school-aged children. In the past, these issues have put school officials at odds with its constituents, as RHHS has been at the center of some very important legislation to come through the Arkansas General Assembly.
In 1994, another school district in Arkansas accused the state’s governor of failing to adequately and equitably fund public schools in the state. Rolling Hills was not involved in this particular lawsuit. The subsequent case resulted in a 15-year prolonged battle in the court system, rising all the way to the Arkansas Supreme Court, until it eventually was settled for the plaintiff; Arkansas’s schools would now be funded based on student population as opposed to the original formula which was based on tax revenue.

Although Rolling Hills was not directly involved in that particular case, according to the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), their tax revenue exceeded the amount they would be allotted under the current formula based on their student population. Therefore, in 2010, the ADE demanded that Rolling Hills return the excess revenue to the general fund for distribution to other school districts in the state, citing the aforementioned case. The school board and administration at Rolling Hills disagreed, and instead, filed a suit against the ADE to keep the remainder of the tax revenue for the district. After a two-year court battle and countless appeals on both sides, in 2012, the Arkansas Supreme Court ruled in a split decision that school districts, including Rolling Hills, could keep their excess tax revenue. This cemented Rolling Hills’s status as a small school with a great amount of monetary resources. The excess cash allowed the district to hire more administrators and athletic coaches, build state-of-the-art athletic facilities for its state-championship teams, a new middle school, and community safe rooms to use in the event of severe weather. While there are enough funds to hire an assistant band director for the growing band program, the band program is sadly still a one-person job.
The Pride of Rolling Hills. The Pride of Rolling Hills is the 58-member marching band for Rolling Hills High School. In the last five years, it has undergone many changes to adapt to the quickly changing educational culture of the district. The current middle school principal built the Pride of Rolling Hills during the first 18 years of his career before retiring his baton and moving into the Rolling Hills administration in 2008. During his tenure as director, the Pride, consisting of over 100 members, was invited to a number of honorary performances at the state and national levels, and they were twice honored with a citation of excellence from two previous governors of Arkansas. Under his leadership, the band grew to become known as one of the more preeminent small school bands in the state.

The Pride has had two directors in the last five years; however, their tradition of excellence and musicianship continued despite changes in leadership at all levels. Until the fall of 2009, the Pride was made up of students in grades 8 through 12. With the creation of the new middle school housing grades 5 through 8, the administration no longer desired 8th graders to participate in high-school band activities, causing an abrupt change of dynamic in the band program. Now, students who had eagerly anticipated becoming a member of the Pride in the 8th grade would have to wait another year, enrolling instead in a newly-created 8th grade band. This angered students and parents alike, but it also caused the Pride’s enrollment to shrink, causing a community backlash against the current director because he was accused of facilitating the resulting drop in enrollment.

The Pride of Rolling Hills maintains a culture of shared responsibility,
accountability, and excellence in musicianship. Furthermore, its director, as the only
director for over 150 students in the program, emphasizes and facilitates the leadership
qualities in his students, as he requires them to take ownership for aspects of the program
that are prime for student leadership roles such as the loading crew, uniform crew, and
field crew. During my two visits, as I looked around the room, I could see the students of
the Pride helping one another with their music, practicing their parts together, and
celebrating one another’s accomplishments.

**Meet Wesley.** Wesley is a second-generation music educator and is in his third
year as the director for the Pride of Rolling Hills. Prior to accepting the job at RHHS, he
worked for one year as a director in a middle school in central Arkansas. Wesley is
married with one adopted child; he and his wife are contemplating adopting more
children and have just gone through training to become foster parents. Both he and his
wife are music educators: Wesley teaches secondary instrumental music and his wife
teaches elementary music at another school in town. His father, who is recently retired
from a very successful career as a music educator in Arkansas, lives close to Rolling
Hills; he once served on the board for the Arkansas School Band and Orchestra
Association (ASBOA) and was also named Bandmaster of the Year in 2005 by the
Arkansas Bandmasters’ Association (ABA).

Wesley and I met in the summer of 2012 at the annual ABA Conference and
became fast friends due to our similar passion for arts education: We both believe in
music’s potential to make a positive impact on students. Upon his appointment at Rolling
Hills, Wesley immediately began to experience success, mostly due to his friendly and
upbeat disposition when addressing the students and the camaraderie the students displayed despite going through a change in directors. In the last three years, Wesley has molded the program into a group that is swiftly becoming one of the most well-respected performing groups for its size in the state.

**Findings for Rolling Hills High School**

I administered the student questionnaire and conducted the director interview in January of 2015 and I collected the data from the focus group in March of 2015. The most common themes observed in the data relating to how the students of the Pride of Rolling Hills felt about their participation in adjudicated music events were as follows:

1. The ratings the ensemble earned at assessment appeared to have a mixed influence on individual students’ beliefs regarding their own abilities as musicians.

2. Ensemble ratings, especially poor ratings, seemed to motivate the students to improve as individual musicians, practice harder, or concentrate more during rehearsals and performances.

3. Students appeared to have a sense that their individual musical performance contributed to the quality of the whole ensemble’s performance.

4. The goal itself is not important; that the students are working toward one is.

5. Although the students specified a variety of goals, earning a chair in the all-region and all-state honor bands was particularly important to the students and their director.
1. The ratings the ensemble earned at assessment appeared to have a mixed influence on individual students’ beliefs regarding their own abilities as musicians.

Findings at RHHS revealed that if the student’s self-efficacy beliefs were affected by the band’s ratings, the direction of influence mirrored the ensemble’s results at assessment. So, if the ensemble performed well, that prompted an increase in an individual student’s beliefs about themselves as musicians. Conversely, the results of a poor assessment rating facilitated a decrease in individual student’s beliefs about their own musicianship. It was as though the assessment results were a verification or validation that the students were good musicians: The students equated good ratings with good musicianship and vice-versa. One participant’s response revealed this point very succinctly:

> Based on what the band rates at a contest affects my feelings. If the band scores low, I feel as if it was my fault and I try to figure out what I did wrong. If the band scores high, I feel I did good as an individual musician. My feelings on how I did all depend on the band’s rating.

Another student agreed: “My band’s ratings at contest influence my personal feelings either negatively or positively depending on how good or bad the ratings are.” A few other students also mentioned that they felt the results their band earned at adjudicated music events affected their beliefs about themselves. For instance, the band’s drum major took her role in the program especially seriously, assigning fault to herself if the ensemble’s performance did not go well:

> Being drum major, I feel accomplished as if I am doing my job when we, as a whole, have good scores at marching competitions. If we have bad scores, I feel
as if I’m not doing something right and it makes me feel like I am not being a good enough musician to fulfill my duties.

A couple of her peers shared her feelings, writing, “I feel like somewhat of a failure as a musician when the band does poorly at contest.” “I think of all that I did wrong and I blame myself for the score. I feel like I’m holding my band back.” Still another member voiced similar feelings of self-blame:

If we get a good rating then I feel good about myself as a musician because my contribution to the band led to a good score. If we get a bad score I think of all the things I did wrong that could have led to the bad score.

Wesley conceded his difficulty in keeping the ratings of his bands in perspective as a music educator:

It’s hard not to see the ratings as a measure of the success of your year, the success of your teaching, music choices, and whether or not your students were able to do what they were supposed to do. It’s a rating based off of one single performance; everybody’s got good performances and bad performances. I just try to see it as a reflection of how I did as a teacher and how the students did playing the music I asked them to play.

Wesley demonstrated his difficulty in keeping perspective when, during his closing remarks, I provided an opportunity for him to express any other concern he had about adjudicated musical performances. Although he had a generally positive view about the preparation process and the potential benefits to his students, Wesley took issue with how judges were selected to evaluate a particular adjudicated event:
As far as the assessments go, I just wish they were more uniform. Sometimes it just seems like you could take the same show to a marching contest and depending on what judges you have and what their background is, it really could go either way a lot of the time. For instance, in our region this year, they had people judging that had also had experience judging like, BOA Semifinals and stuff like that. And that’s just—it’s a completely different setting. And I know that they try to understand that things are different, but every assessment that we go to, it always feels like, oftentimes, there’s a different difficulty level, you know.

Moreover, Wesley was not concerned with the rating that his ensemble earned, but that the rating was a “consistent” measure of how his students had performed in comparison with other bands:

I think that as long as the assessments are working towards being more consistent, I think that would be the best. I’m not worried about getting high ratings every time or low ratings every time, you know, whatever. As long as a “two” this year is a “two” next year is a “two” every year. Then I would be happy as long as it’s just consistent.

These comments clearly indicated that many research participants at Rolling Hills, including Wesley, took their adjudicated musical event results as a direct reflection of their own musical abilities (or in the case of Wesley, his abilities as an educator), despite the process itself being an evaluation of the whole group and not individual players. Nevertheless, although many student responses indicated an association between
their beliefs in themselves as musicians and their band’s ratings at these events, a similar number of students noted feelings toward the contrary. “It doesn’t really change my feelings either way (win or lose),” wrote one student. “It’s fun to get to contest; it’s not supposed to bring your feelings down.” A baritone player suggested that the ratings of the ensemble were not the same as individual ratings:

It doesn’t bother any of my feelings about myself because the best baritone player in the world could play in a marching band, and if the band is bad, then it’s the band as a whole that’s bad, not the individual that’s bad.

There were similar expressions from other members, one of whom called the ratings “silly:” “They don’t affect me at all in complete honesty. I feel as if I can separate the whole band’s performance from myself because I, myself, try to do the best of my abilities, so I am satisfied by that.” Another student stated, “If we win or lose, it does not affect me that much. I am proud of myself, my abilities as a musician, and my band; a silly score can’t affect that.”

The conversation during the student focus group interview resulted in a similar array of responses. Elizabeth, a junior flautist, alluded to how mixed her peers’ feelings were about adjudicated music performance events:

I feel like we all did pretty good; I feel good about myself, but everyone else, I’m sure, feels different about their performance. But considering how good we did, I’m sure everyone gave more than half their effort to it. ‘Cause if one person doesn’t, then, it does affect our scores.

However, Sonya, a ninth grade clarinetist, mentioned that how the group as a whole is
rated is not as important as how the individual feels about his or her own individual performance:

If you get a lower score, as long as you know that you did good as an individual, that’s all that really matters. You tried your hardest, and the score will affect you a little bit; I mean, who wants a terrible score?

While about half of the students from Rolling Hills tied their beliefs in their own musicianship to the results of their band’s adjudicated musical events, the other half exhibited some resilience to the ratings, understanding that the judgment on the ensemble was not necessarily a judgment upon themselves as individual musicians, merely an opportunity to improve. Generally speaking, if participants indicated that they felt bad about themselves as a direct result of their ensemble earning a poor rating at adjudicated events, it was usually qualified with a statement about how they should improve as musicians, practice harder, or concentrate more during rehearsals and performances, as discussed in the following theme.

2. Ensemble ratings, especially poor ratings, seemed to motivate the students to improve as individual musicians, practice harder, or concentrate more during rehearsals and performances. Raymond, a senior percussionist who participated in the focus group session defined “success” as the following: “‘Being able to play your instrument to the best of your ability.’ and ‘Having a better tone than others,’ I guess. Just having good tone and being good at your instrument.” Wesley, the young director of the Pride of Rolling Hills, appeared to concur, describing “success” as more about the quality of individual musicianship his students demonstrated during an adjudicated music event
rather than an opinion of a panel of three of his peers; however, he did not discount the
potential educational benefits the process of working toward an adjudicated performance
can bring to his students. “I think assessment is a really important thing to do,” he said.
“It really helps give the kids feedback and provides a worthy goal to aim towards.” In
addition to the two aforementioned quotes, the RHHS band students’ responses to the
questionnaire appeared to exemplify this second theme:

When our band gets a low rating, that’s ok, but it tells me we definitely need to
practice more, and I need to practice more to make the band better. It makes me
feel as if we had a bad day, didn’t care, or need more practice.

Furthermore, this idea seemed to be foremost on the students’ minds more so if
they earn a poor rating at an adjudicated musical event. One participant’s comments
clearly illustrated this point: “I feel like an undesired rating will show me that I, myself,
need to kick it in gear and put more effort into the music we play whether I like it or not.”
Another student wrote:

I feel upset, but it pushes me to want to try harder and do better the next time. It
also makes me feel like it’s all my fault and if I would have done something
differently, then we could have gotten better scores than we did.

A third student stated, “I sometimes feel like it’s my fault but it makes me try harder to
be a better player.” Finally, when writing about her feelings about earning poor ensemble
ratings, a fourth student noted, “Like most people, it upsets me at first, but it shows me
that I need to work harder and practice more.” More than half of the other participants
had similar comments on this theme, such as:
“I always think I can do better, no matter what type of rating. When our rating is low, it just gives me more reason to practice more.”

“It still makes me feel good, but the rating tells me and my band that we need to fix our mistakes so we can do better.”

“When we get an undesired score, I feel like I could’ve done so much better. I’m disappointed, but it’s also motivation to try harder.”

“I feel like I have let down my band and that I have to try even harder if I want my band to get what we desire.”

It is conceivable that the students adopted this attitude toward individual musical improvement as a result of their teacher, Wesley, who stated that one of his goals is to focus on the “individual musicianship” in his ensemble:

I think as a band director, my focus is on the individual musicianship…I try to make my goal for every kid to be able to play their instrument really well. And then if they’re a good enough individual musician and we get them enough ensemble playing, then the ensemble will come together.

There were many more quotes present in the data similar to these comments from participants. They seemed to reveal throughout the ensemble an almost ubiquitous desire to improve, knowing that while their hard work may have not earned them the ratings they, as a group, felt they deserved, their continued persistence toward excellence would eventually pay off with better ratings.
3. Students appeared to have a sense that their individual musical performance contributed to the quality of the whole ensemble’s performance. The band students at Rolling Hills understood the necessity for everyone to contribute to the whole product. This finding complements the previous theme relating to participants’ desires to improve their own musicianship skills. Because they knew that they were each a part of a whole that contributed to the success of their ensemble, they understood that if they improved their individual musicianship, they could improve the overall quality of the band’s performance. One student blatantly said, “I feel slightly better about myself but it was a team effort. No lone wolves.” Another musician excitedly declared, “I feel awesome because the band accomplished something as a team that we worked on for months. We made something great!”

Students also seemed aware of when their peers’ actions were incongruent with the shared group efficacy beliefs. For instance, during the focus group, Elizabeth frustratingly mentioned that these individuals may need to find another activity in which to participate:

There’s those few that don’t show up and don’t even try; I feel like if you don’t even try…you’re just…[rising tone of voice] you shouldn’t even…If you don’t want to be there [in band], why be there? Why stay in something you don’t want to be in?

Elizabeth was clearly exasperated with this situation; she, along with the other members of the group, were well aware that there were students in their ensemble that were not contributing to the goals and objectives of the group as a whole. Likewise, Raymond, a
senior percussionist, concurred with Elizabeth, and alluded to an idea that by not bringing a positive attitude to band rehearsals and performances, these individuals were failing themselves along with their ensemble:

Yeah, if you enter into it [band rehearsal or performance] with a mindset that, you’re like, ‘Oh!’ you’re dreading going to it, than that’s failure. Not having a positive attitude for what you’re doing.

While the focus group discourse regarding group efficacy beliefs centered on those students who appeared ambivalent toward the goals and objectives of the ensemble, the questionnaire data indicated a shared belief that improving the individual musicianship fostered the musical growth of the ensemble as well:

I think it would make me want to practice more and try to be better, but the only reason we would get a fabulous rating would be the band, not just me. I do think that it’s okay, but I would still try my hardest to make a better outcome next time so I will feel like I pulled my weight and I did well, great, or even amazing.

Wesley, their director, also saw the benefits to improving the individual, in this case, himself as an educator, for the sake of the group:

I’ve always had trouble with hearing things like balance and blend, so those are areas that I need to work on for ensemble teaching; this is probably my weakest area [as an educator].

Talking about his students, he continued, “If they’re a good enough individual musician and we get them enough ensemble playing, then the ensemble will come together.”

Wesley’s comments gave me insight into the group efficacy beliefs he inculcated into the
culture of his program: The group will become better musically if the student concentrates on improving his or her individual musicianship.

4. **The goal itself is not important; that the students are working toward one is.**

Nearly half of the participants indicated that they felt better about themselves as musicians if they were pursuing at least one mastery goal in music; however, the goal itself was not important. In illustrating this point, one student said, “I feel very good about achieving my personal band goals. It gives me a feeling of accomplishment and achievement.”

The participant responses to the questionnaire regarding feeling “accomplished,” “rewarded,” “better,” and so forth were numerous. Regardless of what goal the participants pursued, their responses indicated an increase in positive self-efficacy beliefs as a result of accomplishing a specific musical goal. One student was very pointed and direct in her response to this query:

Anything you can do I can do better; I won’t stop, I can’t stop, I will never stop until I can do EVERYTHING better than you, or him, or her. I will be AWESOME at this. When I accomplish [my goals], I do “sixth grade me” a favor, or else the past 5 years were a waste and I won’t have that. I’ll be famous for my instrument. That’s how I feel. I can’t stop until I achieve. I’ll be ninety years old sitting in a rocking chair playing my instrument and my family will look at me and say, ‘Really?’ And I’ll say, ‘Always.’

Her response to this question was, positively, the most detailed and poignant response to any question asked throughout the course of this study. Her goal was to be the absolute
best player on her instrument, in homage to her sixth grade self, but she did not offer specific milestones that usually subdivide such a Herculean task into smaller objectives. Despite the lack of specificity, nevertheless her goal remained crystal clear: She will do “EVERYTHING” better than you and will be “AWESOME” at playing her instrument for her entire life.

Albeit lacking such dramatization, many other student responses were just as poignant. One student wrote that his goal was “to always reach a higher standard than yesterday.” Another student wrote:

My musical goal is to get every honor that I can and to go to college and get a full-ride through their band. I feel like the best player that I can be when I accomplish my goals. It makes me want to be even better and that I can influence people to be even better than me.

If the participants reached specific goals, regardless of what they were, they indicated consequential positive increases in their self-efficacy beliefs. The following are some more examples from participants:

“My goals are to make all-region, stop being shy and play with pride, and to get better at sight-reading. After I accomplish a goal, I feel good about myself. It makes me feel like I’m a help to my band.”

“I want to know how to read complicated music and play better as a musician. I feel pretty good. It makes me feel like if I accomplish that then it would help the band even a little bit more.”

“My personal music goals are to always try and to keep practicing and make
beautiful music for others to enjoy. When I accomplish these goals, it makes me happy and makes me feel really good about myself. It affects me as a member of the band by helping me get better musically and not only a better person, but it shows in my chair position and life in general.” As these quotes illustrate, it was not the specific goal that facilitated the participants’ increase in self-efficacy beliefs, rather, it was the mere pursuit and attainment of that musical goal.

5. Although the students specified a variety of goals, earning a chair in the all-region and all-state honor bands was particularly important to the students and their director. Considering that the band students of Rolling Hills knew and understood how their personal musicianship affected the performance quality of their ensemble, it is no surprise that they had selected goals to help promote an increase in their personal musical abilities. Both students and director placed quite an emphasis on earning chairs in honor bands, perhaps due to their constant striving toward individual improvement for the benefit of the ensemble.

During his interview, Wesley implied that honor bands were a cornerstone of his educational philosophy due to the data he obtained from the audition process about his students’ “personal musicianship:”

My goals are just to increase our all-region numbers every year, ‘cause I think that’s a good reflection of personal musicianship in the ensemble. I give a lot of private lessons; I probably do a lot more of that than ensemble teaching.

His students in the focus group session inferred that auditioning for the all-region band was expected of all students in the ensemble. “We make all-region a big thing,” said
Elizabeth. “I haven’t made it yet, but I would like to next year. That’s my biggest goal.”

Sonya replied:

By the end of high school, I want to make all-state. That’s my biggest goal. I know that it’ll take a lot of work, but just even if I made a really poor chair, as long as I could say I made it, that would be pretty cool.

The participants’ reasoning for such an emphasis on one particular goal was also enlightening, in that I could tell the students had been taught about its importance for them as individual musicians and, by proxy, their ensembles. During our conversation about his feelings regarding adjudicated music events, Wesley said that by concentrating on the individual musicianship of his students, he hoped to make the preparation for such events less stressful:

I do try to do well at marching and concert assessment, but I think if I put the focus on those other things I mentioned [individual musicianship, all-region numbers, honor bands], the assessments won’t be quite as much work whenever we get there or quite as much stress on me or the kids.

The students of the focus group took a more competitive stance and expressed that they valued the experience and exclusivity afforded to them at honor band clinics. Elizabeth said:

It places you with better players and you get to go on experiences that if you weren’t to try, then you wouldn’t get to go do those things. And you meet tons of new people and it just makes you feel better about yourself because you get to be in something that a lot of people don’t get to be in.
Many other students noted similar feelings about honor bands. On her questionnaire, one student implied she would experience a surge in musical self-confidence if she achieved her goal of making all-region, declaring:

I want to become amazing at my instrument and make it into all-region. I would feel great because setting my mind to it got me there. When I do accomplish goals, I feel like I’m a bigger part of the band that actually helps out at contests and such.

Another student would not be satisfied unless he made the all-region band his “whole high school career:”

One of my big goals is to make all-region my whole high school career and maybe have a chance at at least getting to try out for all-state. After I accomplish these goals, I would feel happy that all of my effort paid off. Accomplishing my goals will make me a better musician and that way, I will be able to help the band as much as I can.

In addition to this particular participant’s unwavering pursuit toward his goal, he exhibited an altruistic stance toward his value as a member of the ensemble: His band becomes a better band when he becomes a better musician.

Pride of Rolling Hills students and director alike valued the individual benefits they received from preparing and working toward earning a chair in the all-region and all-state honor bands, and were also quite cognizant of the benefits to the ensemble. The repeated comments regarding how the students wanted to “help the band” or “make the band better” were indicative of a culture of mutual trust and cooperation and the
knowledge that their actions as individuals could affect the entire group as a whole unit.

Summary

The findings from Rolling Hills High School suggested that the participants (a) experienced a mix of effects on their efficacy beliefs upon hearing of their results at CMPEs; (b) indicated they were motivated by poor ratings to improve themselves as musicians; (c) exhibited a sense that their individual musical performance contributed to the quality of the whole ensemble’s performance; (d) had higher indications of self-beliefs if they were working toward a personal goal; and (e) placed great emphasis on earning a chair into one of the all-region or all-state honor bands as one of their goals. Again, these findings will be expanded and discussed further in Chapters 7 and 8.
Chapter 6: Faulkner High School

I would like to become a mallet percussionist in college, and I would like to be able to perform difficult and complicated music. When we are allowed to play such music, I feel wonderful because we are creating beauty, and since I am a band member, I help create said beauty.

-A band student from Faulkner High School

Faulkner High School is located in a small district that serves a quaint town of about 2,500 people in south Arkansas. Life is slower there; visitors to Faulkner will not witness the hustle and bustle of a larger city. Rather, people take the time to greet one another; those who live close to the town square tend to go for a walk to window shop in the few local establishments or grab a “cup of joe” at the Boiling Percolator coffee house. There are families that have lived in Faulkner for generations and are the cornerstones of the town’s culture.

The town’s history is rooted in the south Arkansas oil boom of the 1920s. Because of the sudden discovery of oil, the population of Faulkner grew rapidly, almost doubling every few months. At the height of the oil boom in Arkansas in 1925, the town had swelled to well over 20,000 people. Several decades later, it has settled at just 10% of its largest population, but its oil fields continue to operate and supply the town and surrounding areas with a steady and profitable economic resource.

In an effort to help save money on overhead costs of school districts, the Arkansas General Assembly passed legislation about a decade ago which requires public school
districts in Arkansas to maintain a student population of at least 350 students. A district that experienced two consecutive years below this required number would be flagged by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) for possible consolidation with another neighboring district. However, to encourage districts that had a student population at close to the required number, the ADE offered a stipend of $2 million in extra funding, should they choose to consolidate with a neighboring district rather than be forced by the ADE to consolidate.

Several years ago, Faulkner was required by the ADE to annex a district less than 10 miles away. The annexed district’s students were bussed to the Faulkner campus and its buildings remained unused for several years, until they were eventually sold to a faculty member at FHS and repurposed. Furthermore, because it was a forced annexation, Faulkner did not receive the $2 million stipend and had to absorb the annexed district’s students, financial situation, and staff with no additional assistance from the ADE.

Their luck would change a decade later. The board had been in negotiations with another neighboring district for years to begin consolidation proceedings. For one reason or another, they were never able to agree on the terms for a voluntary consolidation. In early 2014, they reached a deal to combine their respective districts, and thus were eligible to receive the stipend. Their consolidation will be final at the beginning of the 2015–2016 school year.

**The Faulkner Pride.** The Faulkner Pride is the 31-member marching band for FHS. The band tripled in membership to almost 80 after incoming students were promoted from lower grades and the annexed district moved in. The Faulkner Pride will
also don new uniforms at the beginning of the 2015–2016 school year, due in no small part to the stipend that the district received for the voluntary consolidation. With the extra revenue, the district has also planned a $750 thousand renovation of their 60-year old music facility.

The Faulkner Pride has a rich history and tradition in Arkansas. In the director’s office hangs a picture of the 1932 Faulkner Pride marching in a local hometown parade. Several directors who would later become pillars of instrumental music education in the state began their careers at FHS, and the program has graduated a number of students who are presently practicing music educators themselves. Despite how influential the program was in shaping music education in Arkansas, it has not been impervious to changes that occur throughout the passage of time. While the administration had mostly been supportive of the program, demographic changes and community culture have shaped the Faulkner Pride into a different organization than it was several decades ago. For a few years now, various circumstances beyond the control of the students influenced their most recent ratings at assessment. During one school year, the Faulkner Pride went through three band directors, all but one of whom left after a few short months. Moreover, the support for the program waned from the central office administration, making certain aspects of the job difficult for the director who stayed to rebuild the program. The band was awarded several accolades in the past but now has a larger emphasis on the students’ enjoyment of the program.

Meet Gene. Today, instead of focusing on trophies and contest ratings, the current director of the Faulkner Pride wants his students to “love music.” His ultimate
goal is to “instill a desire in [his] students to want to make music themselves.” He chooses music that he thinks the students will enjoy, and although he regularly attends marching and concert assessments, he places little pressure on the students to bring home the “hardware.” A 37-year veteran of sacred and secular music education, Gene has taught both band and choir in Florida, Arkansas, and Louisiana. He is in his sixth year at FHS, but not consecutively; he taught at FHS for four years, retired for one year, and is now in the second year of his second stint as director.

A saxophonist who started his musical journey on clarinet, he has three sons who are also quite influential in their own professions (i.e., computer programmer, attorney, accountant, state House of Representatives). Gene has clearly spent his life and career helping children become the best they can be, at both school and home.

Findings for Faulkner High School

I conducted the student questionnaire and director interview portions of this study in January of 2015, and followed up with a visit to collect data from the focus group participants in March of 2015. During the focus group session, three students joined me in a 10-minute discussion about band the band assessment process: Lily, a freshman trumpet player; Jasmine, an eighth grade clarinetist; and George, a senior saxophonist. One of the youngest students in the group, Lily, gave the most information during the interview. She seemed to have an answer for almost every question and spoke with conviction. After analyzing the data, the most common themes for Faulkner High School are as follows:
1. The ratings the ensemble earns at assessment seem to influence individual students’ beliefs regarding their own musicianship.

2. The ratings earned at assessments motivated the students to improve their individual playing skills.

3. Students at Faulkner recognize that their individual performance contributes to that of the entire group.

4. The students who set and achieved a personal musical goal said that they felt better and more confident about their abilities as a musician.

5. In addition to the aforementioned self-belief benefits, students mentioned that when they achieved a personal musical goal, it seemed to validate the time and effort they have expended practicing their instruments.

1. The ratings the ensemble earns at assessment seem to influence individual students’ beliefs regarding their own musicianship.

I feel that your band’s ratings at contest absolutely influence your personal feelings about yourself as a musician. If your band gets a bad rating, you as a musician feel angry or upset. Also, when your band gets a good rating, you as a musician feel elated and happy.

This quote was written on a questionnaire by a student in the Faulkner Pride and was a clear example of this theme. This participant’s response thoughtfully illustrated the rationale the students gave for expressing both their joy at succeeding and disappointment for not earning the rating they felt they deserved at adjudicated musical events.

Moreover, these participants’ responses took on a more melancholy tone when compared
to the data from the previous two cases, and they were clear that their band’s poor ratings were driving their affective responses. “I felt as if I wasn’t good enough to be in the band,” wrote one student. “We made 3s by the way.” Another student concurred. “We made 3s every time so it makes me pretty mad. And sad.” The responses from other participants were very similar. “Usually, if we get a rating of 3–5, I feel as if I am not good enough to be there. On the other hand, the higher the score is, the better I feel.” Gene even commented on this phenomenon, because as their director, he has witnessed first-hand how his students react to their ratings. “When the kids get a good score, they all holler—the all just go crazy,” he said. “When they get less than what they expected, they’re kinda quiet and feel a little let down.” When student participants spoke or wrote about their affective experience after earning poor ratings, their responses were very similar to one another:

“After band gets an undesired rating at contest, I feel that I did not perform adequately, meaning that I feel that my personal musical abilities were lacking.”

“I feel mad, angry, and disappointed.”

“Like I did after losing the state game.”

“Sometimes very mad but mostly sad. I feel that I didn’t do as good as I could. If I just had one more chance to do better.”

“It makes my self-esteem lower in a way just knowing that I worked my butt off and just kind of got crushed.”

During the focus group, Lily also commented on this point. “When you know you messed up on the field and you’re kinda like, ‘I messed up,’ and then you feel like it’s all
your fault if you get a bad score or something.” The participant who wrote that he had similar feelings “after losing the state [football] game” suggested that each adjudicated event is a competition to be won or lost, and that if their group did not succeed as they had hoped by earning a great rating, then they were losers. This same idea appeared in another participant’s response; for instance, the student who noted that she was “crushed” after all of her hard work resulted in a defeat for her and her peers.

When asked about how the participants would feel if their band earned a great rating, the results for most were a reciprocal of previous responses:

“I feel like I finally did something right.”

“After getting a favorable rating at contest, I feel great about my personal musical abilities.”

“I feel happy and loved.”

“It improves my confidence as a band member. It makes me feel like the band worked together.”

“I feel like I did good.”

“I’m all excited to get a score we want. Kind of reminds me of a sugar high, jumping around and screaming.”

There were many other responses that were synonymous with these. Furthermore comments generally alluded to an overall sense from these students that perhaps they did not experience a lot of positive feelings of confidence in their musical performance. The student who wrote that she felt “happy and loved” is one example. Why did earning a great score at an adjudicated musical event evoke feelings of happiness and love in this
participant? Was her band class the only positive experience she received throughout her day? The answers to these questions were beyond the purview of this study, but they would make great topics for future research. Most of these students clearly attributed their worth as a member of the band to their success or failure at adjudicated events: The higher their band’s rating or score, the more positive their beliefs regarding their own musicianship.

Despite the majority of participants at Faulkner High School indicating that they tied their musical self-beliefs to their band’s ratings, some were not so affected by their band’s results at adjudicated musical events. One student blatantly wrote, “Our band’s ratings don’t influence my personal feelings about myself as a musician.” “Our scores do not change my feelings about myself,” wrote another.

Even Gene was very pointed in his response to this question about his feelings toward the ratings his band earned at adjudicated musical events: “Normally, it doesn’t affect me at all,” he declared. Additionally, another student recognized that their results were about the group and not an indictment on the individual performers in the group. “It really didn’t affect my feelings about myself as a musician. The marching contest judges the band as a whole. I myself did my best job.” “My band’s ratings don’t affect my feelings about myself as a musician because we are being judged as a whole band and not me by myself.” There were similar feelings of personal resilience toward the band’s ratings, so long as the participant felt he or she “did my best.” “They don’t really affect my personal feelings because it’s a group project, so as long as I know I did my best, that’s all that matters.”
2. The ratings earned at assessments motivated the students to improve their individual playing skills. The ensemble’s director, Gene, seemed to be quite aware of the data he could obtain by participating at adjudicated performance events; he saw them as a good way to measure student growth and achievement. As a matter of fact, he said, “I enjoy taking the band to all the marching contests I can.” More than likely, this constant stream of data from adjudicators led Gene and his students to set goals for themselves in an effort to improve the group’s overall performance.

When their band earned positive ratings at adjudicated events, the student participants appeared to be motivated to continue working on improving their individual music skills. “I would feel really proud about myself and work a lot harder to get better and better,” wrote one student. One of his peers noted, “It gives me confidence and helps me want to improve.” Another student was quite specific on what she needed to work on individually:

When we get good scores it makes me feel good about my music abilities because I feel that the band needs me and that I can actually play my instrument to maximum potential; but I know I still need to improve on high notes and tonguing and not rushing the band.

Likewise, another student implied that there was no ceiling on how much better a musician one can be, no matter how good the scores were after adjudication. “I feel as though our band worked hard and it paid off, but I’m still working hard because there is always room for improvement.” Lily from the focus group concurred, “If you know you did good, you still wanna improve.”
The findings were very comparable when the participants spoke or wrote about earning undesired ratings at adjudicated music events. “I feel that maybe we could have done better. I could have done better. I think about how I could do something different,” wrote one participant. “It upsets me and sometimes I want to give up; yet I keep pushing forward,” wrote another. A third student suggested that “undesired” ratings were commonplace in her band, but she still wanted to “perfect” her performance: “Most of the time our ratings are undesired. Since this happens a lot, I’m mainly disappointed and start working harder to perfect for the next contest.” One of her peers concurred, “I feel as though we need to work harder and try our best next contest.” The discourse during the focus group interview appeared to mirror these comments:

Lily: Well, if they’re bad, they tell me that we need to put in more work and work harder to get better scores…

George: It just shows what all you have to work on in the future.

Lily seemed to blame herself for her band’s poor ratings because she knew that she “could have put more practice time in:”

If we do bad, everybody kinda needs work. I just get upset at myself ‘cause ‘I could have put more practice time in, but I was busy doing something else that wasn’t really important at that time.’

Gene’s response was very similar to those of his students. In reminiscing about his early career as a music educator, Gene noted that he felt “pressure” to earn excellent ratings; however, as he became more experienced, he realized that undesired ratings were just another opportunity for him to improve himself as a teacher:
When I was younger, now, I felt different. I felt pressure. But as I meld and got older, I realized if you don’t get a one today, the sun’s gonna come up tomorrow regardless. And it’s another day, and you have a chance to do better the next time.

3. *Members of the Faulkner Pride appeared to recognize that their individual performance contributed to that of the entire group.* The evidence for this theme was derived in two ways: First, a few students wrote about either their individual need for improvement or the idea that it takes all members to execute a great product. Second, more than half of the students wrote about how there were some students in their band who were not contributing to the group at the same level of performance.

The theme of camaraderie emerged when a few students wrote about their ensemble earning their desired results. “It improves my confidence as a band member,” wrote one student. “It makes me feel like the band worked well together.” Another student said, “I feel that the band made great performances at the contest that made a great rating.” A third student spoke about his contribution to the overall product: “I feel like I was a required musician and an essential part of the band in order to earn our rating.”

While a few student participants noted their positive feelings about their group efficacy, several others seemed to be quite frustrated with how some of their peers lacked both effort and desire to achieve like the others in the ensemble; this was especially true when the participants discussed the effects that low ratings had on their efficacy beliefs. “It makes me think the band could have done better as a whole,” wrote one student. “It makes me feel like those who didn’t try hindered our score,” wrote another student. And
yet a third student commented, “The band overall hasn’t made over a ‘three’ all season, so it influences my feelings majorly. If everyone would care about the band, we would be making all ‘ones’ at contest.” Another student implied that she did not look to herself when her ensemble earned low ratings; instead, she turned to the group dynamic as a whole to cast blame. “My feelings remain the same about my personal musical abilities. After an undesired rating, I just feel that some in our band don’t work as well together as some others do.” George, who participated in the focus group interview, mentioned, “Complete failure usually only happens with a group of people that don’t care.”

Some of these participants may have been acknowledging that some of their peers were indifferent toward participating in the group, while other participants may have been expressing their disapproval of that perceived indifference. In either case, making a distinction between the two would be meaningless; these participants sensed that their peers’ indifference contributed to the quality of the group’s performance, thus undermining the goals of the ensemble.

4. The students who set and achieved a personal musical goal said that they felt better and more confident about their abilities as musicians. In addition to the three questions relating to students’ feelings about band assessments, the survey also asked about participants’ own personal musical goals. The data from Faulkner High School revealed two common themes as to how the students and their director approached music from a goal achievement perspective: (a) students’ goals were related to comparing themselves with their peers and (b) earning a chair into the all-region band appeared to be the pinnacle of success for these students. Many students commented on their feelings
about accomplishing a personal goal, some going so far as to say it enhances their overall musical experience. One student declared that he “feel[s] like a rockstar” when he accomplishes a musical goal. Although many students were not as expressive with their similes, their responses indicated that they felt the same way:

My personal musical goals are to do the best I can at what I do. I want to make sure that I can do and play anything my instructor asks me to play. When I accomplish these goals it makes me feel like I did something good. I think it helps me as a member of my band. I think that it also helps the band.

Another student concurred:

My personal music goals are to simply be the best that I can be. When I accomplish my goals, I feel great and relieved. Accomplishing my goals [affects] my experience by making it better.

Some students also commented that their purpose was just to help others see that, in their opinion, the judges’ scores or ratings did not matter as long as they felt they did their best:

My personal musical goals are for the band as a whole to know that they did great no matter what the judges say. I feel very pleased when or if this goal is accomplished. Accomplishing this goal helps me to feel that I have done all that I can.

The dialogue during the focus group interview also gave verisimilitude to this idea:

Researcher: Do each of you have personal musical goals that you would like to accomplish, and if so, what do you consider to be the most important goal or goals for
you to accomplish?

Jasmine: To get into the all-region band.

Lily: Mine’s to get into the all-region band, get a blue ribbon at solo and ensemble, and eventually, I’d like to go to college for music.

R: Any particular reason for the all-region band?

J: ‘Cause it’s a big honor.

L: I’ve been wanting to do it for three years. I’ve been working hard. I wanna get in the all-region band ‘cause all my friends are in it and I’m just kinda like, stuck back.

George: Helps gain scholarships.

This discourse revealed two themes: First, much of the time, student participants’ goals were related to competition or comparing themselves to their peers (e.g., all-region, solo and ensemble, competing for scholarships to collegiate band programs), especially when Lily commented that her not accomplishing that goal of earning a chair in the all-region band left her “stuck back” when compared to her friends and peers. Second, earning a chair in the all-region band seemed to be a pinnacle of success for many of the students at Faulkner Pride, one of whom called the accomplishment an “honor.” During his interview, Gene did not mention anything about encouraging or requiring his students to audition for the all-region band, as was the situation for the previous two case studies.

5. In addition to the aforementioned self-belief benefits, students mentioned that when they achieved a personal musical goal, it seemed to validate the time and effort they have expended practicing their instruments. Similar to the previous two case studies, the type or nature of the participant’s goal was not a factor in increasing their
musical self-beliefs. While the range of specific goals varied from becoming an R&B singer to traveling the world teaching others how to play the trumpet, data showed it was more important for the participants to be working toward a goal than to be concerned about what the goal actually was. In almost every instance, participants who were pursuing goals of any kind noted a sense of “accomplishment” or “achievement” after completing the goal or imagining they had completed the goal. For example, one student wrote about his selection to the high school ensemble as a middle school student:

When I accomplish my goals I feel like I’m on top of the world and then I set my goals higher and higher. It makes me look like I can hold my own and last year, when I was in 8th grade, I had to prove myself worthy of being in senior high band.

Another student wrote about all the instruments he desired to learn how to play:

My goals are to learn acoustic and electric guitar, banjo, violin, and cello. But my band related goals are basically just to memorize the marching music. I do feel accomplished, and I feel like I’m helping the band.

A third student wrote about how she wanted to teach others and conquer the world of trumpet performance: “I would want to travel America, teach kids how to play the trumpet, and be a famous trumpet player.” And another member wanted to help her peers understand that the results their ensemble earns at adjudicated events are only opinions:

My personal musical goals are for the band as a whole to know that they did great no matter what the judges say. I feel very pleased when or if this goal is accomplished. Accomplishing this goal helps me to feel that I have done all that I
Furthermore, this theme was reinforced when the students discussed the quality of their experience in the band. The students appeared to have a better experience in the band because they were working toward their own goals in addition to the objectives of the ensemble. If the ensemble did not receive the ratings they desired as a group, the individual students working toward goals of their own appeared to be less affected by the ratings than those who did not have goals. “I feel very comfortable when I accomplish these goals,” said one student. “It has a good effect on my experience as a band member.” Another student’s goal was to earn a different chair. “I want to improve and make it to at least second chair. It will make me happy and feel like I accomplished something. It gives me a great experience.” A third student concurred:

My personal music goals are to simply be the best that I can be. When I accomplish the goals, I feel great and relieved. Accomplishing my goals affects my experience by making it better.

While many students were concerned more with concrete goals, one student took a more aesthetic approach:

I would like to become a mallet percussionist in college, and I would like to be able to perform difficult and complicated music. When we are allowed to play such music, I feel wonderful because we are creating beauty, and since I am a band member, I help create said beauty.

Should these students actually accomplish their goals, not only might their self-efficacy beliefs increase, but they would probably not be as concerned about the ensemble’s
ratings; thus, their experience as members of the band would be better because they set and accomplished their own goals. Moreover, while the specific nature of the goals was quite varied among participants, most noted a positive increase in their musical confidence when they did accomplish or imagined what their experience would be like if they did accomplish a goal they set for themselves.

When Gene discussed the goals he had set for his ensemble, his response revealed his own educational philosophy, whereby he focused on what music could do for his students and not what accolades they could achieve together:

My goal for kids in band is for them to finish school, look back and say, ‘I love music.’ I want them to love music more than— I’m more concerned about that than I am the scores, you see. That’s just my personal opinion. If they’re happy with what they do and do the very best that they can, I don’t care. If their best is only a three, that’s fine; ‘course we push for a one all the time. But, if their best is only a three and they enjoyed it, I’m happy with that.

Gene appeared to strike a balance between his personal educational philosophy and what he believed his students needed. Although he would take them to a number of contests a year, he also centered his pedagogical skills on ensuring that his students enjoyed the process of making music. This is most likely substantiated in the creative diversity of his students’ goals. Because he cared more about the process of making music than the scores, his students were free to pursue what they desired in an effort to improve their own musicality. The creation of lifelong musicians could arguably be the apex of any music educator’s career, and Gene appeared to be close to achieving that goal.
Summary

The findings from Faulkner High School indicated that the participants (a) experienced effects on their efficacy beliefs upon hearing of their results at CMPEs; (b) indicated they were motivated by their results at CMPEs to improve themselves as musicians; (c) exhibited a sense that their individual musical performance contributed to the quality of the whole ensemble’s performance; (d) had higher indications of self-beliefs if they were working toward a personal goal; and (e) experienced a validation of their time and effort when they accomplished one of their personal goals. Again, these findings will be expanded and discussed further in Chapters 7 and 8.
Chapter 7: Cross-Case Analysis

It’s still just a snapshot of one day. Something could go wrong that never went wrong before—it doesn’t define you. . . You have to learn how to keep moving and teach Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and be important to the kids.

And then, I think you’re a good director if you can do that.

-Jane, Director at Sunny Brook High School

A total of ninety-one students and three directors from three high school bands in the State of Arkansas volunteered their time, effort, and thoughtfulness to this project. I examined their responses and analyzed them using a priori codes and expanded the analysis into emergent themes in an effort to gain insight into the students’ and directors’ experiences with the assessment process. While the literature suggested that assessment in education is an important part of measuring our efficacy as educators, this study is intended to help us be cognizant of the effects these assessments have on our students’ self-efficacy beliefs as musicians.

In this chapter, I will present a cross-case analysis of the data presented from each of the three schools, looking for emergent themes that are present in all three case studies. Next, using this analysis, I will suggest a framework for understanding the group efficacy beliefs of a band ensemble: Unity, Introspection, and Cognizance of Function. In Chapter 8, I will relate this newly-suggested framework to existing literature on both group efficacy and self-efficacy theories. Finally, I will conclude Chapter 8 with implications of these findings for the profession of music education and ideas for future research.
I presented the individual case data in Chapters 4, 5, and 6; however, the individual cases only begin to tell the story of how competitive music performance events affect the individual musicians’ self-efficacy beliefs in music and the efficacy beliefs of the group as a whole. Therefore, I found it necessary to examine the data across the cases to gain a better insight as to the salient issues that these participants experience during the assessment process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The four themes that appear across the cases are:

1. Participants’ responses indicated that they had a sense that the quality of their individual playing affected the quality of their entire ensemble’s performance;

2. The participants’ ensembles’ ratings appeared to be a clear motivator for them to improve their individual musicianship;

3. While there was a variety and diversity to the goals the participants choose to pursue, by frequency of participant responses, students who established, worked to achieve, and accomplished a personal musical goal experienced a greater increase in efficacy beliefs and a more satisfactory experience as a band member than those individuals who indicated they did not pursue a goal. Furthermore, this sense of satisfaction appeared to be, overall, greater in proportion than an experience of obtaining a desired ensemble rating at an adjudicated music event; and

4. At some point in time during their interviews and without prompting from the researcher, all three directors mentioned their concerns about adjudicators for these events. Their similar concerns may lend credibility to an argument
toward a perceived problem in adjudicator selection in the State of Arkansas.

1. Participants’ responses indicated that they had a sense that the quality of their individual playing affected the quality of their entire ensemble’s performance. Many students indicated that they knew and understood the importance of the quality of their individual musical abilities and how they affect the sound of the entire ensemble. This was especially true of the bands that had experienced a desired rating at a recent contest or festival. Furthermore, this sense extended to pointing out groups who were not working toward the mutual goals and objectives of the group. Participants who sensed some disconnect between the desires of the group expressed frustration at the lack of effort from those who did not seem to want work toward accomplishing the group’s goal(s).

When discussing how she felt about not accomplishing one of her goals of making the all-region band, Lisa said that even though she did not accomplish her goal, her peers benefited from her practice:

I’ve been there and [not making the band] is disappointing. You kind of feel like, ‘Ugh! I wasted all that time practicing the music!’ But there is no practice time that is necessarily wasted. Even when the band as a whole maybe doesn’t get that rating they wanted, the practice time you put into it isn’t wasted. You’re still working together and playing the same music.

Additionally, the student focus group participants from Sunny Brook mentioned that regardless of the rating their ensemble earned at a CMPE, they “made something” together as a group:
Jen: Even if you get a low rating, you still did something, you still made something. . .

Tim: Right.

Lisa: Right.

Jen: . . .completely, pretty much from scratch. And you do something. . .

Lisa: . . .that you couldn’t have done by yourself. . .

Jen: . . .yeah, and you all get on the same page, and that’s just really fun.

Lisa: It takes a group of people to make music sometimes.

The dialogue exchanged between me and the participants during the focus group session suggested that these students all understand their the band’s performance is a group effort. Furthermore, when describing what she witnessed from her students when they earned good ratings at a CMPE, Jane, their director, echoed their responses: “I think the reaction comes from that bond of, ‘Hey, we did this together and we’re super proud.’”

This bond of “togetherness” indicated that there is a clear sense of unity within the group. Jane and her students knew that their individual contributions to the ensemble contributed to the success of the group.

Similarly, the students from Rolling Hills High School noted feelings of cooperation in their responses: “Hearing that we excelled at contest is the best feeling. It reminds me that all the practicing adds up and helps our band. I feel closer to my band mates and that we can do anything.” Another student wrote: “I feel awesome because the band accomplished something as a team that we worked on for months. We made something great!” Conversely, Elizabeth from the focus group commented on the tension
that is created when there are members of the group who appear to be apathetic to the 
group’s goals and objectives: “There’s those few that don’t show up and don’t even try. I 
feel like if you don’t even try, why be there? Why stay in something you don’t want to be 
in?” The students at RHHS appeared to value their sense of cooperation and camaraderie.

The students from Faulkner High School also indicated that mutual cooperation 
with one another is essential to earning their desired ratings as an ensemble. Lily said that 
she blames herself if her band earns a poor rating at a CMPE: “If we do bad, I get upset at 
myself. I could have put more practice time in, but I was busy doing something else that 
wasn’t really important at that time.” In response to Lily, George replied: “Complete 
failure usually only happens with people [who] don’t care.” Lily’s story is indicative of a 
student who understands her role in the group’s performance and how the execution of 
her part may have contributed to the group’s rating. Furthermore, George understands 
that, while there may be individuals who do not agree with the goals and directions of the 
ensemble, the group itself could only fail if everyone gave up.

2. The participants’ ensembles’ ratings appeared to be a clear motivator for 
them to improve their individual musicianship. Regardless of the rating their ensembles 
earned at prior assessments, and notwithstanding the effect such a rating had on the 
individual participant’s efficacy beliefs, ensemble ratings seemed to motivate student 
participants to work to improve their own musical skills. Perhaps this was due to 
students’ perceptions of competitive music performance events as interim measurements 
of how much they had learned throughout the year, and their awareness that they could 
use that data to help themselves improve musically. These findings were present for
about two-thirds of the participants who responded on the survey. For instance, many students from all three participating schools knew when they made errors at a CMPE, and therefore worked to ensure that they corrected those errors before the next performance, be it another CMPE or other public concert. In addition, approximately two-thirds of students indicated a similar sense of “responsibility” for their part in earning their ensemble’s rating.

This innate desire, or intrinsic motivation, to improve seemed to permeate throughout the data in all cases: Students wanted to improve their own musical skills, they wanted to see their peers improve and achieve, directors wanted to make sure that all their students were improving in addition to working on increasing their own pedagogical skills, and all desired to see a general improvement in the ensemble as a whole.

3. While there was a variety and diversity to the goals the participants choose to pursue, by frequency of participant responses, students who established, worked to achieve, and accomplished a personal musical goal experienced a greater increase in efficacy beliefs and a more satisfactory experience as a band member than those individuals who indicated they did not pursue a goal. Furthermore, this sense of satisfaction appeared to be, overall, greater in proportion than an experience of obtaining a desired ensemble rating at an adjudicated music event. This is probably the most salient theme across the three cases. The participants seemed to recognize how their actions or inactions affected the results of the entire group while maintaining a desire to improve their own musicianship; however, those students who were also working toward goals of their own seemed to experience a greater satisfaction as a member of the band
and less of an impact on their self-beliefs should their ensemble not achieve its collective goal. It appeared as though students’ pursuit toward personal musical goals could have enhanced their musical self-efficacy beliefs, in that they understood that although they were a part of the ensemble, the rating did not solely rest on their shoulders; they had additional data, measured by how they felt about themselves in pursuit and accomplishment of their goals, by which to gauge their worth as a musician.

*Increase in positive feelings.* Approximately three-fourths of the participants at each school noted on the survey that they experienced positive feelings when they accomplished a goal. For instance, participants stated that they felt “incredible,” “experience is better,” “accomplished.” Moreover, in addition to the positive feelings, the participants also said that when they accomplish their goal they “feel like they help the band,” “feel like they can do anything,” and “feel like [they are] getting better.”

Likewise, while not as ostentatiously as their students, the director participants indicated similar feelings about themselves as music educators. For instance, Jane from Sunny Brook, mentioned that her goal is to make sure her music selections are aligned with the musical objectives she is trying to teach her ensemble:

> If you pick music that’s too easy for your group, then you’re not reaching and striving and achieving and there’s no danger there. I think you’re doing the kids a disservice. . . You gotta start with ‘This is what I want to teach you.’ [For example], I found that a lot of these kids, especially the younger ones, could not count; they relied on the older kids for their rhythmic support. So, I immediately
started to pick songs that made them count. [The music’s] gotta have a musical goal.

Similarly, Wesley from Rolling Hills, noted that his musical goal every year was to “focus on individual musicianship.” He does this by ensuring his students participate in musical activities that benefit each student:

I teach a lot of private lessons—I probably do a lot more of that than ensemble teaching. I usually rate the success of my year by our test grades in class: whether or not they’re going up, how many scales my kids can play, and how they do at [events] like solo and ensemble and all-region.

Gene, from Faulkner High School, took a more philosophical approach to selecting the goals for his ensemble:

My goal for kids in band is for them when they finish school, look back and say, ‘I love music.’ I’m more concerned with that than I am with the scores, you see. That’s my personal opinion. If they’re happy with what they do and do the very best that they can, I don’t care. If their best is only a [third division], that’s fine.

While each of these three directors had a different method for selecting the goals for their ensemble, all three focused on their students’ individual musicianship and what they were experiencing as students of music.

“Snapshot of one day.” When I asked the participating directors how they felt about competitive music performance events, Jane and Wesley offered some suggestions to other music educators about how to keep their teaching and the welfare of their students in perspective. Jane said:
It’s still just a snapshot of one day. Something could go wrong that never went wrong before—it doesn’t define you. You have to learn how to keep moving and teach Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and be important to the kids. And then, I think you’re a good director if you can do that.

Wesley’s response alluded to the same idea as Jane’s:

It’s hard not to see the ratings as a measure of the success of your year, the success of your teaching, music choices, and whether or not your students were able to do what they were supposed to do. It’s a rating based off of one single performance and everybody’s got good performances and bad performances. I just try to see [the CMPE] as a reflection of how I did as a teacher and how the students did playing the music I asked them to play.

*Emphasis on the all-region band as a musical goal.* Participants noted a range of goals from just wanting to fulfill their individual potential to desiring a career as a popular singer and artist. The most common goal mentioned by participants, however, was earning a chair into the all-region or all-state honor bands.

Two of the director participants openly encouraged their students to work toward achieving the goal of being selected to the all-region honor band. In fact, Wesley, the Rolling Hills director, required all of his students to learn the audition music for the all-region event. His philosophy was that, even if students do not make the band, they have learned some challenging literature for their instrument, and thus have experienced improvement as musicians. Furthermore, he and his students seemed to believe that the ensemble as a whole indirectly benefited from all students requisitely learning the all-
region audition music. For instance, Elizabeth from the student focus group, talked about why all-region was so important to her and her peers:

It places you with better players, and you get to go on experiences that if you weren’t to try, then you wouldn’t get to do those things. And you meet tons of new people, and it just make you feel better about yourself because you get to be in something that a lot of people don’t get to be in.

Elizabeth’s comments about her desire to make the all-region band were echoed by Wesley’s responses about his personal goals as a music educator:

As far as my personal goals, I try to make my goal for every kid to be able to play [his or her] instrument really well. My goal [is] to increase our all-region numbers every year, because I think that’s a good reflection of personal musicianship in the ensemble.

This same idea was also present in the responses from the student focus group at Sunny Brook. When I asked those participants why they placed such importance on the all-region and all-state ensembles, Lisa responded:

Well, it allows you to play in a band that’s composed of a lot of talent. There’s something about seeing your name on that list and seeing how your hard work helped you to accomplish that and that makes me feel really good.

To which Jen replied: “Especially if it’s one of your goals. To accomplish [that], you know, is great!”

At Faulkner High School, all three of the student focus group participants mentioned their desire to earn placement into an all-region honor ensemble:
Researcher: Do each of you have personal musical goals that you would like to accomplish, and if so, what do you consider to be the most important goal or goals for you to accomplish?

Jasmine: To get into the all-region band.

Lily: Mine’s to get in the all-region band and get a [first division] at solo and ensemble.

R: Any particular reason for the all-region band?

J: Because it’s a big honor.

L: I’ve been wanting to do it for three years. [Previously], I should have been practicing, [but now] I’ve been working hard. I wanna get in the all-region band because all of my friends are in it and I’m just kinda stuck back.

George: Helps gain scholarships.

Although each individual noted a different reason for pursuing this particular goal (accolades, peer-to-peer comparison, scholarships), all three thought it a worthwhile goal to pursue.

4. At some point in time during their interviews and without prompting from the researcher, all three directors mentioned their concerns about adjudicators for these events. Their similar concerns may lend credibility to an argument toward a perceived problem in adjudicator selection in the State of Arkansas. While this particular issue is indirectly related to this study, I believe that it is worth noting because all the director participants spoke about the selection of adjudicators for competitive music performance events in Arkansas. Though a small sample of directors, their similar responses may
indicate an issue with adjudicator selection, which may directly impact the participants’ experience of competitive music performance events in the state.

Jane noted that some judges may not consider the age group of the students who are performing and thus, the ratings may not accurately reflect student learning:

I think it’s easy with the junior high groups to [judge] them based on what you know a high school group should sound like or what you think a professional group should sound like. [Judges] don’t always factor in these are twelve-year-olds and thirteen-year-olds; these kids have only been playing for a year or two. The level of experience students have playing a musical instrument may affect the score their ensemble earns, especially when the adjudicators do not take into account their respective ability levels. Furthermore, the ratings earned from these CMPEs could then negatively affect these students’ self-beliefs in music.

Wesley commented on how the adjudicators’ backgrounds have also affected his ensemble’s ratings. He goes on further to state that while his purpose of the CMPEs is so he and his students can receive feedback from their performances, he wants to experience some level of “consistency” in how the judges score his ensembles.

I just wish [the assessments] were more uniform. Sometimes it just seems like you could take the same show to a marching contest and, depending on what judges you have and what their background is, it really could go either way a lot of the time. For instance, in our region this year, they had people judging that had also had experience judging Bands of America Semifinals and stuff like that. That’s just a completely different setting…I think that as long as the assessments are
working toward being more consistent, I think that would be best. I’m not worried about getting high ratings every time or low ratings every time, [just] as long as a two this year is a two next year is a two every year.

While Jane expressed concerns about judges taking into account the students’ level of experience playing an instrument and Wesley noted his perceived issues with the adjudicators’ consistency in evaluation, Gene mentioned that he saw some adjudicator selections as favoritism on the part of his colleagues:

Let me explain how we pick judges. We have an annual directors’ meeting for our region every spring [to] set the dates for Region Assessment. Then we all throw out names that we would like to see for judges. Lots of times it comes down to the friends of some of the directors. I think they need to be unknown, outside people.

The three participant directors’ statements about their concerns regarding adjudicators at CMPEs may indicate a problem with how judges are selected for these events in Arkansas.

**A Framework for Understanding the Formation of Group Efficacy Beliefs of High School Band Students**

My analysis of the data presented in Chapter 4 offered insight into how we can begin to understand the essence of group efficacy beliefs of high school band ensembles. This is an important finding because there are very few studies examining group efficacy in music education, and I have discovered that a framework for understanding the efficacy beliefs of an entire group of high school band students may not exist (Matthews & Kitsantas, 2007, 2013; Schmidt, 2007). My framework for understanding the formation
of group efficacy beliefs of high school band students has three tiers: 1) Unity; 2) Cognizance of Function; and 3) Introspection. Figure 1 is a diagram of this proposed framework.

**Unity.** I found that unity was the strongest element present in bands that, by participants’ own admission, have performed well at music performance events. These findings were consistent with those of other scholars in different domains of group efficacy research (e.g., Gibson & Earley, 2007). Unity is present in a group of individuals when each member of the group shares the same values, beliefs, and objectives of that group. This does not mean that the individuals blindly follow one another without cause or reason, but rather, that they recognize that by working together, they are able to accomplish more than any one individual could by him- or herself.

For instance, when participants were asked how about their *individual* feelings about music performance events, many participants noted that such events were “a team effort,” “a group project,” and required “teamwork” to be successful. Thus, some indicated that while they were “disappointed” about earning a poor rating or “happy” about earning a good rating, most knew either result was not a judgment upon the performance of any one *individual* but a measurement of the performance of the *group*. “I had my peers there with me to back me up,” wrote one student who was discussing how she felt about *herself* as a result of the *group*’s rating. In response to a question about individual feelings in response to good group ratings, a student from Rolling Hills High School wrote, “I feel slightly better about myself but it was a team effort. No lone wolves.” Similarly, another student from RHHS said, “I feel awesome because the band
accomplished something as a team that we worked on for months. We made something great!” These students’ sentiments strengthen the idea of unity as an essential component of any shared efficacy beliefs of a group of individuals.

The concept of unity was further expressed by a student from Sunny Brook High School who suggested the group as a whole could not fail unless everyone shared a desire not to succeed. “I don’t think the whole group could fail unless everyone just didn’t want to be there,” she said. Another student from Faulkner High School implied the same idea about earning poor ratings: “After an undesired rating I just feel that some in our band don’t work as well together as some others do.” These students’ statements lend credence to the notion that individual members understand that working together is a necessary part of making music in an ensemble setting.

Some students also expressed their frustration with their peers who, through their actions, did not demonstrate that they wanted to assimilate into the group. A student from the focus group of Rolling Hills High School said, “Like, there’s those few that don’t show up and don’t even try; why stay in something you don’t want to be in?” Another student from Faulkner High School expressed similar concerns when answering a questions about her ensemble earning poor ratings: “It makes me think the band could have done better as a whole. It makes me feel like those who didn’t try hindered our score.” Unity is an essential component of achieving success in a band ensemble setting, and as these findings suggested, students know whether or not their peers share the values, beliefs, and goals of the group.
Cognizance of function. In order for a group of individuals to exhibit a sense of unity through their performance, the findings suggested that it may be necessary for each individual member of the group to acknowledge (a) their function in fulfilling the objectives of the group, and (b) that every other individual member of the group also has a function in fulfilling the objectives of the group. Once again, these findings agreed with other scholars (Gibson, 2001; Gibson & Earley, 2007). These two ideas come together to form the leg of the framework for group efficacy I termed “cognizance of function.”

Cognizance of function is based upon the notion that individuals understand that they and their peers serve a function in the group as a whole. Like one gear in a machine, each individual member must work together to achieve the desired outcome or the entire machine stops working and falls apart. For instance, in a discussion about success and failure, one student during the focus group interview at Sunny Brook High School said:

I think that knowing that your contribution to the band helped the overall positive outcome [is success]. Knowing that I did something to help everyone else.

Working together.

Her statement implied that, in her mind, the fact that her actions helped her peers accomplish a goal meant she was successful; she understood that her actions could either negatively or positively affect the outcomes for her peers. This is quintessential cognizance of function. Almost immediately after this exchange took place, the group defined “failure” as the exact opposite: “Not doing your part; not pulling your weight.” The very idea of an individual in a group being unaware or ambivalent to his or her role in the function of a group appears, at least to these participants, to be the epitome of
failure.

Other individual members appearing to their peers as flippant about their role in the group may affect the efficacy beliefs of the group as a whole. During the focus group interview, one student noted a particularly “stressful” time he had because he had to “fill in” for another percussionist who, at the last minute, was unable to attend a very important performance. “I was stressed because one of the percussionists couldn’t be there, so we had to fill in for him. The day before—actually, a few hours right before we left…terrible.” The percussionist who was unable to attend the performance, for whatever reason, seemed to his peers to be oblivious to the effect his absence would have on the entire percussion section, if not the ensemble as a whole group. As such, at least for that moment in time, that particular student who missed the performance did not possess cognizance of function.

**Introspection.** The third and final leg of my framework for group efficacy in band performance is introspection. The findings supporting this framework suggest that introspection is the ability for all members of the group to be able to (a) reflect on their individual contributions to the ensemble’s performance, and (b) determine what actions may be necessary to affect individual improvement for subsequent performances (e.g., set goals, reflect individually on performance, practice difficult passages, etc.). This finding was supported throughout the analysis of data from all three case studies, especially in discussions and responses to questions about the ensemble earning poor ratings at music performance events. This portion of the framework is corroborated in Schmidt (2005), whereby students reported learning more and a greater satisfaction with the learning
process if they were working in a cooperative group environment and concentrating on accomplishing personal educational goals.

More than half of participants stated that reflecting on their ensemble’s poor ratings made them want to work harder and practice more. One student from Sunny Brook High School wrote, “When we receive an undesired rating, I am disappointed, and I thought that we should have done better, and that we should do better the next time. So we practice till we do it the best as we can.” Another student from the same school wrote, “It definitely stings a little, and I can’t help but wonder, ‘Was it because I messed up at measure ‘x’?’ I feel part of the blame rests on my shoulders as part of the ensemble.” Both of these students are clearly reflecting on their individual performances and determining what they need to work on to improve their performance for the next event.

These ideas were not just present in the analysis of the data from Sunny Brook; they were also present in the data analyses of the two other participating schools. “When our band gets a low rating, that’s ok, but it tells me we definitely need to practice more, and I need to practice more to make the band better. It makes me feel as if we had a bad day, didn't care, or need more practice,” wrote one student from Rolling Hills High School. “I always think I can do better, no matter what type of rating,” wrote another student from RHHS. “When our rating is low it just gives me more reason to practice more.” A third student said, “I feel like I have let down my band and that I have to try even harder if I want my band to get what we desire.” Students from Faulkner High School also had similar comments. “I feel that maybe we could have done better. I could have done better. I think about how I could do something different.” Another student
said, “When we earn a bad rating, I feel like I failed the band because I didn’t play to maximum potential and I need to practice way more to help the band out and do my part.” All of these comments are indicative of individual members of their respective ensembles reflecting on their own performances and setting objectives to improve their personal contribution to that of the group.

**Relationship of this framework to self-efficacy.** Through the analysis of these data, I surmised that there is a complex interplay between this suggested framework for group efficacy of band students and the self-efficacy beliefs of the individual members. Bandura (1977) noted that one of the key sources of individual self-efficacy beliefs is enactive mastery experience, or continued belief in oneself after mastering an objective. My framework for group efficacy aligns with the enactive mastery experience source of one’s self-efficacy beliefs: Repeatedly accomplishing tasks as a contributing member of a band may positively affect one’s enactive mastery experience. This, in turn, hypothetically, fosters the growth of individuals’ introspective capacity and awareness of the role they play within the group (cognizance of function). The individuals’ mindfulness toward introspection and cognizance of function contribute to the sense of unity that the group as a whole demonstrates in their performance.

A cogent example of this idea is from a student at Sunny Brook High School who, when writing about how she felt when her band earned a good rating at a music performance event, said:

I feel like we were very accomplished. Everyone has a role, and for our band to [get] a good rating, each member’s role had to have been good. It’s a team game,
and we all have to work together to succeed. I feel like a better musician after we do well, because that probably means I did alright too.

Her accomplishments with the band helped facilitate a positive increase in enactive mastery experience. Thus, the self-efficacy beliefs about her musicianship were increased, according to her own statement, as a result of her ensemble earning good ratings at a music performance event.

Participants from Rolling Hills High School expressed similar sentiments. “When the band scores a good rating at a contest, I feel like I did a good job. I feel as if I am capable of helping my band make a good score,” wrote one student. Another student from Faulkner High School concurred: “When we get good scores it makes me feel good about my music abilities because I feel that the band needs me and that I can actually play my instrument to maximum potential…” These examples from each of the three participating schools illustrate that perhaps experiencing success as a member of the group facilitates an increase in personal self-efficacy beliefs.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented a cross-case analysis of data from each of the three participating schools in this study. Next, using this analysis, I offered a framework for understanding the group efficacy beliefs of a band ensemble: Unity, Introspection, and Cognizance of Function. In Chapter 8, I will relate this newly-suggested framework to existing literature on both group efficacy and self-efficacy theories and conclude with implications of these findings for the profession of music education and ideas for future research.
Figure 1. Diagram of the framework for understanding the formation of group efficacy beliefs in high school bands. This figure illustrates the connection of the three legs of the framework and how they contribute to group efficacy beliefs.
Chapter 8: Discussion

*We shall not cease from exploration,*

*and at the end of all our exploring*

*will be to arrive where we started*

*and know the place for the first time.*

-T.S. Eliot

In this final chapter, I will relate the cross-case themes to current literature on self-efficacy and group efficacy beliefs, discuss the limitations with my proposed framework for group efficacy and high school bands, offer pedagogical suggestions and implications for music educators, and conclude with directions for future research.

Summary

The data gathered from the participants at Sunny Brook, Rolling Hills, and Faulkner High Schools have revealed some insights into how band students and directors experience adjudicated music events; however, the subsequent analysis of the data unearthed additional questions about how the findings of these three schools were related to one another: Were there similarities as to how the band students at each of these schools experienced adjudicated music events? How did the philosophies of the individual directors affect the efficacy beliefs of their group? Was there one particular ideology that affected the most change in student beliefs about their musicianship?

In order to answer these questions, it was necessary to conduct a cross-case analysis between each of the three schools, which was completed in detail in Chapter 7. The four themes that emerged across the cases were:
1. Participants’ responses indicated that they had a sense that the quality of their individual playing affected the quality of their entire ensemble’s performance;

2. The participants’ ensembles’ ratings appeared to be a clear motivator for them to improve their individual musicianship;

3. While there was a variety and diversity to the goals the participants choose to pursue, by frequency of participant responses, students who established, worked to achieve, and accomplished a personal musical goal experienced a greater increase in efficacy beliefs and a more satisfactory experience as a band member than those individuals who indicated they did not pursue a goal. Furthermore, this sense of satisfaction appeared to be, overall, greater in proportion than an experience of obtaining a desired ensemble rating at an adjudicated music event; and

4. At some point in time during their interviews and without prompting from the researcher, all three directors mentioned their concerns about adjudicators for these events. Their similar concerns may lend credibility to an argument toward a perceived problem in adjudicator selection in the State of Arkansas. Furthermore, the cross-case analysis led to the development of a potential extension of the theoretical construct of group efficacy for band ensembles. I proposed three components to a framework for furthering our understanding of group efficacy beliefs of high school bands: (a) Unity, (b) Cognizance of Function, and (c) Introspection. Replication and expansion of this study in other similar contexts is needed to determine the validity of this new line of inquiry.
Conclusions

This study was framed using self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977) and the theoretical construct of group efficacy (Bandura, 2000). Using the analysis from this study, I sought to gain clarification to three questions: (a) What are students’ perceptions about their musical self-beliefs as related to their ensemble’s ratings at competitive music performance events? (b) How are the musical self-beliefs of the students and the educational ideology of their director related? (c) How are the students’ perceptions of their musical self-beliefs related to the efficacy beliefs of their ensemble as a group of performers?

Moreover, this study made the following propositions with respect to the case study questions: (a) Music performance event results can alter the participants’ perceptions of their musical self-beliefs. (b) In band ensembles, individuals’ self-efficacy beliefs and the efficacy beliefs of the ensemble as a whole are intertwined. What follows are the conclusions to these case study questions, which I have drawn from the aforementioned analyses.

1. **What are students’ perceptions about their musical self-beliefs as related to their ensemble’s ratings at competitive music performance events?** Many of the participants, both students and directors, indicated that they had a tendency to use their band’s assessment results as “feedback” (Amrein-Beardsley & Barnett, 2012) to evaluate and improve their own musical skills. Although there is no shortage of literature that calls into question the process and quality of music performance assessments (Batey, 2002; Colwell, 2002; Cooper, 2004; National Association for Music Education, 2012; Wise,
1996), most literature on assessment noted that its purpose is to improve the educational outcomes of students by providing them with appropriate feedback and giving teachers the necessary data to improve their practice. In this case, the participants used the data gleaned from their band’s assessments as tools for personal musical improvement, thus confirming the previous literature on the topic in that assessment data gave student participants the necessary feedback to improve their musical skills (Conway & Jeffers, 2004) and director participants the data to improve their teaching practice (Ndalichanko, 2015).

According to the analysis of participants’ responses, the philosophical center of the Rolling Hills High School band program is the construct of improvement. From the director, Wesley, who worked to improve his own pedagogical skills as a music educator to his requirement for all of his students to learn the oftentimes difficult music for the all-region band auditions, it was clear that both he and his students valued becoming better musicians over anything else. Perhaps, in Wesley’s frame of mind, it is not those who score well on tests, assessments, or challenges who tend to continue their success, but rather, those who continually strive for personal growth who become the winners in the end.

Competitive musical performance events can give music educators the data needed to improve specific musical characteristics of the ensemble’s performance (i.e., balance, blend, intonation, etc.), an idea which was confirmed in the stories of Jane and Wesley in Chapter 7; however, most student participants viewed their group efficacy as more of a measure of how well they executed their own performances for the benefit of
the group, not as the specific group rating or score offered to them by the panel of adjudicators.

Because numerous responses indicated that students knew and understood how their individual performance affected that of the entire group, I suggest that it also meant that they understood the role they played in the ensemble’s success or failure (Cognizance of Function and Introspection). Again, it is not known whether this was due to the quality of instruction by their director, Jane, or an inherent trait present within the members of the ensemble. This finding paralleled previous literature on group efficacy in that (a) groups with a task-oriented mindset experienced an increase in group efficacy beliefs and group cohesion and (b) persistence toward mutual group goals and objectives increased group efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 2000; Gibson, 2001; Gibson & Earley, 2007). Therefore, when individual students are participating in an ensemble performance, perhaps it is not the group’s rating at competitive events that students use to measure their personal achievement as a musician. Rather, it may be the shared experience of performing with their peers and the perception that they contributed to a shared goal that students view as an indication of their own musical achievement.

2. How are the musical self-beliefs of the students and the educational ideology of their director related? Self-efficacy and CMPE results. Participants from Faulkner High School indicated that their feelings about their individual musicianship were polarized toward the direction of their ensemble’s rating. The analysis of data on this topic indicated that participants had negative feelings about their musical efficacy if their ensemble rated low and positive feelings about their musical efficacy if their band earned
top ratings. This was especially true if the ensemble ratings were low. This finding corroborates previous literature in group efficacy (Bandura, 2000; Gibson, 2001; Gibson & Earley, 2007) in that the efficacy beliefs of the group and the efficacy beliefs of the self are interdependent.

Additionally, if we examined this phenomenon through the self-efficacy source of enactive mastery experience, (Bandura, 1977), we may find that the reason for this is partially due to the group as a whole having not succeeded in that particular task-mastery performance. Thus, if we take a similar approach as other scholars in group efficacy and assert that the efficacy beliefs of the group are an amalgamation of the individual members’ self-efficacy beliefs and are interdependent with one another (Bandura, 1997, 2000; Gibson, 2001; Gibson & Earley, 2007), their group efficacy beliefs, at least in terms of the belief in themselves that they can be successful at such competitive music events, may still be in the process of forming. More research in this area is needed to determine this potential relationship. The authentication of this finding via quantitative analysis is an area for future researchers to study because (a) the design of this study is only applicable to a small sample of participants from three high schools in Arkansas, thus rendering generalization of these findings to larger populations unlikely at best and (b) certain statistical analyses (such as Cronbach’s alpha) may help determine how reliable the relationship is between the efficacy beliefs of the self and those of the group.

However, not all participants’ responses were similar. For instance, the students and director of the Sunny Brook Pride appeared to have the ability to place the results of their ensemble assessments within the context of individual and ensemble improvement,
as well as the opportunity to develop greater interpersonal skills with one another. The students of the focus group noted that even if the rating was low, the group still “made something” of value (see Chapter 7). Regardless of the rating, these students appeared to acknowledge that the group’s performance was more important than the rating; they understood that all worked for the benefit of the entire group. This finding supports previous literature in group efficacy in that students who were motivated by the desire to improve as opposed to being competitive experienced greater satisfaction when working toward mutual objectives within a group (Sandene, 1997) and that the negative effects on the students’ self-efficacy beliefs may have been mitigated by their positive relationships with their peers (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996).

For Jane (see Chapter 7), her perceptions of her self-beliefs as a music educator was measured by how important she was to her students. No matter what the score, the performance was over, and it was time to move on and continue the process of teaching. This finding lends credibility to the notion that it is easier for individuals to cope with setbacks if they perceive the causes of such setbacks as outside their locus of control (Bandura, 1997). Wesley expressed similar feelings about CMPEs and desired to use those results as feedback (see Amrein-Beardsley & Barnett, 2012) of how well he taught the music he selected for his students.

*Self-efficacy and goal setting.* The analyses, however, also revealed that more than half of participants experienced a positive increase in their feelings about themselves as musicians as a result of accomplishing personal musical goals. For instance, according to their own statements, Rolling Hills band students who set and strived toward achieving
their own personal musical goals felt better about themselves as musicians than just being a part of the achievements of their ensemble. Far more students who set and achieved a goal mentioned that they felt “great” about their accomplishments than those who did not and wrote about the accomplishments of their ensemble. This result paralleled previous literature on the topic of self-efficacy and goal-setting (Elliot & Dweck, 1988; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Gibson & Earley, 2007; Pelpel, 2012) in that students with a task-oriented mindset experienced a positive increase in self-efficacy beliefs after accomplishing a personal goal.

Moreover, Wesley set his own personal goals as a music educator and made it a point to ensure that his students were striving toward personal musical achievements, whether set by himself or his students. In doing so, Wesley sent a message to his students that while achieving accolades as an ensemble could be rewarding, it was more important to grow as an individual musician.

Although the results from Jane’s school, SBHS, indicated that a few students may have experienced a loss in musical confidence due to their band’s ratings at adjudicated events, more than half of the students from SBHS suggested that it was more important for them to set and achieve their own goals than to not have a goal whatsoever. Further research is needed to determine if this phenomenon was a direct result of the instruction from their director who made it a point to work toward the improvement of the entire ensemble, or if it was a character trait brought with the students to school from home. Either way, the students at Sunny Brook who relied more on the achievement of their own goals as opposed to the ratings of the entire ensemble tended to have a greater
perspective on their self-efficacy as a musician and the collective agency of their band, a result which corroborated the literature on mastery goals (Elliot & Dweck, 1988; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Gibson & Earley, 2007; Pelpel, 2012) and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1978, 1997, 2000).

Furthermore, based upon the results of this study, I posit that the reason so many student participants chose to pursue all-region as a goal is that it was the closest to an interschool peer comparison of playing ability that students could experience. Because each auditionee is evaluated and ranked based on total points, it is the epitome of how much a student has achieved as a musician compared to his or her peers at another school. What is unknown, however, is if students’ ensembles do not perform well at assessment and they are unable to accomplish this goal, is there a potential double impact on their self-efficacy beliefs? Will they feel twice as bad, or at the least worse, about their musical abilities as they normally would should only one of these events have taken place? Conversely, if the students do extremely well at a competitive music performance event, which may be one of the students’ goals, do they feel twice as elated as only accomplishing one or the other (i.e., an excellent rating or accomplishing a musical goal)?

These findings, especially those on goal-setting, are important for music educators. First, because our profession relies on how well individuals function within a group, it is essential that our students be able to have a variety of measures by which to gauge their individual achievement. Prior researchers suggested that by increasing individual efficacy beliefs, those of the entire group can be increased as well (Gibson,
2001; Gibson & Earley, 2007). These authors also noted that along with an increase in individual efficacy beliefs, subjects experienced a greater sense of cooperation and collaboration. Therefore, by engaging in a curriculum whereby students are not only allowed to work toward their own musical pursuits but also encouraged to do so, directors may be able to increase not only their individual students’ self-beliefs, but those of the group as well.

3. How are the students’ perceptions of their musical self-beliefs related to the efficacy beliefs of their ensemble as a group of performers? Both student and director participants noted that the synergy of the group as a whole was an important influence in the ensemble’s success or failure at competitive music performance events. Their statements paralleled research on collective agency, which suggests that (a) the efficacy beliefs of the self and those of the group are intertwined (Bandura, 1997, 2000; Gibson, 2001; Gibson & Earley, 2007); (b) the effort of the participants related to their intrinsic motivation for achievement (Schmidt, 2005, 2007); and (c) the cohesiveness of the group is positively related to group efficacy (Gibson & Earley, 2007). Moreover, the stories offered by Wesley, Raymond, and Elizabeth from Rolling Hills High School (see Chapter 5) also seemed to corroborate previous literature on group efficacy, in that by improving the individual’s self-efficacy beliefs, there is a marked increase in the efficacy beliefs of the group (Bandura, 2000; Gibson, 2001; Gibson & Earley, 2007).

Additionally, this also showed some maturity on the part of the students, especially when I reexamined the literature on group dynamics and group efficacy that noted a group functions more effectively if its members viewed themselves as essential,
valuable, contributing members of the group (Gibson & Earley, 2007). These personal views on individual efficacy as it related to group efficacy show that particular students maintained a high degree of self-efficacy in music as also suggested in the literature.

The responses from student and director participants, especially at Sunny Brook and Rolling Hills High Schools, indicated that they appeared to have developed a culture of mutual cooperation and understanding. For instance, students who were new to the band, whether they moved in from a public school or were promoted from the junior high ensembles, were able (with help from their older peers) to assimilate into the culture of the band and work together to achieve their group objectives. Past scholarly literature has stated that these qualities are important characteristics for a group working toward a common goal (Bandura, 1997, 2000; Gibson, 2001; Gibson & Earley, 2007; Sandene, 1997; Schmidt, 2005, 2007). Student responses about CMPEs demonstrated a trend toward the need to contribute to a whole product, a sense that what they did mattered to the group as a whole.

These findings were not similar for Faulkner High School, however. While the cases at Sunny Brook and Rolling Hills indicated a positive culture of cooperation, the cohesiveness of the group that was present at the first two schools had not materialized at the time of this study. Perhaps it was due to the fact that Faulkner had not achieved recent success at competitive performance events (as stated by their participants), and as a consequence, the group’s sense of collective efficacy did not emerge from the data. Additionally, these results could have also stemmed from the forced annexation of a
neighboring district, which would require some time to integrate all students who are now involved in the FHS band program as a result of this annexation.

Despite the fact that the analysis from FHS had not revealed that those participants had achieved a sense of group unity, almost universally, and regardless of the quality of the rating earned, the students at Faulkner used the information they collected from their adjudicated music event results to become better individual players. In relation to the literature on group efficacy (e.g., Gibson and Earley, 2007) whereby improving the individual members increased the effectiveness of the group as a whole, this was an extremely important quality for the individual members in the band to possess.

These are also indicators of promising pedagogical practice. The nature of playing in ensembles such as music suggests that all individuals must cooperate and work together to produce a work of art. The fact that student participants commented on how their individual performance affects the entire group, especially the participants from Sunny Brook and Rolling Hills, shows that the participants have a sense of the role and function that they should play in the ensemble’s performance. Furthermore, by working together (or not in some cases), the participants can also perceive when they have peers in their ensemble who may not subscribe to the goals and objectives of the group. All three directors who participated in this study mentioned their knowledge of how their pedagogy influences their students, and all of them also stated that they work to improve their skills so they can help their students improve and become better musicians.

The director participants’ concerns about the judging panel (see Chapter 7) are not new to scholars studying the issues of adjudicator consistency and inter-rater reliability at
CMPEs. The literature agreed with the directors that these are issues that were important to evaluating students of music in an ensemble setting (Bergee, 1995; Hash, 2012; Kinney, 2009; National Association for Music Education, 2012; Norris & Borst, 2007; Saunders & Holahan, 1997; Smith & Barnes, 2007).

Limitations with the Proposed Framework and Directions for Future Research

The cross-case analysis I conducted in Chapter 7 led to the development of a potential extension of the theoretical construct of group efficacy for band ensembles. I proposed three components to a framework for furthering our understanding of group efficacy beliefs of high school bands: (a) Unity, (b) Cognizance of Function, and (c) Introspection. Further research is needed to determine the validity of this new line of inquiry, perhaps first by replicating this study to determine if findings are consistent and then branching out into other musical domains such as choirs and orchestras.

I believe these findings offer a premise for future scholars in music education to continue this work and, hopefully, further ground these ideas in later empirical studies. This framework is limited to the participants’ statements from the three participating high school bands from the State of Arkansas, and generalization of this framework to other band ensembles, even within the same geographical region of the United States, may be inappropriate. Furthermore, while the participants’ statements can be grouped together by themes to suggest this framework, it may be informative for future studies to utilize statistical evidence that can attest to the reliability of this framework when applied to other band ensembles. Next, I believe it would be prudent for future researchers to develop a method for measuring abstract constructs such as “unity,” “introspection,” and
“cognizance of function.” Doing so would both lend credibility to this new line of inquiry into group efficacy and allow further study using this construct. Finally, this framework is suggested for high school band ensembles only; further research is needed to determine if it may also be applicable to other ensembles such as junior high bands, choirs, orchestras, and high school choirs and orchestras.

**Pedagogical Suggestions for Music Educators**

The entire basis for this dissertation centers on conflicting educational ideologies that will continue to be debated long after the final results of this study are presented. It should be no secret that accountability in education will be required from the public at large, and we, as music educators, should be prepared with answers to questions that may be asked should administrators or politicians question the reason for our programs’ existence. However, we owe it to our students to maintain our objectivity about our purpose for assessing our students and be mindful of the effects on our students when considering taking our students to a festival or contest.

Therefore, I offer the following suggestions for my peers to ensure they are meeting the educational and musical needs of their students while also abiding by cultural and administrative demands of competitive performance. These recommendations are as follows: (a) frame the assessment or contest as part of the learning process, not a means to an end; (b) encourage students to set and pursue their own personal musical goals; and (c) develop a culture within the ensemble of shared values, beliefs, and goals, awareness of each individual’s role in the performance, and foster the ability for individual students to reflect and improve their own performances for the benefit of the group.
1. Frame the assessment or contest as part of the learning process, not a means to an end. Students’ beliefs in their abilities can set them up for success or failure later in life (Bandura, 1997, 2000). Therefore, it is essential for us as educators to help our students develop and have accurate perceptions of their self-efficacy beliefs as much as possible. This precept should not be considered permission for us to prevent students from failing at a given task; rather, it suggests that we should be cognizant of how our decisions about pedagogy, specifically competitive music performance events, affect the experience our students have both in and out of the classroom.

Furthermore, we need to have an open and honest discussion with our colleagues and our students about the purpose of ensemble assessment: to become better musicians. As with any assessment in any other subject, the ultimate goal is to check understanding and plan for growth. The data in this study indicate that most participants used the ratings their ensemble earned at assessment to become better musicians, regardless of how those ratings affected their feelings and efficacy beliefs about themselves as musicians or that of the group as a whole. However, we need to ensure that our students understand that the assessment is just a part of the process of learning and the adjudicators’ comments are not a personal attack on their musicianship. As I have stated previously, the data also indicate that some students, too many to dismiss, reported perceived negative effects on their self-beliefs beliefs about themselves as musicians as a result of poor assessment ratings. This phenomenon might lead to unnecessary attrition from band programs involved in these kinds of assessments if directors fail to preempt potential assessment ratings with an open dialogue with their students about the function and purpose of these assessments.
A copious amount of literature exists that indicates that assessment, when used properly, is an excellent tool that teachers can use to evaluate how well their students are performing in the classroom (Amrein-Beardsley & Barnett, 2012; Colwell, 2002; Cooper, 2004; Hale, 2015; Wise, 1996). The same may be considered true for ensemble festivals; however, we run into trouble when we begin to only see the rating and not the progress our students have made in preparation for that one particular performance. We need to discuss with our students the importance of improving as musicians.

2. Encourage our students to set and pursue their own personal musical goals.

The message is clear from this study: According to their own statements, students who are able to set, pursue, and achieve goals on their own may achieve a greater satisfaction with music making. This finding supports previous literature by Bandura (1977, 1982, 1997) in that (a) the musical goal is task-specific (i.e., making the all-region band), (b) may be guided and directed by the self, and (c) allow the students to experience setbacks throughout the process which they learn to overcome by themselves. Furthermore, as previous literature has indicated, people who achieve an increase in individual self-efficacy beliefs also experience a greater sense of group efficacy (Gibson, 2001; Gibson & Earley, 2007). Students who are able to experience a higher sense of efficacy beliefs will also help their peers feel better about themselves (Bandura, 1997, 2000). According to previous research, this phenomenon translates into increased cooperation, collaboration, and feelings of wellbeing between individuals (Bandura, 2000; Gibson, 2001; Gibson & Earley, 2007), all of which are essential for a successful musical performance.
In addition, all three of the director participants in this study had either personal goals as an educator, goals for their ensemble, or both. It cannot be overstated that it is necessary for us to continue growing personally, musically, and pedagogically. In doing so, we can ensure that we continue to improve ourselves while setting an example for our students by modeling healthy behaviors that our students will appreciate, respect, and emulate. Bandura (1977) noted that *vicarious experience*, or witnessing others accomplish difficult tasks without adverse consequences, is an influential source of self-efficacy beliefs. Therefore, if directors are exhibiting the types of behaviors they desire from their students, this action may help their students realize that accomplishing those same tasks may not be difficult for them as well.

3. *Develop a culture within the ensemble of shared values, beliefs, and goals, awareness of each individual’s role in the performance, and foster the ability for individual students to reflect and improve their own performances for the benefit of the group.* The findings from this study suggest that the development of shared group goals and objectives that lead to a positive sense of group efficacy may be a critical aspect of developing a band program that fosters musical growth, especially when we consider the potential effect that a positive experience as a contributing member of a group may have on an individual’s self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 2000; Gibson, 2001; Gibson & Earley, 2007).

Participants repeatedly commented on their perceived importance of teamwork, personal reflection (especially after a poor performance), and the desire to improve their abilities as musicians. Moreover, while many participants spent time reflecting
individually on their own performances, they also acknowledged that their peers may have been refusing to accept the shared beliefs of the group and thus were compromising the group’s efficacy. As such, it would be prudent for band directors to remain aware of those students who may not agree with the collective objectives of the ensemble; in doing so, directors may be able to help those students adjust to the group dynamics or learn why they disagree with the group. The directors could then use this information to help those students adjust to the group atmosphere or spot potential problems within the group that may arise.

**Ideas for Future Research**

Oftentimes, in the daily grind of the educational process, we get lost in the chaos of today’s accountability machine. It is important for us to continue observing and inquiring as to how this process affects our students. The data gathered from this study lead to some intriguing findings and implications for scholars in both the fields of education and music education to pursue in the future.

First, it would be interesting to further investigate how and to what extent the directors allow the students to determine if they will attend ensemble assessment during the school year. This study assumed that the directors unilaterally chose to attend assessment (which was the situation in all three case studies) and did not inquire into how it was determined that the band was to attend assessment.

Second, this study gathered data from both marching and concert assessment seasons. As such, the data cannot be confined to one season or the other, and it cannot be determined as to if students and directors felt differently about assessments between
marching and contest seasons. Therefore, it may be useful for other researchers to focus on one season or the other to determine if there are similarities or differences between participants’ feelings regarding competing at marching versus concert assessments.

Third, it may be essential to examine further how and why students adopt the philosophy of the director or if the students bring those ideals with them into the rehearsal facility. I witnessed a different personality in each of the three directors, yet their students responded to them well and accepted instructions and criticism with an open mind. How do the students learn and adopt group values? Are they disseminated entirely from the director or is there a group dynamic and interplay taking place? Do the directors sometimes compromise their convictions in favor of student interests? Answers to these questions could help music educators improve the relationships between themselves and their students and interpersonal relationships between students.

Finally, and most certainly, it will be necessary to replicate the protocol I use in this study in an attempt to strengthen my proposed framework for group efficacy beliefs. In addition to replicating the method I have used here, I also encourage scholars to make necessary modifications to ascertain whether or not this framework is applicable in other situations and with a variety of ensembles.

**Concluding Thoughts**

The purpose of this study was to (a) examine students’ perceptions of their musical self-beliefs as related to their ensemble’s ratings at competitive music performance events (CMPEs), (b) gain clarity into how the educational ideology of the director might affect the self-efficacy beliefs of his or her students, and (c) open a
dialogue into potential discovery of the sources of group efficacy beliefs in a band setting as related to individual self-efficacy beliefs. Ninety-one students and three directors from three different band programs in Arkansas participated in the study.

This study offers insight into how music performance events affect students’ self-efficacy beliefs and how those beliefs relate to the efficacy beliefs of the ensemble. While a comparison of actual student growth based on individual goals with the results from holistic ensemble adjudication is beyond the purview of this study, the analyses of participant questionnaires and interviews suggested that the ensemble results can positively or negatively affect students’ self-beliefs as musicians. Furthermore, through their testimony, students also indicated that they felt better about themselves when they accomplished a personal goal. Musical performance is an experience for all participants: music students and music educators. As such, music educators would do well to pay attention to the experiences their students are having in the process, including how they choose to evaluate students’ musical progress and growth. I hope the findings of this study have offered insight into how the results of competitive music performance events might affect the self-efficacy beliefs of individual members in a band, help uncover the synergy between the efficacy beliefs of the self and those of the group, and furthered the line of inquiry into group efficacy in band ensembles in order to discover new ways to benefit our students.
### Appendix A: ASBOA Marching Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Music Performance</th>
<th>Superior</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For this classification, student performers demonstrate highly developed characteristic qualities that reflect their instrument and musical style of performance with minimal lapses.</td>
<td>Student performers demonstrate above average characteristic qualities for their instrument and musical style of performance, but there are minor lapses.</td>
<td>Student performers demonstrate adequate characteristic qualities for their instrument and musical style of performance, but lose control at times.</td>
<td>Student performers demonstrate inadequate characteristic tone qualities for their instrument and musical style of performance, and lose control often.</td>
<td>Student performers demonstrate below average characteristic tone qualities for their instrument and musical style of performance, and lose control most of the time.</td>
<td>Student performers demonstrate inadequate characteristic tone qualities for their instrument and musical style of performance, and lose control most of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ensemble visually enhances the musical presentation.</td>
<td>Student performers demonstrate an awareness of tuning tendencies of instruments and sensitivity to uniform intonation within their section, but there are some inconsistencies.</td>
<td>Student performers demonstrate an adequate awareness of tuning tendencies of instruments and sensitivity to uniform intonation within their section, but there are several flaws.</td>
<td>The ensemble demonstrates below average concepts of balance and blend of sounds, and does not produce a desirable or appropriate sonority of the music performed.</td>
<td>The ensemble demonstrates inadequate concepts of balance and blend of sounds and produces an undesirable and inappropriate sonority of the music performed.</td>
<td>The ensemble demonstrates inadequate concepts of balance and blend of sounds and produces an undesirable and inappropriate sonority of the music performed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program in an appropriate manner, and the choreography of the written program is adequate, but there are inconsistencies.</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program in an appropriate manner, and the choreography of the written program is adequate.</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a below average manner.</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a below average manner.</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a below average manner.</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a below average manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ensemble exhibits little control of all aspects of rhythm, tempo, and pulse.</td>
<td>The ensemble exhibits adequate control of all aspects of rhythm, tempo, and pulse.</td>
<td>The ensemble exhibits good control of all aspects of rhythm, tempo, and pulse.</td>
<td>The ensemble exhibits adequate control of all aspects of rhythm, tempo, and pulse.</td>
<td>The ensemble exhibits adequate control of all aspects of rhythm, tempo, and pulse.</td>
<td>The ensemble exhibits adequate control of all aspects of rhythm, tempo, and pulse.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marching Performance</th>
<th>Superior</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For this classification, student performers demonstrate a high degree of uniformity of posture and body carriage, and maintain appropriate equipment, of all equipment.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate above average foot placement for length of step and style of stride being utilized, there are inconsistencies.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate above average foot placement for length of step and style of stride being utilized, there are inconsistencies.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate above average foot placement for length of step and style of stride being utilized, and there are many inconsistencies.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate inadequate foot placement for length of step and style of stride being utilized, and there are many inconsistencies.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate inadequate foot placement for length of step and style of stride being utilized, and there are many inconsistencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ensemble demonstrates below average alignment in linear forms (ranks, files, diagonal, etc.) and visually precise curvilinear forms (arcs, circles, other nonlinear shapes, etc.) with minor lapses.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate above average alignment in linear forms (ranks, files, diagonal, etc.) and visually precise curvilinear forms (arcs, circles, other nonlinear shapes, etc.), however, there are some inconsistencies.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate above average alignment in linear forms (ranks, files, diagonal, etc.) and visually precise curvilinear forms (arcs, circles, other nonlinear shapes, etc.) are inconsistent and lack visual definition.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate average alignment in linear forms (ranks, files, diagonal, etc.) and visually precise curvilinear forms (arcs, circles, other nonlinear shapes, etc.) are inconsistent and lack visual definition.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate below average alignment in linear forms (ranks, files, diagonal, etc.) and visually precise curvilinear forms (arcs, circles, other nonlinear shapes, etc.) are inconsistent and lack visual definition.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate below average alignment in linear forms (ranks, files, diagonal, etc.) and visually precise curvilinear forms (arcs, circles, other nonlinear shapes, etc.) are inconsistent and lack visual definition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ensemble demonstrates below average alignment in linear forms (ranks, files, diagonal, etc.) with several flaws, and visually precise curvilinear forms (arcs, circles, other nonlinear shapes, etc.) are inconsistent and lack visual definition.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate above average application of timing, spacing and halts required to define all forms present in the design of the drill.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate adequate application of timing, spacing and halts required to define all forms present in the design of the drill.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate average application of timing, spacing and halts required to define all forms present in the design of the drill.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate below average application of timing, spacing and halts required to define all forms present in the design of the drill.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate below average application of timing, spacing and halts required to define all forms present in the design of the drill.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Effect / Integration of Marching Components</th>
<th>Superior</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For this classification, the marching style and competencies demonstrated by both the ensemble and its individual performers are at a high level for the drill design of the presentation.</td>
<td>For this classification, the marching style and competencies demonstrated by both the ensemble and its individual performers are at a high level for the drill design of the presentation.</td>
<td>For this classification, the marching style and competencies demonstrated by both the ensemble and its individual performers are at a high level for the drill design of the presentation.</td>
<td>For this classification, the marching style and competencies demonstrated by both the ensemble and its individual performers are at a high level for the drill design of the presentation.</td>
<td>For this classification, the marching style and competencies demonstrated by both the ensemble and its individual performers are at a high level for the drill design of the presentation.</td>
<td>For this classification, the marching style and competencies demonstrated by both the ensemble and its individual performers are at a high level for the drill design of the presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a convincing manner to maximize flow and continuity of presentation.</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a convincing manner to maximize flow and continuity of presentation.</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a convincing manner to maximize flow and continuity of presentation.</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a convincing manner to maximize flow and continuity of presentation.</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a convincing manner to maximize flow and continuity of presentation.</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a convincing manner to maximize flow and continuity of presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ensemble visually enhances the musical presentation through staging and choreography of the written program in a superior manner.</td>
<td>The ensemble visually enhances the musical presentation through staging and choreography of the written program in an above average manner with some inconsistencies.</td>
<td>The ensemble visually enhances the musical presentation through staging and choreography of the written program in an above average manner with some inconsistencies.</td>
<td>The visual enhancement of the musical presentation by the ensemble through staging and choreography of the written program is adequate, but there are inconsistencies.</td>
<td>The visual enhancement of the musical presentation by the ensemble through staging and choreography of the written program is inadequate and is very inconsistent.</td>
<td>The visual enhancement of the musical presentation by the ensemble through staging and choreography of the written program is inadequate and is very inconsistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For this classification, the suitability of the music is unsatisfactory.</td>
<td>For this classification, the suitability of the music is unsatisfactory.</td>
<td>For this classification, the suitability of the music is unsatisfactory.</td>
<td>For this classification, the suitability of the music is unsatisfactory.</td>
<td>For this classification, the suitability of the music is unsatisfactory.</td>
<td>For this classification, the suitability of the music is unsatisfactory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four or five of the above, and flow and continuity of presentation is excellent and appropriate sonority of the music performed.</td>
<td>Four or three of the above, and flow and continuity of presentation is desirable and appropriate sonority of the music performed.</td>
<td>Four or two of the above, and flow and continuity of presentation is desirable and appropriate sonority of the music performed.</td>
<td>Four or one of the above, and flow and continuity of presentation is desirable and appropriate sonority of the music performed.</td>
<td>Four or none of the above, and flow and continuity of presentation is desirable and appropriate sonority of the music performed.</td>
<td>Four or none of the above, and flow and continuity of presentation is desirable and appropriate sonority of the music performed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Superior</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music Performance</td>
<td>Student performers demonstrate highly developed characteristic qualities for their instrument and musical style of performance with minimal lapses.</td>
<td>Student performers demonstrate above average characteristic qualities for their instrument and musical style of performance, but there are minor lapses.</td>
<td>Student performers demonstrate adequate characteristic qualities for their instrument and musical style of performance, but lose control at times.</td>
<td>Student performers demonstrate inadequate characteristic tone qualities for their instrument and musical style of performance, and lose control often.</td>
<td>Student performers demonstrate below average characteristic tone qualities for their instrument and musical style of performance, and lose control most of the time.</td>
<td>Student performers demonstrate inadequate characteristic tone qualities for their instrument and musical style of performance, and lose control most of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marching Performance</td>
<td>Student performers demonstrate a high degree of uniformity of posture and body carriage, and maintain appropriate equipment, of all equipment.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate above average foot placement for length of step and style of stride being utilized, there are inconsistencies.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate above average foot placement for length of step and style of stride being utilized, there are inconsistencies.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate inadequate foot placement for length of step and style of stride being utilized, and there are many inconsistencies.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate inadequate foot placement for length of step and style of stride being utilized, and there are many inconsistencies.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate inadequate foot placement for length of step and style of stride being utilized, and there are many inconsistencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Effect / Integration of Marching Components</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a convincing manner to maximize flow and continuity of presentation.</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a convincing manner to maximize flow and continuity of presentation.</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a convincing manner to maximize flow and continuity of presentation.</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a convincing manner to maximize flow and continuity of presentation.</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a convincing manner to maximize flow and continuity of presentation.</td>
<td>The ensemble combines the visual program with the musical elements in a convincing manner to maximize flow and continuity of presentation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: ASBOA Concert Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASBOA Concert Scoring Rubric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUNDAMENTAL TECHNIQUE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tone Quality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior: The tone is uniform, centered, consistent and well controlled throughout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent: Most tones are uniform, centered, consistent and well-controlled throughout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good: There is an overall good tone quality with some harshness and/or distortion at extended ranges and volume levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair: Most tones are not uniform, centered, consistent and well controlled throughout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor: Tones are fragmented and rough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intonation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior: The ensemble performs in tune in all dynamic levels and ranges throughout the performance. There may be infrequent intonation errors that are quickly resolved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent: The ensemble is well-tuned most of the time with occasional pitch problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good: The ensemble intonation is inconsistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair: The ensemble is rarely in tune.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor: There is a lack of tonal center that results in poor intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation / Bowing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior: Articulation / Bowing is clear, appropriate and consistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent: Articulation / Bowing is proper and consistent with only minor variations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good: Correct Articulation / Bowing is performed some of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair: Correct Articulation / Bowing is infrequent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor: Articulation / Bowing is inconsistent and not appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rhythm, Precision and Tempo</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior: Rhythms are accurate and vertically aligned. Tempos are accurate throughout the performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent: Most rhythms are accurate and vertically aligned. Tempos are accurate most of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good: Most rhythms are accurate and vertically aligned. Tempos are accurate some of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair: Rhythms are seldom vertically aligned and tempos are inconsistent throughout the performance. There is little sense of rhythmic accuracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor: There is little or no rhythmic accuracy throughout the performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note Accuracy and Technique</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior: The ensemble performs accurate notes with great dexterity and flexibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent: Accurate notes - Technical facility is excellent. Flaws occur infrequently during difficult passages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good: Technical facility is good most of the time. Flaws occur sometimes during difficult passages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair: Flaws are evident in complex passages as well as relatively easier passages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor: Technical facility is poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MUSICAL EFFECT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpretation and Style</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior: Performance is stylistically accurate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent: Performance is stylistically accurate most of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good: Performance is stylistically accurate some of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair: There is little stylistic interpretation of the music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor: Performance is stylistically incorrect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance and Blend</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior: Chords balanced at all dynamic levels and melody clearly heard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent: Most chords are balanced and melody is usually heard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good: Most chords are not balanced and the accompaniment often covers the melody.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair: There are incomplete chord sounds. Accompaniment and melody are not well defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor: Several parts are missing. Ensemble is consistently out of balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phrasing and Expression</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior: Great attention is paid to the shaping of phrases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent: Most phrases have musical shape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good: There is a basic attempt to shape phrases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair: There is a minimal attempt to shape phrases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor: There are no discernable phrases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dynamics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior: The ensemble displays a wide range of appropriate dynamics throughout the performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent: The ensemble displays a consistent dynamic range most of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good: Dynamic variation is apparent, but range of dynamic level is limited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair: The ensemble attempts some dynamic changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor: There are no meaningful dynamic changes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: IRB Waiver of Written Parental Consent

Boston University Charles River Campus Institutional Review Board
25 Buick Street
Room 157
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
T 617-358-6115
www.bu.edu/irb

Notification of IRB Approval: Initial Review

November 3, 2014

Peter Maggio
Doctoral Student
College of Fine Arts
School of Music Education

Protocol Title: Student Perception of Ensemble Assessment as a Function of Musical Achievement
Goals
Protocol #: 3657E
Funding Agency: Unfunded
IRB Review Type: Expedited (6) (7)

Dear Mr. Maggio:

On 11/3/14, after review of your initial application received on 10/10/14 and your response to subsequent modification requests, the IRB has approved the above-referenced protocol in accordance with 45 CFR 46.111. Approval for this study is effective from 11/3/14 to 11/2/15.

In accordance with 45 CFR 46.404 and 46 CFR 46.408, the IRB determined that the research did not involve greater than minimal risk, and that the permission of one parent is sufficient. Consent will be obtained from the parents and assent will be obtained from minors.

The requirement to obtain written documentation of consent was waived per 45 CFR 46.117 (c) (2) for parents of minors.

This approval includes the following:
1. IRB Application – approval to enroll 150 subjects
2. Three Informed Consent Forms – Parent, Band Director, Parent, Student
3. One Assent Form
4. Three recruitment letters – Parent, Band Director, Student
5. Interview Guides – Band Director and Focus Group
6. Initial Survey Questionnaire

This approval is valid for one year, and will expire on 11/2/15. Please submit a Continuing Review Application, which is located on our website (http://www.bu.edu/irb), six weeks prior to the expiration of your study.
As the Principal Investigator, you are responsible for ensuring that studies are conducted in accordance with federal regulations, state laws, and institutional policies.

Please note:
- No subjects may be involved in study procedures prior to the IRB approval date or after the expiration date.
- All unanticipated problems or serious adverse events must be reported to the IRB immediately.
- All protocol modifications must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation unless they are necessary to eliminate immediate hazard to subjects.
- All protocol deviations must be reported to the IRB.
- All recruitment materials and methods must be approved by the IRB prior to use.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 617-358-6117.

Sincerely,

Ed Szkutak
Senior IRB Analyst
Charles River Campus IRB

Enclosures

cc: Professor Kink Vu, CFA
Appendix D: Student Survey Instrument

Survey No. ____________

Student Perceptions of Ensemble Assessments as a Function of Personal Musical Achievement Goals

INITIAL SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please describe how your band’s ratings at contest influence your personal feelings about yourself as a musician.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

2. Please describe how you feel about your personal musical abilities after your band earns a favorable rating at contest.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
3. Please describe how you feel about your personal musical abilities after your band earns an undesired rating at contest.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

4. Describe your personal musical goals. How do you feel about yourself when you accomplish these goals? How does accomplishing your personal goals affect your experience as a member of your band?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
Appendix E: Focus Group Interview Protocol

Focus Group Interview Protocol

*Review the Assent Form in person and ask if they have any questions about the process before beginning the interview.*

*Encourage them to keep all discussions in the focus group confidential.*

1. Describe your feelings regarding your participation in band assessments.

2. How do your band’s assessment ratings, whether good or bad, affect your own views as a musician?

3. How would you define “success” in band? How would you define “failure” in band?

4. Do each of you have personal musical goals that you would like to accomplish? If so, what do you consider to be the most important goal(s) for you to accomplish?

5. Do you have anything to add to this interview about band assessments?
Appendix F: Director Interview Protocol

Director Interview Protocol

Review the Consent Form in person and ask if they have any questions about the process before beginning the interview.

1. Describe your feelings regarding your participation in band assessments.

2. How do your band’s assessment ratings, whether good or bad, affect your own views as a music educator?

3. Describe the reactions you have witnessed your students have when they have learned of their ratings at a band festival. To what do you attribute those reactions?

4. Do you have goals for your ensemble? If so, what do you consider to be the most important goals for your ensemble to accomplish?

5. Do you have anything to add to this interview about band assessments?
References


Curriculum Vitae

PETER ANTHONY MAGGIO

Doctor of Musical Arts, Music Education (2016)
Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts

Master of Science in Education, Educational Leadership (2008)
Henderson State University, Arkadelphia, Arkansas
Thesis: Attitudes Toward Music Education at Smackover High School, Smackover, Arkansas

Bachelor of Music, Instrumental Music Education (2005)
Henderson State University, Arkadelphia, Arkansas

Teaching Experience

Director of Bands (July 2014-Present)
Hope High School, Hope, Arkansas
  • Teach and manage three bands and over 200 students in grades six through twelve
  • Manage all aspects of the program, including budgeting for growth, coordinating for rehearsals and performances, and delegating tasks to students to foster ownership
  • Collaborate with parents in the Music Parents Association for continued parent involvement
  • Teach high school choir

Instructor of Online Learning (August 2014-Present)
Randstad K-12 Online Virtual Public School, Herndon, Virginia
  • Teach online Music Appreciation, Middle School Music, and AP Music Theory

Adjunct Instructor of Music (January 2015-Present)
University of Arkansas Community College at Hope-Texarkana
  • Develop and teach MUSI 2103 Music Appreciation (on-campus and concurrent sections)
Assistant Director of Bands, Director of Percussion Studies (2012-2014)
Magnolia High School, Magnolia, Arkansas
• Assisted the Director of Bands in all aspects of managing and directing a band program of over 600 students at a 5A school.
• Taught all aspects of a percussion studio.
• Managed percussion equipment, inventory, and resources.
• Conducted the 9th grade and high school concert bands.

Director of Bands (2008-2012)
Fountain Lake High School, Hot Springs, Arkansas
• Taught and managed three bands and over 200 students in grades six through twelve, including budgeting for growth, coordinating for rehearsals and performances, and delegating tasks to students to foster ownership
• Collaborated with parents in the Band Boosters Organization for continued parent involvement
• Co-taught AP Music Theory and designed a Pre-AP Music Theory course for underclassmen
• Developed and taught a Career Focus in Music class for high-school students
• Taught Fifth Grade Music and High School Jazz Band

Percussion Captionhead (2010-2011)
Arkansas Thunder Drum and Bugle Corps, Hot Springs, Arkansas
• Founding staff member to Arkansas’s first all age DCA Class A drum corps
• Composed and taught the percussion arrangements to members

Director of Bands (2005-2008)
Smackover School District, Smackover, Arkansas
• Helped the band climb from a rating of “Fair” to a rating of “Excellent” in three years
• Taught instrumental and vocal music in grades six through twelve
• Taught AP Music Theory
• Designed a Survey of Music class curriculum for grades seven and eight

Percussion Instructor (2003-2005)
Bryant School District, Bryant, Arkansas
• Taught percussion private lessons to high school students
• Wrote drumline parts, front ensemble parts, and cadences for marching band shows
• Conducted weekly percussion sectionals and taught private lessons
Presentations

“Redefining the Folk Song for Twenty-First Century Music Education” (2014)
The College Music Society Pacific Northwest Regional Conference, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana

“Community Music in Okinawa, Japan: Implications for Music Education in the United States” (2014)
The College Music Society Rocky Mountain Regional Conference, Aurora University, Denver, Colorado

Annual Educational Renewal Zone Conference, Arkadelphia, Arkansas

Adjudications

Ouachita Valley Invitational, Camden, Arkansas (2013)
Jessieville Marching Invitational, Jessieville, Arkansas (2012)

Committees

Percussion Committee (2014-2015)
Arkansas School Band and Orchestra Association

Policies and Procedures Committee (2012-2014)
Magnolia Public Schools

Policies and Procedures Committee (2009-2012)
Fountain Lake School District

Incentive-Based Compensation Committee (2009)
Fountain Lake School District
Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP) Steering Committee (2008)
Fountain Lake High School

Fountain Lake High School

Performance Biography

Percussionist (2011-2012)
Little Rock Wind Symphony, Little Rock, Arkansas

Saxophonist, Percussionist, and Guest Conductor (2009-2010, 2012)
Hot Springs Community Band, Hot Springs, Arkansas
• Encouraged Fountain Lake Band students to participate during the school year and the summer, and most continue participation after high school while in college
• Performed a joint concert for the community in February of 2010 with the Fountain Lake Symphonic Band

Percussionist (2002-2005)
South Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, El Dorado, Arkansas
• Performed the Nutcracker with the Moscow Ballet as well as numerous orchestral works by prolific composers such as Copeland, Beethoven, William Grant Still, and Gershwin

Licensure

Arkansas Department of Education
• Instrumental Music P-12
• Vocal Music P-12
• Building Level Administrator P-12

Advanced Placement College Board
• Advanced Placement Music Theory

Arkansas Induction Mentoring Model (AIMM)
• Certified Teacher-Mentor
Awards and Honors

- Summa Cum Laude Graduate (2005)
- Alpha Chi, National College Honor Scholarship Society (2005)

Professional Memberships

- The College Music Society
- Endorsed Educator, Vic Firth Sticks and Mallets
- Arkansas School Band and Orchestra Association
- Percussive Arts Society
- Alpha Chi, National College Honor Scholarship Society
- Kappa Delta Pi, International Honor Society in Education