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Doing good and doing well: servant leadership and peer mentoring in a high school band

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Dissertation

**DOING GOOD AND DOING WELL:
SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND PEER MENTORING
IN A HIGH SCHOOL BAND**

by

EVAN C. DOYLE

B.A., University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 2005
MAEd., Western Carolina University, 2007

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requirements for the degree of
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Approved by

First Reader

Andrew Goodrich, D.M.A.
Associate Professor of Music, Music Education

Second Reader

Kính T. Vũ, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Music, Music Education

Third Reader

Karin Hendricks, Ph.D.
Director of the School of Music
Professor of Music, Music Education

*The things you do for yourself are gone when you are gone but the things
that you do for others remain and become your legacy.*

— Kalu N. Kalu, *Citizenship: A Reality Far from Ideal*

DEDICATIONS

For my wife, Avery, and our daughters, Emma and Hadley. Without their support and patience, my pursuit of this dream never could have come to fruition.

And in memory of my mentor, George N. Parks, whose support and abundant enthusiasm, energy, and excitement helped shaped my life's path and purpose.

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EVAN C. DOYLE

Boston University College of Fine Arts, 2026

Major Professor: Andrew Goodrich, D.M.A., Associate Professor of Music, Music
Education

ABSTRACT

Scholars have problematized large ensemble music due to issues of hegemonic authoritarianism inherent in many traditional rehearsal strategies (e.g., Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Hess, 2023). Peer mentoring is a student-centered instructional strategy wherein a teacher can facilitate opportunities for students to guide learning when serving as mentors and mentees (Goodrich, 2007; 2023b). Researchers suggest that peer mentoring can support the development of leadership skills among mentors (Funfar, 2022; Goodrich, 2023b; Lee et al., 2020). Current music education research, however, lacks a theoretically grounded understanding of the leadership skills developed through peer mentoring. To address this gap in the literature, this instrumental case study was conducted to examine peer mentoring and student leadership in a high school band through a servant leadership framework.

Utilizing a framework that extends the work of van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015), in this case study I examined the role of compassionate love, virtuous traits (*humility, gratitude, forgiveness, altruism, empathy, and vision*) and servant leadership behaviors (*empowerment, authenticity, stewardship, providing direction, and inclusion*)

in promoting wellbeing as learners engaged in peer mentoring in a high school band setting. In this study I sought to deepen understanding of how servant leadership and peer mentoring shaped students' leadership learning and practice within a high school band.

The study took place at a suburban high school in the northeastern United States and occurred over a twelve-week period at the start of the school year. Data were collected through observations and a series of interviews with the band director, peer mentors, and peer mentees.

Following data collection, data were coded and analyzed. Three themes emerged: empowered student voices, learning leadership, and flourishing together. Combined, these themes suggest a conceptual framework, Servant Leader Peer Mentoring (SLPM). The SLPM framework proposes a way of understanding how students in a band program came to experience and adopt servant leadership as they engaged in peer mentoring and co-constructed a community built on service and care. Additionally, the findings clarified that leadership was also practiced outside of the context of peer mentoring through acts of stewardship as student leaders cared for peers and spaces.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

“Close your eyes and think back to your first days in your high school band.” One of my great teachers and mentors, George Parks, would say this at the culminating moment of each days-long session of the Drum Major Academy (DMA). He would then encourage students to imagine the band room and look for the faces of the people who made band a special experience.

I can still remember the first time I engaged in that reflective activity as a student at DMA in the summer of 1997. I remember less vividly the countless times I heard George say the same words over the years that I worked beside him as a DMA instructor. And now, in the years since his passing, as I have been the one asking students to close their eyes and think back, I find that I still reflect on my own experience while the students do the same. Even now, the names and stories of the people who made my experience a transformative one still echo in my mind as resolutely as they had so many years before.

My experience as a new member in my high school band program changed the trajectory of my life in ways that I could not have possibly foreseen in the countless moments that I experienced. I had joined the ensemble somewhat reluctantly, coaxed by the promise of a trip to Florida and the pressure of a few friends. Within the first day of my first band camp, that time prior to the start of the school year when the marching band began to rehearse the new field show, I was already sensing a shift in my reasons for being in band. I felt welcome. I felt valued. I felt comfortable to be myself in a way that I

had not previously experienced in any other group. In hindsight, it is obvious that shift was due to the way in which the leaders in my band interacted with me.

Over the course of that year, one of those leaders had immeasurable influence on me. She was one of the band's drum majors, and a saxophonist like me. It was on her encouragement that I began to practice in preparation for a regional honor band audition. She was always there with advice on how to practice or kind words to make me feel like an important part of the group. She and several other of the student leaders in the ensemble made sure that I was included socially, too.

Because of my drum major and the other leaders in the band, I learned what it took to be a part of our band. I wanted to be as cool and talented as they were. I began to copy the examples they provided. In time, I eventually became a drum major of the band. In that role, I tried to emulate the behaviors that I had admired in my leaders. The warm support of my high school band's student leaders influenced so many of my life choices.

Bringing attention back to Drum Major Academy, George always closed that final session by telling the students that their position as leaders in the band could have an unimaginable impact on their peers. My own experience with great leaders as a student in my high school band indicates that this may be true. So much of my life is the result of wanting to be just like them. Without their guidance and support, my life would probably not have developed the way that it did.

Because of my experiences, I contend that there is immense value provided by enacting student leadership in band. Goodrich (2023b) suggested that peer mentoring is one way that students can engage in leadership, and, through mentoring experiences,

develop leadership skills. Although researchers have found evidence that peer mentoring has a positive relationship with the development of leadership skills (e.g. Fine, 2021; Hirsch et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2020), there is no evidence that directly supports this claim in a large ensemble music education setting (e.g., marching band, orchestra). Examining the degree to which servant leadership may or may not influence peer mentoring in a band program could provide insight that illuminates the ways in which student leadership is enacted and developed. Such illumination might include enriched understanding of potential benefits or limitations as perceived by high school band students and their teacher.

Peer Mentoring

There are many student-centered practices that a teacher can use in an ensemble setting and these practices have overlapping traits. These practices include cooperative learning, collaborative learning, peer tutoring, peer assisted learning, and peer mentoring and involve students co-constructing knowledge (Goodrich, 2023b). For example, in cooperative learning, teachers facilitate opportunities for students to work together in clearly designated roles (e.g., leader, timekeeper) (Schul, 2011). In collaborative learning, the teacher may facilitate learning opportunities, where peers learn from a more knowledgeable peer and develop social bonds but does not provide the structure found in cooperative learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Peer tutoring is a highly structured experience which is facilitated by a teacher (or other adult) where a more knowledgeable peer teaches or coaches another in academic concerns with little to no concern given for the social relationship (Topping, 1988). In peer-assisted learning, students work together to

teach one another, and in the process of teaching they often learn more themselves (Johnson, 2017). What sets peer mentoring apart from the other practices is flexibility. According to Goodrich (2023b), that flexibility is found in peer mentoring because this student-centered learning practice allows students to focus on both academic or social growth while also allowing for the roles of mentor and mentee to be reversed. In other words, peer mentoring can often be structured very similar to the other student-centered practices mentioned, but with the freedom for students to decide on how knowledge is shared and what roles (e.g., mentor, mentee) they may take in the situation.

Defining Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring is an educational practice wherein teachers facilitate opportunities for students to share knowledge and experience with each other (Goodrich, 2023b). Peer mentoring in ensemble music classes allow more knowledgeable mentors to work with mentees in support of the mentee's growth musically and socially within the ensemble (Goodrich, 2007, 2023b). Goodrich (2021) found that mentors engaged in helping mentees learn are simultaneously deepening their own understanding of the material.

Peer mentoring, like peer tutoring, can be hierarchical when a more knowledgeable student acts as the mentor to a less knowledgeable mentee (Goodrich, 2023b). Peer mentoring can be non-hierarchical, however, when the roles of mentor and mentee are interchanged based upon the situation. In a band context, a hierarchical peer mentoring relationship could be observed in the relationship between a section leader and any (or all) individuals in their section. If a band director stops the band during rehearsal and asks students to discuss observations and strategies to address perceived issues could

be a non-hierarchical peer mentoring engagement, provided that both peers speak equally and learn from one-another in such scenarios. Another example of a non-hierarchical mentoring experience could occur where an older peer helps musically talented younger saxophonist socially into the organization and that younger peer shares the knowledge that they have previously learned about jazz improvisation.

Because students engaged in peer mentoring decide what knowledge and information is worth sharing within the context facilitated by the teacher (Goodrich, 2023b), peer mentoring allows students to develop and demonstrate their leadership skills. When students engage in leadership, though, important questions arise regarding exactly what type of student leadership might be developed. Funfar (2022) examined how leadership skills developed through peer mentor have applied later in life. Recently, scholars have found evidence that college undergraduate students serving as a peer mentor have reported an increased confidence in leadership self-efficacy (Byrne et al., 2022; Fine, 2021) and the development of skills associated with strong leaders (Hirsch et al., 2021). It is not yet clear, however, if peer mentoring in a secondary band setting would have similar connections to leadership self-efficacy and leadership skill development.

An emerging understanding of the way peer mentoring can be utilized as a form of leadership education for adult-aged individuals (e.g. Byrne et al., 2022; Hirsch et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2020) helps to reaffirm Goodrich's (2023b) assertion that there is a relationship between peer mentoring in music education and the development of student leadership. To date, however, there is scant research that explicitly connects peer

mentoring in music education to a well-established leadership theory. By completing a case study that examines the ways in which students engage in leadership and peer mentoring, I intend to provide novel insight into the ways that peer mentoring might be influenced by servant leadership, and vice-versa.

There is also the matter of considering the types of leadership that are possible. Much of the research on leadership and leadership education centers on leadership behaviors and goals, which can be either positive or negative (Grunberg et al., 2021). Leaders who demonstrate negative leadership tend to have an adverse effect on followers and the organizational culture. By contrast, Dugan (2017) suggested positive leadership theories, such as servant leadership, are intended to promote the wellbeing and development of followers. A focus on follower wellbeing through servant leadership can promote a positive organizational culture (van Dierendonck, 2018).

Through leadership education, positive leadership traits can be increased and negative leadership traits can be diminished (Anthony, 2017). Given that adolescent students may have had limited leadership experience, a need for training may be even more clear. Music educators interested in promoting student leadership would benefit from an understanding the ways in which a teacher can support the development of leadership traits among students while also facilitating leadership opportunities through peer mentoring experiences.

Servant Leadership

When undertaking research involving student leadership, it is important to utilize a framework that makes clear the appropriate behaviors and dispositions of a leader. This

is particularly true given the history of bands in schools. Band leadership has potential to be authoritarian (Allsup & Benedict, 2008). Such authoritarianism can be observed in the conductor who dictates instructions from the podium without ever stopping to include student voices in the musical decision-making. By placing themselves as the sole source of knowledge, conductors of this type are also positioning students as empty vessels who must be filled with knowledge (Freire, 2017/1970). By contrast, a conductor can share power by giving students an opportunity to share their own knowledge with peers as part of a more egalitarian rehearsal structure (Weidner, 2015; 2020). Approached this way, the rehearsal becomes a collaborative effort where students and conductor can each contribute to the ensemble's learning and creativity.

Given the call by many scholars for band directors to aim toward justice and the breaking down of authoritarian structures (e.g., Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Hess, 2023; Tan, 2014), the leadership framework should be compatible with that aim. I also posit that any inquiry to student leadership that is concerned with anti-authoritarianism must include consideration of the perspective of the followers, those who work alongside the leaders, and comprise the majority of people in an organization. My position finds support from Freire (2017/1970) and Greenleaf (2002/1977), who both suggested that people must be provided space to address the problems that they face in the world. In the next paragraphs, I will offer my case for why servant leadership is the chosen framework for this study.

A Case for Servant Leadership

First conceptualized by Robert Greenleaf (1977/2002), servant leadership provides a model of leadership wherein a servant leader places the needs and wellbeing of followers at the front of leadership decisions and actions. More recent and academically grounded, frameworks of servant leadership can be viewed as an extension of the transformative leadership framework of Burns (1978), with the two theories differentiated primarily by their respective end goals (Paolini, 2007; Stone et al., 2004). Because servant leadership is built upon transformative leadership, both theories share a strong moral grounding and require that a leader be attuned to follower needs (Dugan, 2017; Washington et al., 2014). The focus of transformative leadership primary focuses on organizational health and success (Bass, 1985) while a servant leader's primary focus is on the wellbeing of followers (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

Servant leadership focuses the leader's emphasis on growth and wellbeing of the followers in their charge. In this research, I consider the term servant leader to be interchangeable with "teacher," "peer mentor," or "student leader." In those cases, the teacher's followers could be seen as all their students and the followers of student leaders would be the rest of the students. Servant leadership's emphasis on follower growth and wellbeing positions the theory as fitting for research concerning student leadership and peer mentoring, particularly in a music education setting. Greenleaf (1977/2002) suggested servant leaders would create conditions wherein followers should be "more likely themselves to become servants" (p. 27). His assertion indicates that followers learn to be servant leaders from role models who are themselves servant leaders, and who

nurture the development of followers somehow. There is an expectation that servant leaders establish a culture that perpetuates itself to a degree and that the next generation of servant leaders would seek to do the same for their followers. I see similarity here to Goodrich's (2007, 2018) findings that suggested that peer mentors draw from their experience to share knowledge, but also help mentees assimilate into the culture of the music program through socialization. My findings through this current research may lend additional insights to the degree of this connection.

Defining Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a framework first introduced in Robert Greenleaf's philosophical essay in 1970 and given stronger theoretical grounding by several other scholars in recent decades (e.g., Patterson, 2003; Spears, 2010; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Leadership researchers have examined servant leadership in the fields of business (e.g., Carroll & Patterson, 2014; Setyaningrum, 2017; Sarwar et al., 2021; van Winkle et al., 2014), athletics (e.g., Burton et al., 2017; Durden, 2016), religion (e.g., Larive, 2021; Muoneme, 2012), and military (e.g., Grunberg et al., 2021). Scholars in education have most frequently investigated servant leadership in education in the contexts of school administration (e.g., Mostafa, 2014) and educational experiences aimed toward development of students into servant leaders (e.g., Chan & So, 2017; Funfar, 2022). Within the context of music education, servant leadership has been used as a framework to examine the leadership provided by ensemble directors (Maddix, 2023) and to explore how ensemble directors select student leaders (Posey, 2023). In this research study, I aim to consider the ways in which the

ensemble director and the student leaders display servant leadership attributes through peer mentoring experiences.

Servant leaders approach their roles from positions of compassionate love for their followers (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). For this current study, compassion (interchangeable here with compassionate love) can be considered attitude and behaviors that are focused on caring, concern, and support toward others (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). Such compassion compels the leader to act ethically and to put the needs of followers first (Buck, 2019). It is important to distinguish here that needs are those things which promote the follower's wellbeing, which includes engendering strong senses of autonomy, belonging and meaningfulness of the work as well as promoting both physical and mental health (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Greenleaf (1977/2002) put forth the following as his personal, informal test to determine if a leader was practicing servant leadership:

Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? (p. 27, emphasis in original text)

Peer Mentoring and Servant Leadership

Peer mentoring and servant leadership seem compatible on account of the importance of compassion in both. Goodrich (2023a) suggested that when peer mentors engage with mentees compassionately, as in Hendricks (2018), the empathy that is required promotes more inclusive learning spaces and develops trust. Van Dierendonck

and Patterson (2015) posited that compassionate love is the pre-requisite condition for servant leadership, a condition from leadership which supports the growth and well-being of followers. Scholars have found that followers of servant leaders report favorably on the organizational culture of their groups (Burton, et al., 2017; Gotsis & Grimani, 2016).

The skills required for effective peer mentoring can be taught and learned. The same is true of servant leadership. For example, peer mentors can benefit from teacher guidance aimed toward developing their mentoring skills (Goodrich, 2021). Regarding leadership, Anthony (2017) found that when leaders receive coaching in positive leadership behaviors, they tend to experience an increase in positive leadership behaviors and decrease in negative ones for adults in leadership positions. This skill development relates to the teacher's role as a facilitator of the peer mentoring experience (Goodrich, 2023). Understanding more about how teachers support the development of effective peer mentoring and student leadership may provide insights to band directors who either use these instructional strategies or are considering using them for the first time.

Problem

Utilizing peer mentoring in a band classroom setting can provide students with a greater voice in the learning process (Goodrich, 2023b). Scholars have supported the incorporation of more student-centered strategies within the band rehearsal space (e.g., Johnson, 2017; Weidner, 2020). Band students gain autonomy when they are given a greater voice in the process (Allsup, 2003; Schatt, 2022), which can contribute to greater motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Still, traditional band rehearsal strategies tend to be teacher-centered (Allsup &

Benedict, 2008; Hess, 2023). There are many reasons that teachers might resist utilizing peer mentoring in the classroom. Music teachers who reported a strong belief in the value of student-centered strategies still tended to rely heavily on teacher-centered methods of instruction (Bazan, 2011). There are many reasons that teachers might resist utilizing peer mentoring in the classroom. Music teachers have cited insufficient rehearsal time, performance demands, and student-readiness as reasons for avoiding student-centered strategies (Scherer, 2021).

Peer mentoring is an instructional strategy that allows students to lead the learning. Although scholars have suggested that the use of such strategies in band instruction benefits students (Goodrich, 2023a; Johnson, 2017, Schatt, 2022; Weidner, 2020), Scherer (2021) found that ensemble directors still tend to favor traditional teacher-centered strategies. Teachers participating in these studies citing student readiness as a barrier is especially troubling considering that evidence suggests that students can overcome this issue with some support (Goodrich, 2021; Schatt, 2022). An exploration involving the ways in which servant leadership and peer mentoring occur in a high school band setting may provide insights into the manner of that relationship, if one exists at all. If the relationship is promising, such insight could provide guidance for how band directors might use these instructional strategies in their own teaching practices while supporting students through the process.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which peer mentoring and servant leadership interacted with one another in a high school band setting. This research study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do students in a high school band engage in peer mentoring and servant leadership?
2. In what ways, if any, are the behaviors or dispositions of peer mentors aligned with those of servant leadership?
3. What is the teacher's role in supporting servant leadership and peer mentoring?

Rationale

Understanding the ways in which servant leadership and peer mentoring interact has practical implications. Although it is known that the skills and positive behaviors of servant leadership can be taught and developed (Anthony, 2017), and that the same is true of peer mentoring (Goodrich, 2021), there is not yet a clear understanding of which skills overlap or the degree to which they do, particularly in music education. Funfar (2022) examined how peer mentor training through team building exercises impacted student perceptions of their own servant leader attributes. Outside of music education, scholars have connected peer mentoring experience to the development of leadership skills (Fine, 2021; Lee et al., 2020) and leadership efficacy (Byrne et al., 2022). Understanding how servant leadership and peer mentoring work together in a music education context could inform how teachers implement learning opportunities for mentors that lead to more meaningful peer mentoring experiences for both the mentor and mentee.

On a more personal level, this study provided me with an opportunity for deep reflection on the value of servant leadership. Throughout my life in band, I have been surrounded by champions of servant leadership. In recent times, however, I have found myself wondering if the virtues and behaviors that are germane to servant leadership were truly impactful. I could not be sure that these leadership beliefs aligned with the experience of students today, especially when many leaders in broader societal contexts did not embody the values or behaviors of servant leadership. Worried that I may be stuck in a bubble of confirmation bias, I sought to explore the ways in which servant leadership and peer mentoring informed the experience of students and their teacher in a high school band.

Orientation of the Study

Peer mentoring has been shown to be a teaching practice that provides students with an opportunity to develop and exercise leadership skills (Goodrich, 2023b). Scholarship that focuses on peer mentoring in a music education setting, however, lacks the firm grounding of a well-established leadership framework. In this research I aim to address that gap and provide insight into the nature of the leadership skills gained and exercised by students engaged in peer mentoring in a secondary band program. The framework is servant leadership. In this study I examine the development of student leadership, and also the model of leadership provided by the teacher.

The forthcoming chapters of this dissertation will provide the foundation, method, and findings of this instrumental case study. In chapter two, I will explore the servant leadership framework and consider ways in which it might be connected to the extant

literature on peer mentoring. In chapter three, I explain the research method, including information about how data was collected and analyzed. The chapter also includes information about the participants in this instrumental case study. I will share the findings of this research in chapters four through seven and discuss the implications of those findings in chapter eight.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

In the first chapter, I explored how peer mentoring can help students develop leadership skills. I suggested that reflecting on that point raised questions regarding what kind of leadership that might entail. Ineffective leaders lack vision, micromanage, and fail to listen (Grunberg et al., 2021). As a result, the leader's organization may end up being ineffectual and followers may sense the absence of growth potential within the organization. Toxic leaders exhibit traits (e.g., favoritism and bullying) that erode the positive culture of an organization (Grunberg et al., 2021). Some of those traits, particularly micromanagement, bullying, and failure to listen to student voices, have been a uncomfortable, even regrettable, part of authoritarian band traditions (Allsup & Benedict, 2008). Students tend to follow the methods of their teachers (Bazan, 2011; Webb, 2015). Incorporating peer mentoring may be a viable practice for those hoping to eschew the authoritarian practices of the past (Goodrich, 2023b). It is important, however, for teachers to consider ways to promote student learning of positive leadership traits rather than negative ones.

Positive leadership is rooted in positive psychology and seeks to elevate followers and promote excellence in the organization (Monzani & Van Dick, 2020). Anthony (2017) found that coaching in positive leadership tends to foster positive traits in leaders. To offer coaching to students, it is important for the teacher to have a clear vision for what they believe that positive leadership through peer mentoring should be.

Servant leadership is one positive leadership theory that might lend additional

insights to that vision. For this research, I consider both the leadership from the mentors engaged in peer mentoring and the leadership from the teacher facilitating the learning experiences. In servant leadership, the leader (teacher or mentor) places the needs of the followers (students or mentees) at the center of leadership decisions, making it a people-centered leadership theory (Patterson, 2003).

Servant leadership first found its way to modern discourse through the writings of Greenleaf (1977/2002). In the decades since, scholars have provided stronger theoretical grounding (e.g. Patterson, 2003; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015) to provide a scholarly foundation for researching and expanding upon Greenleaf's ideas. There is, however, little, if any, research that connects peer mentoring in music education to servant leadership. In this research study I aim to address that gap. To clarify and strengthen the theoretical grounding of the research, I will first explain the servant leadership framework that I utilize in this research. This explanation will include connections to current research in music education and the broader field of education. Following that, I will consider the ways in which that framework connects to the extant literature on peer mentoring.

In this research I investigate a band director who uses servant leadership and peer mentoring in teaching. Therefore, although I will refer to leaders throughout this chapter, the term should be considered interchangeable with band directors (or any teacher, for that matter) and peer mentors. This is in acknowledgement that, although the band director is typically viewed as the leader of the ensemble (Maddix, 2023), in peer mentoring student mentors have opportunities to take a leadership role in the classroom

(Goodrich, 2023b). As such, when I address research specific to band directors, teachers, or peer mentors throughout this review, I am also addressing leadership.

Servant Leadership

The servant leadership framework used in this research extends theorization by van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015). In that framework, servant leadership originates from a leader's *compassionate love*, which instills *virtuous traits* that compel *servant leader behaviors*. All behaviors are aimed toward the promotion of *follower well-being*. In van Dierendonck and Patterson's framework, the virtuous traits of the servant leader include humility, gratitude, forgiveness, and altruism. I borrow from Spears (2010) to include empathy and from Patterson (2003) to include vision among the virtues of a servant leader. Van Dierendonck and Patterson's (2015) initial framework included servant leadership behaviors such as empowerment, authenticity, stewardship, and providing direction (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). To that list of behaviors, I add inclusion (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016) to provide a means of examining the ways that student leaders might invite peers (or not) to join the co-creation of a community within their ensemble.

Compassionate Love

Love is a frequent topic in servant leadership literature (e.g., Buck, 2019; Patterson, 2003, 2006; 2025; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Scholars have used terms like agapao love (Patterson, 2003), agape love (Buck, 2019), altruistic love (Mulinge, 2018) and compassionate love (Brouns et al., 2020). Sometimes, servant leadership scholars truncate the term to compassion (e.g., Jit et al., 2017). In the context

of servant leadership literature, all these terms align with a definition of compassionate love provided by Sprecher and Fehr (2005) who suggested that “compassionate love is an attitude toward other(s)...containing feelings, cognitions, and behaviors that are focused on caring, concern, tenderness, and an orientation toward supporting, helping, and understanding the other(s)” (p. 630). Because the varied terms used in servant leadership literature all speak to the same care and concern for others, they are virtually indistinguishable in their utilization. For the sake of clarity and consistency in terminology, I will use the term compassionate love throughout this study.

Compassionate love is a virtue shared by servant leaders (Patterson, 2025). It is the virtue that would cause a leader to act in the best interest of their followers, even when it is against their own interests (Patterson, 2025). The positioning of care for others at the front of the servant leader’s actions is the primary trait which differentiates them from other types of leaders (Stone et al., 2004). Because a servant leader has compassionate love for their followers, the leader acknowledges the follower’s dignity without reservation or expectation of personal gain (Héjj, 2019). To honor an individual’s dignity is to recognize that person’s inherent and inalienable worth (Steinmann, 2016). Because the servant leader accepts their followers as they are and works to support the follower’s well-being, trust is developed between leader and follower (Héjj, 2019).

Compassionate Love and Trust

Trust between leader and follower requires that each party is confident in the competence of the other and that both parties will act with benevolence, honesty, openness, and reliability (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Trust is reciprocal in that the trust

that a leader has for their followers tends to be reflected by the trust the followers return (Jeyaraj & Gandolfi, 2019; Nastiezaie et al., 2016). Followers who perceive compassionate love from their leaders tend to display a high sense of organizational efficacy (Nastiezaie et al., 2016). Trust is also the vital first step in the empowerment of individuals (Jeyaraj & Gandolfi, 2019). In other words, when servant leaders demonstrate compassionate love, followers experience increased trust. When trust increases, the followers feel more confident in the organization's ability to achieve shared goals, and they feel empowered to participate in that achievement.

Here, I offer caution. Although compassionate love and trust from leaders can be well-received by followers (Durdan, 2016), there is potential for these traits to work in conflict with one another. At times, a leader may tell a follower a small lie meant to soften a message that may be a difficult truth that the follower should hear (Lupoli et al., 2017). Followers perceive these choices and begin to assume that the leader will withhold criticism to spare feelings, which results in distrust of the leader's integrity (Lupoli et al., 2017). There is an adage that says that when one must choose between being kind and being right (truthful), the best choice is kindness. Leaders can maintain integrity and kindness, however, by sharing difficult truths while maintaining respect and support for their followers (Mharapara & Staniland, 2020). It is possible for leaders to choose to be both kind and right.

In that regard, kindness might be connected to a music educator's openness, "the extent to which [they] communicate freely with others," (Hendricks, 2018, p. 44). Openness requires vulnerability on the part of the leader as that communication might

include personal thoughts and information, but also confidence that what is shared will not be exploited (Hendricks, 2018). Through openness, a teacher can promote a musically safe environment where students are more confident to accept feedback while taking risks, both musical and social (Hendricks, 2018).

Compassionate Love in Music Education

Servant leadership has been a popular topic in music education practitioner journals (e.g., Lautzenheiser, 1997; Wis, 2002), but studies in which researchers explore servant leadership in the context of music education are sparse (e.g., Madix, 2023; Posey, 2023). On the other hand, the role of compassionate love in music education has been increasingly well researched in recent years, often through considering the role of care in music teaching and learning (e.g., Edgar, 2014; Hendricks, 2018, 2023, 2025; Hendricks & Smith, 2024). One valuable contribution from this line of research is the compassionate music teaching (CMT) model put forth by Hendricks (2018).

Compassionate music teaching is a humanistic approach to music education built upon six pillars: trust, empathy, patience, inclusion, community, and authentic connection. When a teacher grounds their practice in care, as is the case for a teacher engaging in CMT, they act to support their students' growth and wellbeing, both within the music classroom (Hendricks, 2025) and beyond (Mitchell, 2023).

With substantial overlap between CMT and servant leadership, a teacher utilizing one of the frameworks in their practice may be simultaneously using the other. To clarify, band directors might observe that CMT connects with how teachers build strong, caring relationships to effectively teach their students (Hendricks, 2018) whereas servant

leadership addresses teachers' stewardship of their ensembles (Maddix, 2023). The overlap in the behavior of the compassionate music teacher and the servant leader occurs through a mutual emphasis on trust, empathy, community, inclusion, and authenticity. There is also the shared goal of student follower growth and well-being. With so much overlap, a band director who applies CMT to their practice might be simultaneously engaging in servant leadership, and vice versa. Deeper understanding of how compassion and care work within music education could provide insight to ways in which servant leadership might be an appropriate framework for student leadership.

Virtuous Traits

Compassionate love engenders within the servant leader several other virtuous traits which compel the leader to make the follower's well-being the primary goal (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). A virtue can be understood as a "persisting and reliable disposition to behave in a morally praiseworthy manner" (Tudge et al., 2016, p. 284). Servant leader virtues include *humility*, *gratitude*, *forgiveness*, *altruism* (van Dierendonck & Patterson) *empathy* (Spears, 2010), and *vision* (Patterson, 2003). Each of those traits will be addressed in this section of the literature review. Throughout this section I will refer to leaders and teachers. Although I do consider these terms to be somewhat interchangeable in this study, there is a distinction in my use of the terms in this review. I will use the term "leader" when addressing literature more broadly connected to leadership and I will use the term "teacher" when addressing literature connected more specifically to education. In this section I review literature related to the virtues of servant leadership from literature in fields including psychology, sociology, leadership, servant

leadership, theology, business, care, health professions, education, and music education.

Humility

Humility might conjure images of meek and overly permissive individuals—dubious qualities for a leader. In the context of servant leadership, however, humility is positioned as a confident self-awareness that allows a leader to assess their own strengths and weaknesses, which allows them to engage authentically with followers (Patterson, 2003). The humble leader acknowledges follower strengths and contributions before seeking recognition and remains open to feedback and ideas from others (Owens & Heckman, 2016).

Perhaps because humility can be seen as a vulnerability, there can be drawbacks. Followers often see humble leaders positively when it comes to communal qualities like warmth, honesty, and cooperativity but view them less favorably in agentic qualities like assertiveness and independence (Zapata & Hayes-Jones, 2019). However, a skillful servant leader can balance their humility with action-oriented behaviors to empower followers and promote organizational success (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2014). This requires leaders to have a vision and a drive that compels them to support the growth of people within their organization as leader and follower pursue mutual goals (Xu et al., 2019).

Humility from leaders can be good for an organization. Leaders who are perceived by followers to display greater humility are also perceived to have a greater role in organizational effectiveness (Rego et al., 2018). Humble leaders tend to be more altruistic and spark creativity and innovation within their organizations (Mallén et al.,

2020). This may be due to humble leaders promoting follower engagement by creating organizational cultures where followers and their contributions are valued (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2017).

In this study, servant leadership will frequently return to the idea that a servant leader will inspire followers to become servant leaders themselves (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). For example, a teacher who practices servant leadership will display humility, which may beget similar displays of humility from students. In the years right after high school, former students with greater humility have higher social self-efficacy beliefs and a greater love of life (Ross & Wright, 2023). As they become adults, that same humility has been connected to a stronger sense of well-being (Ross & Wright, 2023). When a teacher's humility inspires the same trait in students, the teacher has worked to promote the well-being of students beyond those students' years in the classroom.

Gratitude

In considering the virtue of gratitude, I use the definition provided by Tudge et al. (2016):

The definition of gratitude as a virtue thus has three very specific features: (a) a benefactor has freely and intentionally helped or provided a beneficiary with something; (b) the beneficiary recognizes the benefactor's intentionality; and (c) the beneficiary freely chooses to repay, if at all possible and appropriate, with something the benefactor needs or wants. (p. 284)

Understood this way, gratitude requires an act of reciprocity between the benefactor and beneficiary. This reciprocity from the beneficiary could take the form of a simple “thank you,” returning the favor when an opportunity arises, or perhaps paying the kindness forward by becoming a benefactor for a new beneficiary. Because the help and repayment are both given freely, gratitude is not a quid-pro-quo situation where a benefactor holds past service against the beneficiary (Tudge et al., 2016).

Because gratitude as a virtue requires reciprocity, gratitude can also be seen as an active practice, the outward manifestation of the internal virtue (Howells, 2014). For teachers, the practice of expressing gratitude has positive implications in classrooms. The relationship between students and teacher become stronger and as the relationships strengthen, student engagement increases (Howells, 2014). These positive gains may be because the expressed gratitude from a teacher engenders the internal feelings of gratitude from the students, which in turn encourages students’ expressions of gratitude and other pro-social behaviors (Spence et al., 2014). In music education, student gratitude for the opportunities that their music education provides them is linked to increased effort and motivation (Barnabé-Valero et al., 2019). Teachers looking to positively impact student engagement, effort, and classroom culture should consider the ways in which they model gratitude for their students.

Forgiveness

Within academia, there is no single agreed-upon definition of forgiveness. Forgiveness research tends to focus on the degree to which an individual experiences a positive change in their negative emotions toward a transgressor (Campbell, 2020). The

varied definitions tend to view forgiveness as either an intrapersonal or an interpersonal phenomenon (Worthington, 2019). In general, forgiveness research focuses on the degree to which an individual experiences a decrease in desire to extract revenge against a transgressor (McNulty, 2019). Intrapersonal forgiveness is experienced by an individual who is forgiving a transgressor and can be exhibited by a choice to let go of bad feelings, a regulation of feelings, or an action toward the transgressor (Worthington, 2019). Interpersonal forgiveness extends to the interaction between the forgiver and the transgressor, making it a shared experience (Worthington, 2019). Because servant leadership is built on relationships between leaders and followers and those relationships aim toward building community (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015), it is also valuable to consider interpersonal forgiveness.

In addition to readily offering forgiveness, a servant leader is prepared to seek forgiveness from those against whom they transgress (Muoneme, 2012). A servant leader also seeks forgiveness from any witnesses of the transgression (Ferch, 2020). This step affirms the dignity of the violated individual and validates the importance of the relationship between the transgressing leader and violated follower.

When leaders are forgiving, followers are more likely to be forgiving (Radulovic et al., 2019). Considering that children and adolescents are in more malleable stages of social development, they are particularly well positioned to be taught to be more forgiving (Garthe & Guz, 2019). Forgiving individuals tend to have a higher sense of well-being (Pareek et al., 2016; Singh & Sharma, 2018). When leaders are forgiving, they create a climate of forgiveness, which makes followers more likely to be forgiving too

(Radulovic et al., 2019). The leader seeks to promote a culture of organizational forgiveness by modelling forgiveness in their own actions and by facilitating forgiveness when disagreements occur among followers (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

When it comes to interorganizational transgressions, victims are more likely to forgive when they feel that there is a measure of organizational justice (Bobocel, 2013). Restorative justice is an option that has been effective in promoting forgiveness (Wenzel, 2019). Restorative justice in an organization is aimed toward rehabilitating the offender and repairing their relationship with the victim rather than simply seeking to punish offenders through retributive punishment (Wenzel et al., 2008). A leader can use restorative justice to address an offender's inappropriate behavior while also facilitating forgiveness on the part of other followers within the organization.

In addition to readily offering forgiveness, a servant leader is prepared to seek forgiveness from those against whom they transgress (Muoneme, 2012). A leader should also consider seeking forgiveness from any witnesses of the transgression (Ferch, 2020). This step affirms the dignity of the violated individual and validates the importance of the relationship between the transgressing leader and violated follower.

Altruism

Altruism is a disposition that leads an individual to put the welfare of another ahead of their own (Batson et al., 2015). In contrast, egoism is demonstrated when an individual places their own welfare ahead of others (Batson et al., 2015). To simplify, altruism may be seen as selflessness from an individual and egoism is selfishness. While altruistic acts can be tied to an expectation of reciprocity (reciprocal altruism), humans

regularly perform non-reciprocal acts of altruism without expecting a return of the favor or social gain (Vlerick, 2021). Reciprocal altruism is demonstrated, for example, when an individual helps a neighbor move furniture and reasoning that their neighbor would do the same if needed. An example of non-reciprocal altruism could be a person making an anonymous charitable contribution to help in world hunger relief.

Altruism can also be pure or impure. Pure altruism occurs when an individual acts to benefit another without any personal gain, and perhaps even some loss (Ottoni-Wilhelm et al., 2017). Whereas some might consider the word impure in a negative context, impure altruism need not be a negative act or mindset. Impure altruism is an altruistic state where the individual may gain something from helping another (Ottoni-Wilhelm et al.). Although the gain of a reciprocal altruistic act may be obvious, it is possible for an individual to experience gains through non-reciprocal altruism. In those cases, the benefactor may experience a “warm glow,” or a positive feeling after doing something good for others (Andreoni, 1990). Altruism from servant leaders has been connected to higher follower performance levels (Sarwar et al., 2021). Whether it be the warm glow from helping followers or heightened performance of an organization, it seems from the existing literature that servant leaders benefit from putting their followers’ needs first, suggesting an impure altruism might guide a leader’s service.

It is also worth noting the ways in which altruism can help the servant leader. Some of these gains are in the form of prosocial behaviors and traits. The choice of an individual to act altruistically has been connected to strong empathy (Batson et al., 2015) and evolved moral reasoning (Vlerick, 2021). Altruistic individuals tend to report a

stronger sense of purpose (Xi et al., 2017) and psychological wellbeing (Soosai-Nathan, 2015). The benefits of altruism position the servant leader as confident leader who builds strong relationships.

Empathy

The value of empathy from leaders toward followers has been well documented in the extant leadership literature (e.g. Elche et al., 2020; Jit et al., 2017; Spears, 2010). Empathy can be viewed as a “compassion for and attunement to others’ emotions and circumstances” (Holt, 2022, p. 118). Unlike sympathy, where an individual feels pity for the plight of another, empathy occurs when an empathizer understands and shares the emotions, positive or negative, of the other (Breyer, 2020). Empathic feelings and/or actions can be the result of emotional empathy or cognitive empathy (Preston et al., 2020). Emotional empathy (EE) occurs when an individual takes on the emotions of a counterpart and responds to that shift in their own feelings by acknowledging the counterpart’s role in the exchange (Ferguson & Wilmer, 2023). By contrast, cognitive empathy (CE) occurs when the individual recognizes the emotional or physical state of their counterpart and consider how they might feel were they in the counterpart’s shoes. Some scholars suggest that CE does not require that the empathizer share in the emotional state of the other (Fernandez & Zahavi, 2020; Zahavi & Rochat, 2015).

In music education, empathy also included an individual’s response to the musical expression of another (Hendricks, 2025). Musical empathy (ME) occurs when care is provided through acts of making or experiencing music with another (Hendricks, 2025). Through research based on compassionate music teaching (Hendricks, 2018), teachers

have connected music making to students communicating feelings that they may not have words to adequately express (Davis, 2023; McCord, 2023).

In this study, I consider empathy to be the leader's attunement to the emotional, physical, and musical states of follower(s) which may or may not include sharing in those states. In other words, though a leader may engage in EE, CE or ME, they may determine that it is best not to share the emotion of their counterpart when experiencing an empathetic response. The role of ME in servant leadership in music education is novel territory for research. Empathy that could be described as cognitive or emotional have been connected to servant leadership in extant literature. I offer an examination that considers the role of both CE and EE in servant leadership and the broader field of education. First, however, it is prudent to introduce the phenomenon of emotional contagion.

Emotional contagion (EC) is a phenomenon where an individual's emotional state spreads to other individuals within a group (Ferguson & Wimmer, 2023). The difference between EC and empathy is that in empathy, the empathetic individual is aware that their counterpart is responsible for their emotional state, whereas with EC the group may be unaware of that they have taken on the emotions of another (Ferguson & Wimmer, 2023). An example of an empathetic response could occur when a teacher sees a student coming down the hall. The teacher notices the student is very excited and mirrors that excitement in their own feelings and actions as the student shares about an awesome concert they saw the previous night. Emotional contagion can be observed when that same student and teacher enter the rehearsal space and their positivity spreads to other members of the

group as they all begin to interact with one another. At that point, many of the other students might not be aware of any details of the concert and cannot pinpoint why they suddenly feel more happy or excited.

Empathetic sharing and emotional contagion can both have benefits in certain leadership exchanges. When a leader has a positive disposition, EC allows the leader to have a positive influence on the organizational climate as the leader's emotional state spreads to followers (Parke & Seo, 2017). It may not be hard to think of a teacher whose upbeat presence made time fly by and kept the class engaged. A leader who shares in the positive emotions of followers (e.g., triumph, joy, excitement) can promote wellbeing for themselves and the followers (Depow et al., 2021). Although empathetic sharing can be a beneficial experience, the leader's sharing of the follower's emotional state may transfer the emotion to the leader to the point where they are now having their own experience and lose sight of the needs of the follower (Zahavi & Rochat, 2015). Cognitive empathy that stops short of sharing the emotions may allow the leader to better attend to the needs of the follower (Fernandez & Zahavi, 2020).

If a leader's emotions are contagious, it is important to consider that this also applies to their negative emotions, which can have an adverse effect on followers and their organization (Barsade et al., 2018). When a leader interacts with a follower who is experiencing negative emotions like anger or frustration and the leader's empathetic response includes sharing in those emotions, negative feelings could spread through the organization. It may also be that sharing emotions can begin to create feelings of pity or prompt a leader to try to solve a follower's problem, neither of which may be the support

the follower is seeking (Hendricks, 2025). There may be times when a leader sharing in their follower's negative emotions could be cathartic or beneficial to followers and the organization, but the servant leader should allow the follower to determine their own needs (Burns, 1978; Freire, 1970/2017; Greenleaf, 1977/2002).

When a leader shares in the emotions of followers over a long period, they might experience compassion fatigue, resulting in reduced empathetic response over time (Hansen et al., 2018; Smith, 2021). Prolonged empathetic engagement can also diminish the physical health of the leader, likely due to the stress of caring for and sharing emotions alongside their followers (Manczak et al., 2016). Self-care can help a leader maintain their compassion and empathy (Baverstock & Finlay, 2016) as well as their physical health (Butler et al., 2019), leaving them better prepared to care for their followers (Paparo, 2023).

Empathy can also have a problem of paternalism. At times, an empathetic leader may seek to solve perceived problems for the follower and will do so without consideration for the follower's own perceived needs (Hendricks & Hess, 2024). When a leader assumes they know what is best for the follower, they display a paternalistic mindset, which has been brought up in critique of servant leadership (Camm, 2019). Such paternalism does run counter to Greenleaf's (1977/2002) assertion that followers, especially those who may be from marginalized communities, need to have a voice in determining how to best serve their own needs. In engaging empathetically, it is important to acknowledge the emotional experience of the other without allowing one's own emotions to de-center the follower from the experience (Hendricks & Hess, 2024).

Even though empathy has some perils and was not included in van Dierendonck and Patterson's (2015) framework, it does merit inclusion in this study, for reasons argued below. Empathy from leaders is connected to follower wellbeing (Jit et al., 2017), leader wellbeing (Khajeh et al., 2014), and positive organizational environments (Elche et al., 2020). In music education, empathy from a teacher is connected to stronger teacher-student relationships and more holistic teaching and learning (Hendricks, 2018). Furthermore, participation in music ensembles can promote stronger empathy in students (Ellerbe, 2021; Rabinowitch et al., 2013; Schellenberg et al., 2015), which is a trait common to servant leaders (Spears, 2010). Research that involves the role of empathy in the development of student leadership through peer mentoring may provide an understanding of the positive or negative roles empathy could play in the process of servant leadership and peer mentoring.

Vision

In servant leadership, vision relates to the leader's ability to see each follower's dignity and place within an organization's future (Patterson, 2003). A servant leader's vision helps them to understand the needs of each follower, even as those needs shift with changes that happen over time (van Dierendonck, 2018). Such vision requires that the leader be able to conceptualize a bright future beyond the pedantic concerns of day-to-day operation (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Tran & Spears, 2020) while also having the foresight to understand how lessons of the past connect to modern situations that illuminate a path toward that future (Spears, 2010).

It is vision that would allow a teacher to imagine new ways of teaching and

learning that better serve students. Such vision might compel a servant leader to work from a justice-oriented stance, one where they seek to dismantle hegemonic structures and provide space for marginalized students (Jeyaraj & Gandolfi, 2020). The problems of authoritarianism inherent in traditional band teaching models (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Hess, 2023), along with problems of hegemony that favors White European musical traditions by marginalizing music and musicians that fall outside those lines (Hess, 2015, 2021), might find a solution in justice-oriented servant leadership practices (Jeyaraj & Gandolfi, 2020). Music education steeped in compassionate love and care (Hendricks, 2023) invites students to embrace their own musical identities (Schei, 2023) and promotes brave spaces (Goodrich, 2023a), that is, spaces where marginalized voices can be amplified and uncomfortable truths can be shared (Arao & Clemens, 2013).

Summary

Servant leaders possess many virtuous traits, and in this research I considered the ways in which humility, gratitude, forgiveness, altruism, empathy, and vision were demonstrated. Each of these traits are dispositions that can be manifested through pro-social behaviors that tend to promote harmony and the well-being within an organization (Krebs, 2015).

Servant Leader Behaviors

The virtuous traits of the servant leader also position a leader to engage in other behaviors that are aimed toward promoting the wellbeing of followers (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). These servant leader behaviors include *empowerment, authenticity, stewardship, providing direction* (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015) and *inclusion*

(Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). In this section, I define these behaviors and examine the ways in which they occur in servant leadership. I will also draw on literature from the broader field of education and the more specific field of music education to consider how these behaviors help teachers address the problem of hegemony in traditional band rehearsal methods. I begin the examination of these behaviors with a point of caution.

Servant leadership behaviors can be directed toward follower wellbeing, there is also potential for misuse. Authoritarian or narcissistic leaders can engage in *servant leader like* behavior, through which they copy some of the behaviors of servant leadership to manipulate followers into acting for the leader's personal gain (Camm, 2019). Without the establishment of caring relationships between leader and followers, true servant leadership is impossible (Reinke, 2004). A servant leader typically considers the ways in which their leadership behaviors impact followers.

Before I review each behavior, it should be stated that these behaviors typically work alongside one another through a nexus of mutual trust. For example, followers tend to feel more empowered when a leader demonstrates trust by providing direction that supports without diminishing autonomy (van Winkle et al., 2014). The combined behaviors of a servant leader foster trust within an organization (Burton et al., 2017), and trust leads to stronger wellbeing for the leader and their followers (Dirks, 2023). Earlier in this chapter, trust was positioned as a byproduct of the servant leader's compassionate love. In this section, trust will be a throughline connecting the combined behaviors of the servant leader. For this purpose, trust will be observed as a thing that leaders cultivate (i.e., the mutual trust developed between leaders and followers).

Empowerment

Empowerment in terms of a servant leader occurs when followers are provided opportunities to grow while simultaneously being enabled to take initiative and make decisions that impact the team (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). The leader trusts the follower(s) and avoids suppressing their inherent power (Jeyaraj & Gandolfi, 2019). Through that lens, empowerment can be considered an act of cultivation that engenders follower autonomy and development (Patterson, 2003). A servant leader's acts of empowerment provide followers with a stronger sense of belonging (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016).

Followers benefit from being empowered in several ways. When followers are empowered, they tend to perform better and enjoy the work more (Murari & Gupta, 2012; Pham, 2024). Followers also tend to reciprocate the trust that leaders have demonstrated through their empowering actions (Jeyaraj & Gandolfi, 2019; Pham, 2024). The trust and empowerment strengthen the relationship between leaders and followers, which encourages increased engagement and stronger community (Lansing et al., 2023). These findings are consistent with self-determination theory, which suggests an individual's motivation is influenced by a sense of belonging and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Followers motivated through empowerment also tend to be more productive in achieving shared goals of an organization (Sarwar et al., 2021). A leader who empowers followers is providing an environment that supports follower motivation and growth while also promoting organizational success.

In education, empowerment of students is a necessary part of addressing the problems of hegemony in many teacher-centered forms of teaching (Broom, 2015). These status-quo practices keep the teacher at the center of the learning, leaving little room for student voice. This power imbalance could be seen as providing an individual in power, in this case the teacher, with a means to reinscribe their own knowledge as the correct way to know the world (Foucault, 1980). These problems of power imbalance have been demonstrated in traditional large ensemble rehearsal methods, which tend to center the conductor as the lone holder of knowledge (Allsup & Benedict, 2008) while also prioritizing the repertoire and styles of Eurocentric classical music (Hess, 2018, 2023).

To truly empower music students, it is necessary to create a classroom that allows them to bring and share their own experience to co-construct new knowledge (Dewey, 1938/1997; Tan, 2014). Inviting student experience would include creating room to consider and engage with the music that is most relevant to them (Ladson-Billings, 2015; Shaw, 2016). This is not to suggest that a music teacher should eschew all their traditions, but rather they should seek additional, newer ways to connect to students (Allsup, 2015; Hendricks, 2018). To empower students, these new ways must include student-centered experiences that provide the students with a greater voice in the learning process (Hess, 2015; 2019).

Empowerment in a band setting can take the form of a director providing time within a rehearsal for students to share feedback with one another (Weidner, 2020). This sort of sharing is at the heart of peer mentoring (Goodrich, 2023b). Asking students to manage ensemble social media or facilitate social opportunities is another way that

students might be empowered outside of the context of the rehearsal space. In each of these situations, the director is trusting the students to work autonomously, though they may still act to support the work as needed.

Authenticity

Authenticity requires that a leader be honest with themselves and their followers (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). To engage authentically requires that the leader communicates and acts with a sense of consistency that is true to their beliefs (van Dierendonck, 2011; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Servant leadership has been shown to promote authenticity from followers, which leads to greater engagement (Ortiz-Gómez et al., 2020). Authenticity from leaders also promotes pro-social and ethical behavior from followers (Hannah et al., 2011)

In music education, authentic engagement between teacher and students is a vital component in co-creating caring relationships (Hendricks, 2018, 2025). By engaging authentically with students, teachers share their own vulnerability while learning and making music alongside their students, allowing the teachers to extend beyond caring *for* or *about* students to care *with* them (Hendricks, 2023, 2025). Through authenticity, teachers develop a foundation from which they can share hard truths and complicated feelings without shaming or judging students (Mharapara & Staniland, 2020).

Stewardship

Servant leader stewardship is demonstrated when the leader accepts responsibility for an organization and acts in service of followers rather than their own self-interest (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011; Gini & Green, 2014). The steward is also a role model to

followers, demonstrating the care for others that they hope for followers to adopt (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Spears, 2010; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). A steward is less concerned with titles and accolades and more concerned with the ways in which they can help others within the organization (Gunderman, 2024). As a servant leader acts as steward for their followers, the model that they provide fosters stewardship among the followers in the organization (Hernandez, 2008).

The stewardship of a servant leader plays an important role in the development of follower trust in their leader (Reinke, 2004). This may be due to the way in which stewardship demonstrates a leader's positioning of follower interests ahead of their own while more evenly distributing power throughout an organization (Torfing & Betzen, 2020). Unlike agentic approaches, through which leaders tend to work in their own self-interest, stewardship promotes follower motivation, satisfaction, and wellbeing (Schillemans & Bjurstrøm, 2020; Torfing & Betzen).

The position of a steward as a role model has implications in music education. In addition to modelling care for others, teachers demonstrate their own continued learning and growth mindset and cultivate the same in students (Chan, 2016). The care a teacher takes to ensure that the learning space and their own mindset create the conditions that are suited to learning (McCown, 2017). For example, when an ensemble director follows advice about alternative seating arrangements to help students develop balance and blend, they are simultaneously demonstrating an openness to learning new strategies while taking care to provide students with a learning environment that optimizes their development (Yi, 2023). Stewardship can also be demonstrated by giving students a

voice in the repertoire selection process. Including students in this process allows them to share in the decision about which music should be rehearsed and performed (Rotjan, 2017). Student voice need not be limited to contributions on repertoire selection. A teacher is also acting as a steward, while further promoting student empowerment, when they facilitate student discussions regarding what is going on in rehearsal (Hendricks, 2025). Those discussions could include focus on musical expression or offering advice to one another on where to focus. Such student-centered opportunities are one way to integrate peer mentoring into the rehearsal structure (Goodrich, 2023b).

Providing Direction

Servant leaders, like many other types of leaders, provide direction to followers (van Dierendonck, 2011). In servant leadership, however, providing direction tends not to be coercive or manipulative. Instead, the direction provided by a servant leader can be considered an act of guidance or mentorship that provide followers with the right degree of accountability (van Dierendonck, 2011). The right degree of accountability is a subjective matter—a leader individualizes direction so that a follower has the necessary support to meet clear expectations without a loss of autonomy (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Providing direction ensures that an organization can remain focused on common goals, which ultimately leads to better performance (Kerns, 2017).

Trust is inherent in the direction that the servant leader provides. Because the servant leader trusts that followers have the capacity to make decisions and a willingness to do what is needed, there is no need to manipulate or coerce action (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Hendricks, 2018). Instead, the servant leader can step back and allow the

empowered followers to go about their work (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

Although a servant leader music educator is the steward of their classroom—placing care of the students at the front of their actions—there are still other needs for the group that may not be urgent concerns to individuals. A teacher makes care their primary objective while also providing direction that informs the artistic pursuits of learning music, aligning with Noddings (2013) assertions regarding the role of care in education. A band director providing direction can be as simple as sharing goals for a particular segment of rehearsal (Hendricks & Smith, 2024). Sharing goals lets students know what is expected and can help them focus their energy on achieving the goal. On a more individualized level, providing direction is demonstrated when a conductor facilitates discussions where ensemble members can share in decision making and musical creativity (Legutki et al., 2023). In that example, the direction is provided through guiding the conversation and setting the tone for discussions that rely on student vulnerability.

Inclusion

The inclusion achieved by a servant leader is due, in large part, to the sum of all the other servant leader behaviors (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). The servant leader's stewardship of the organization requires that they treat all followers equitably and ethically, valuing the humanity and unique contributions of everyone in the organization. Because the servant leader engenders empowerment among followers while providing direction equitably, there is an acknowledgement that the power is meant to be shared by all members of the organization. In other words, I would suggest that because the servant

leader never tries to take the power that rightly belongs to each follower, those followers are empowered and gain autonomy.

A servant leader who values diversity and practices inclusion may be better prepared to lead the modern workforce with its ever-shifting demographics (Sims, 2018). Servant leaders place inclusion of all followers as the highest priority, which allows the leader and followers to build tighter-knit communities built on trust and mutual understanding (Daniels, 2021). Such community provides followers with a sense of belonging, which leads to greater motivation and psychological wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Servant leadership has been critiqued, not for inclusivity toward followers, but for who is allowed to lead. Some of the critiques question the viability of the framework for leaders from a non-White, male background (e.g., Eicher-Catt, 2005; Liu, 2019; Liu & Baker, 2016). Liu (2019) found that an Asian boss in a largely White company was not perceived to be a leader by his followers. Those same followers did, however, recognize a White subordinate as a natural leader, based largely on his ability to manage office politics. Feminist critiques of mainstream leadership theories have suggested that the role of office politics is minimized and that this favors White men because the politics tend to work in their favor (Liu & Baker, 2016), suggesting that in addition to a problem of race, there may be a problem of patriarchy or sexism. In this study I address those problems through the selection of a band program led by a woman in a school with a diverse student population as a case subject.

Scholars in music education have long called for more inclusive practices in music classrooms (i.e., Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Burnard et al., 2008; Hendricks, 2018; Hess, 2015). Across the United States, researchers have found that students from Black or Latinx backgrounds, as well as all students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, are under-represented in large ensemble music (Elpus & Abril, 2011, 2019, 2025; Tucker & Winsler, 2023). At times, music teachers have found that local laws or administrative policy make inclusive practices challenging, if not impossible (Burnard et al., 2008). A music teacher working from the relational position of servant leadership, however, intuitively creates an inclusive environment for their students (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016).

One obvious way that a servant leader teacher could practice inclusion in a band setting would be to choose diverse repertoire. When performing music from their cultural background, the students may feel better connected to the music making process and gain a strengthened identity as a musician (Shaw, 2016). It may also be that ancestral musics do not resonate with students (Hendricks, 2025). Diversity of repertoire can be about diversifying the identities of composers rather than the cultural origins of the music (Cumberledge & Williams, 2023). Here, the need for student input in the repertoire selection process may become clearer. Selecting repertoire without knowing directly from the students what might provide a sense of inclusion would be a paternalistic assumption from the teacher that they know best, a dynamic that parallels Freire's (1970/2017) critique of teacher-centered education.

Additional to discussions of which repertoire to perform, band teachers can also dedicate time in the rehearsal for peer interactions where students discuss observations or

musical ideas with one another before sharing out to the larger group (Weidner, 2020). In addition to getting everybody more involved in discussions, these kinds of peer interactions can be especially helpful for students with learning disabilities, as they are given an opportunity to express their opinions while simultaneously building stronger social relationships (Draper et al., 2019).

Summary

The servant leader's position provides a platform from which they can engage in leadership behaviors that are aimed toward promoting the wellbeing of followers (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). These behaviors include empowerment, authenticity, stewardship, providing direction, and inclusion. To enact these behaviors, there must be mutual trust between the leader and followers. In this research, I considered the ways that students and their teacher engaged in these behaviors as part of their shared experience in a high school band.

Follower Wellbeing

The primary concern of the servant leader is the wellbeing of followers (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). The compassionate love of a servant leader makes the wellbeing of followers the highest priority and the driving force behind a servant leader's behaviors (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). By drawing on literature from fields including (but not limited to) leadership, psychology, care, education, and music education, I define wellbeing and contextualize it within both servant leadership and music education.

Defining Wellbeing

Like many of the servant leader virtues, wellbeing can be difficult to define. Among the varied definitions of wellbeing are those which might focus on physical health, social-emotional awareness, or an individual's experience of flourishing (Spratt, 2017). The common thread that runs through these definitions is the idea that an individual experiencing wellbeing has had some sort of positive occurrence. Wellbeing can occur through the absence of illness (physical health), being able to manage a difficult emotion (social-emotional), or through feelings of accomplishment (flourishing) (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). With regards to wellbeing, Greenleaf (1977/2002) advocated that the servant leader should be concerned with the growth, health, and development of followers. It would seem, then, that these varied definitions may all have a place in discussions about servant leadership and wellbeing.

Because consideration of physical health of students seemed unnecessarily invasive, I decided that the present study should focus primarily on wellbeing as a matter of growth and development. As I reviewed the literature from servant leadership, I discovered that scholars used several terms in discussions of wellbeing. These terms include *psychological wellbeing* (Ryff & Singer, 2008), *subjective wellbeing* (Diener, 1984), *emotional wellbeing* (Park et al., 2022), and *flourishing* (Seligman, 2018). Frequently, wellbeing scholars refer to *eudaimonia*, a feeling of self-actualization or meaning in life (i.e., Park et al., 2022; Ryff & Singer, 2008). Another common term in wellbeing scholarship is *hedonic wellbeing*, which deals is based on an individual's general feelings of happiness, often described as pleasure, and the degree to which they

feel positive emotions rather than negative ones (Diener, 1984).

Psychological Wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing (PWB) is aimed toward self-actualization, or a sense of eudaimonic happiness (Ryff & Singer, 2008). There are six core dimensions that comprise PWB: *autonomy, self-acceptance, purpose in life, environmental mastery, positive relationships, and personal growth* (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

Subjective Wellbeing. The primary concern of subjective wellbeing (SWB) consists of three components: *life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect* (Diener, 1984). In the case of SWB, life satisfaction refers to the degree to which an individual feels happy in life. Positive and negative affect refer to an individual's occurrences of pleasant or unpleasant emotions, which can be influenced by factors including socio-economic status, relationships, and environment. Unlike psychological wellbeing, SWB appears to be more concerned with hedonic wellbeing through the emphasis on seeking pleasure (positive affect) over pain (negative affect).

Emotional Wellbeing. Emotional wellbeing (EWB) is a more modern term that is often used interchangeably with SWB but also covers the eudaimonic elements of PWB (Park et al., 2022). There are three components to EWB: *eudaimonia, life satisfaction, and hedonic wellbeing* (National Institutes of Health, 2018). It appears that EWB seeks to combine the hedonic emphasis of SWB with the purpose-based PWB (Park et al., 2022).

Flourishing. Flourishing is the term often used in reference to the five-point PERMA (*positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment*)

model of wellbeing (Seligman, 2011). Whereas PERMA does not offer additional insight toward an individual subject's wellbeing when compared to SWB measures, the five components of the PERMA model do represent at least some of the factors that inform happiness (Seligman, 2018).

This collection of terms centers on the idea that wellbeing is about the happiness, either eudaimonic or hedonic, that an individual feels. In the current research, wellbeing is used as a term that generally refers to any or all these terms as well as research into wellbeing that is not explicitly bounded within one of these frameworks. If a servant leader is oriented toward promoting follower wellbeing, that leader should be interested in the ways in which their behaviors engender stronger satisfaction in life (hedonic) as well as a greater sense of purpose (eudaimonic), for their followers. Solidifying the connection between servant leadership and follower wellbeing is the matter of the subsequent passage of this review.

Wellbeing Through Servant Leadership

When the servant leader starts from a place of compassionate love, the primary objective is to promote the follower's wellbeing through leadership behaviors that promote optimal functioning, community, and meaningfulness for followers (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Several studies have linked servant leadership behaviors from leaders to a higher degree of follower wellbeing (e.g., Kaltiainen & Hakanen, 2022; Li et al., 2018; Maula-Bakhsh & Raziq, 2018; Swanson et al., 2022). Researchers have discovered positive relationships between servant leadership and followers' sense of purpose (e.g., der Kinderen et al., 2020), satisfaction in life (Ortiz-

Gómez et al., 2022), and engagement with the organization's work (Coetzer et al., 2017).

Follower wellbeing may be benefited, at least in part, by the organizational citizenship behaviors fostered by the servant leader (Amah, 2018). Positive organizational citizenship behaviors are aimed toward helping others, meeting organizational objectives, and fulfilling directives (Smith et al., 1983). Servant leaders can promote stronger organizational citizenship behaviors through meaningful interpersonal exchanges with followers, especially the proactive ones (Newman et al., 2017). Stronger levels of organizational citizenship behavior are related to higher levels of wellbeing among the followers of servant leaders (Santos et al., 2023). Servant leaders establish cultures that promote a positive environment and follower wellbeing.

In schools, servant leader administrators can promote wellbeing among teachers (Wu et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2025). In turn, servant leader teachers can foster stronger wellbeing among students (Gultekin & Dougherty, 2021). Though a music teacher cannot decide the stance of administrators, they may have the ability to decide how to operate within their classroom and might consider the potential benefits of adopting a servant leadership mindset.

The servant leader's focus on follower wellbeing can have a cost. The servant leader's tendency to put the needs and wellbeing of followers first can leave the leader feeling stress that can lead to burnout (Yang, 2021). As wellbeing suffers, the leader's family and work relationships can also begin to suffer as the leader withdraws (Zhou et al., 2020). Earlier in this chapter I had mentioned the need for the servant leader to practice self-care as a guard against compassion fatigue. The same advice holds true for

addressing stress and burnout, where self-care has been shown to be beneficial (Alexander et al., 2015; Hricová, 2020; Smith, 2021).

Wellbeing in Music Education

The value of servant leadership within music education may be made clearer when considering the way in which the empowerment of students can promote wellbeing. Teacher support of student autonomy, what servant leaders call empowerment, has been shown to have a positive link to student wellbeing (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2020). Wellbeing is also improved by the music teacher's facilitation of opportunities for creative collaboration (Burnard & Dragovic, 2015). Because students have opportunities to collaborate alongside opportunities for individual growth and achievement, they can gain a sense of wellbeing through individuation, a process through which they move between community and individual focus (Boyce-Tillman, 2000). A music teacher who approaches their work from a position of servant leadership is likely to empower students and promote their wellbeing.

Research on wellbeing in music education often focuses on eudaimonic conceptions of wellbeing (i.e., Boyce-Tillman, 2000; Silverman, 2020, 2023; Smith & Silverman, 2020). Wellbeing is developed through caring relationships and requires a collective effort from the students and their teacher as they engage in meaningful music making (Silverman, 2023). Meaning making in music can be seen as an ecological concern (Boyce-Tillman, 2020), as it requires all parties to be present (physically and emotionally) as they engage with one another and their rehearsal space while working toward common goals (Silverman, 2020). Wellbeing, then, can be understood to be a

relational phenomenon where groups work collectively toward common goals, promoting relational care and mutual flourishing.

The way in which music teachers care for and with their students (Hendricks, 2023, 2025) is another way that the extant literature about student wellbeing in music education might connect to servant leadership through the behavior of stewardship. Servant leadership stewardship can be demonstrated in the ways that a music teacher builds strong care-based relationships with students through thoughtful planning and power sharing (Legutki et al., 2023). The care of stewardship in music education may be best when it is inclusive of all students, and teachers might consider ways in which they can better support marginalized or minoritized students (Smith et al., 2023; Vū, 2023).

Taking care of student wellbeing may be beneficial to teachers. Through caring acts, teachers might create music classrooms that allow students to take risks and to flourish musically, the teachers may also be simultaneously fulfilling their own purpose, finding job satisfaction and supporting their own wellbeing (Holdhus, 2023). This idea may run counter to the problem of burnout previously mentioned, but there is scholarship to support the claim (Pannacio et al., 2015). Teachers who are fulfilling purpose and enjoying their work are likely to be more motivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Purpose (eudaimonic) and satisfaction (hedonic) are also key pieces of the wellbeing puzzle (Park et al., 2022).

Summary

Servant leaders are concerned with promoting wellbeing of their followers. In servant leadership, wellbeing is primarily about helping followers grow individually

while simultaneously developing a sense of community through the shared purposes of the organizational members (van Dierendonck and Patterson, 2015). The sense of purpose that followers achieve is an example of eudaimonic wellbeing. Followers of servant leaders also report higher life satisfaction (Maula-Bakhsh & Raziq, 2018), which is an example of hedonic wellbeing.

Whereas some evidence suggests that servant leaders might be at greater risk for diminished wellbeing due to the stress of leadership (Yang, 2021), other research suggests that servant leaders might experience improved wellbeing as they fulfill their purpose (Pannacio et al., 2015). The present study will examine the ways in which servant leadership relates to wellbeing for a teacher and her students in a peer mentoring experience in a high school band.

Additional Theoretical Considerations

This study provided an opportunity to examine the ways that students in a high school band learned and engaged in student-leadership. This examination included additional theoretical considerations beyond servant leadership and peer mentoring. In this section, I first provide introduction to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. I will follow the description of social learning theory with an examination of lateral leadership (Koçak, 2019; Köhl, 2025).

Social Learning Theory

Through his social learning theory, Bandura (1977) suggested that in addition to learning through experience, people can also learn vicariously by observing others. When observed behaviors are rewarded, observers are more likely to engage in those behaviors.

Conversely, when observed behaviors are punished, observers are less likely to engage in those behaviors.

Bandura (1977) outlined four key processes that govern observational learning. These processes include *attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation*. Attention occurs when the learner first notices a behavior shared within the community. Retention is enacted as learner remembers what they observed. Reproduction is experienced when the learner begins to perform the observed behavior. The learner in this case has effectively become a novice practitioner. Motivation is achieved by the vicarious experience of seeing behaviors rewarded or punished.

Lateral Leadership

Lateral leadership is a framework through which members of an organization share in decision making through collaboration and mutual coordination (Koçak, 2019). Köhl (2025) proposed three pillars upon which lateral leadership can be built—understanding, trust, and power.

Understanding requires that members of an organization confront rigid and conflicting ways of thinking within the group (Kühl, 2025). Through this engagement, members draw on their shared experiences while also considering the diverging interests of others within the organization (Kühl, 2025). Engaging this way allows many voices in conversations that impact the organization, providing an avenue for coordinated group effort rather than coerced compliance (Kühl, 2025).

In the framework of lateral leadership, trust can be considered a relationship of exchange without the guarantee of reciprocity (Kühl, 2025). Trusting behaviors by one

party are done with the hope that the trust will be validated in future encounters.

According to Kühn (2025), the more frequently trusting behaviors are demonstrated by one party, the more typically they are reciprocated. This phenomenon is similar to the way that trust works in servant leadership (Patterson, 2003) as well as music education (Hendricks, 2018; 2025).

Power within an organization is based on the control of zones of uncertainty (Kühn, 2025). Zones of uncertainty are areas within an organization where members possess some degree of discretion, influence, expertise, or autonomy because those areas cannot be fully controlled by rules or superiors (Crozier & Friedberg, 1980). In the case of lateral leadership, Kühn (2025) suggested that these zones of control included the individuals' positions within hierarchies, but also their roles as experts (individuals with valued skill or knowledge), *relay stations* (individuals who control communication to cooperating partners outside of the organization), or *gate keepers* (individuals who control communication within the organization). Hierarchy is but one piece of the power puzzle within an organization and should not be monolithically equated with power (Kühn, 2025). Lateral leadership, therefore, does not require the absence of hierarchies.

The sharing of power that occurs through lateral leadership shares similarities to Greenleaf's (1977/2002) vision for servant leadership in the way that leaders relinquish unilateral authority to provide space for followers to have a voice in discussions about organizational direction. The pillar of understanding in lateral leadership could be seen to parallel the inclusion and stewardship of servant leadership in the way that members of an organization are invited to actively contribute to discussions about organizational

practices. As previously stated, the lateral leadership pillar of trust can also be observed in servant leadership.

Lateral leadership relates back to peer mentoring in two ways. First, by employing peer mentoring as a strategy, a teacher relinquishes control and creating a learning environment where students are more active participants (Goodrich, 2023b). Second, because peer mentoring can be non-hierarchical, responsibility is further shared among students as they fluidly switch between mentor and mentee roles (Goodrich, 2007). Through this study, I was able to reveal the ways that servant leadership and peer mentoring in a high school band program promoted a non-hierarchical spirit that promoted lateral leadership within the organization.

Peer Mentoring

With the framework of servant leadership established, I next examine peer mentoring as it pertains to the framework. According to Goodrich (2023b), peer mentors gain leadership experience through peer mentoring when sharing their knowledge and experiences with each other. In this next section of the review, I consider the traits and behaviors of servant leadership through the instructional practice of peer mentoring. I also consider the teacher in their role as a facilitator of peer mentoring (Goodrich, 2018; Goodrich, 2023b) to explore the ways in which that function can be connected to servant leadership. The idea of the teacher facilitating the development of leadership skills through peer mentoring aligns with Greenleaf's (1977/2002) assertion that a servant leader, in this case the teacher, can develop future servant leaders, the mentors.

In addition, I consider the ways in which peer mentoring may relate to the four components of van Dierendonck and Patterson's (2015) framework: compassionate love, virtuous traits, servant leader behaviors, and follower wellbeing. Previous research from outside of music education has indicated that students who participate in peer mentoring programs perceived that the experience had a positive impact on their development of servant leadership skills (Funfar, 2022). College aged students have been able to develop leadership skills (Fine, 2021; Hirsch et al., 2021) and leadership self-efficacy beliefs (Byrne et al., 2022; Fine, 2021) through participation in peer mentoring programs.

For the remainder of this chapter, I consider literature on peer mentoring research from music education and broader education. Although other fields will be included, I connect back to the extant literature on servant leadership. As with earlier reviews in this chapter, the words teacher and mentor can be understood to align with the role of leader whereas the words student and mentee can be understood to refer to followers.

Peer Mentoring and Compassionate Love

Compassionate love is the antecedent condition for a servant leader (Brouns et al., 2020). When music teachers facilitate a peer mentoring experience that values all student voices and experiences, including those from marginalized backgrounds, the teacher affirms their respect for each student's contribution to learning (Goodrich, 2023a). Such an affirmation may be indicative of the teacher's compassionate love for their students (Héjj, 2019). Rather than claiming all the power in teaching exchanges, a compassionate teacher chooses to empower students to contribute to the learning in a way that parallels van Dierendonck and Patterson's (2015) empowerment in servant leadership. The choice

to empower students through student-centered learning is one which many music educators are often hesitant to make (Scherer, 2021). As a teacher exercises compassion to co-create a caring relationship with students, they begin to understand each student's needs, strengths, and weaknesses (Hendricks, 2018, 2025). The teacher knowing the mentors in this way provides a stronger foundation to better support mentor development (Goodrich, 2021), which is like the way in which servant leaders operate in support of their followers (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016; de Kinderan et al., 2020; Newman et al., 2017).

Mentors and mentees have reported that a relationship built on care is an essential part of their mentoring experience (Buck, 2018). When the mentee knows that the mentor cares about them, the mentee tends to be more engaged in the relationship (Karcher et al., 2010). Whereas novice mentors express interest in developing relationships with their mentees, experienced mentors demonstrate comfort engaging in deeper, more caring relationships (Bellon-Harn & Weindbaum, 2017). The increased comfortability with caring relationships is likely related to how peer mentors sense a refinement of their skills as they gain experience (Beltman & Schaben, 2012). Such a transition is reminiscent of the evolution from a general, somewhat abstract sense of caring about someone to more actively providing caring support that helps the other thrive, which can be described as moving from *caring about* to *caring for* the other (Noddings, 2013). Through trust and open dialogue, students in peer mentoring develop a community of mutual care (Sánchez et al., 2018). In other words, they *care with* one another (Hendricks, 2023, 2025). One of the goals of this study is to provide an enriched understanding of the role of caring

relationships in the peer mentoring process.

Creating a culture of compassionate mentoring starts at the top of an organization (Holmes et al., 2022). In the case of a music classroom, it is the teacher who facilitates the experience (Goodrich, 2023b; Hendricks, 2018) and who can be considered the leader that serves as the role model for what compassionate love and care should be (Holmes et al., 2022). By demonstrating compassionate love through caring actions and support of student wellbeing, the teacher sets the expectation for how members of the organization should treat one another. By completing this study, I hoped to gain insight into how the teacher's model of compassionate love relates to student experiences with peer mentoring in a band setting.

Peer Mentoring and Virtuous Traits

Earlier in this chapter, it was established that the virtuous traits of the servant leader are inward states with associated actions (e.g., a person with humility behaves humbly). Although it may not be possible to know the inner state of teachers and students engaged in peer mentoring, their actions may provide evidence of these virtues.

Examining the literature will provide insight that allows music educators to better understand the traits of the teachers and students who engage in peer mentoring. In this section I consider the degree to which these traits are consistent with the humility, gratitude, forgiveness, altruism, empathy, and vision of servant leadership. Because the virtuous traits of the servant leader are so intertwined with the servant leader behaviors, the behaviors will also be mentioned.

When a teacher facilitates peer mentoring as a classroom strategy, they may be acting with an altruistic mindset. Teachers who are altruistic tend to incorporate more student-centered approaches in their pedagogy (Friedeman, 2016). Students who serve as peer mentors often report that their interest in serving as a mentor was motivated by an altruistic desire to be helpful to another (Beltman & Schaeben, 2012; Noufou et al., 2014; Webb, 2015). The mutually altruistic mindset of the teacher and peer mentors is likely to lead to a classroom climate that promotes wellbeing, prosocial behavior, and academic achievement (Otajanova, 2025).

Facilitating student-centered learning, as teachers do in peer mentoring, requires a degree of humility from the teacher (Rogers et al., 2014). By centering students, the teacher displays that they are open to the fact that they, too, are still learning and that their intellectual humility allows space for the students to be an active part of co-constructing the knowledge (Hendricks, 2025). Teachers modelling intellectual humility can lead to increased engagement and academic success for students (Porter et al., 2026). This is consistent with research from servant leadership that connects leader humility to improved follower wellbeing (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2017).

The humility of the servant leader can be observed in the learning dispositions of peer mentors. Peer mentors tend to be humble enough to know they have much to learn and that their mentee can also teach them (Bellon-Harn & Weinbaum, 2017; Kroll, 2017). It may be that even in cases where the peer mentoring occurs in the context of student leadership roles, which are inherently hierarchical, a peer mentor's humility allows them to engage, at least at times, in a nonhierarchical peer mentoring relationship, thus

allowing their mentee to also act as a mentor. Goodrich (2007) found that, whereas older students served in leadership roles in a high school jazz program, the peer mentoring between older and younger students was often nonhierarchical. For example, younger students often served as musical mentors to the older students. Understanding the ways in which the virtuous dispositions of servant leaders relate to the how mentors and mentees learn from each other could help shed light on the ways that servant leadership and peer mentoring might be related, if at all.

The humility of the teacher and peer mentors can connect to the development of stronger empathy. Goodrich (2023a) suggested that when the teacher facilitates peer mentoring that includes all voices, the teacher and students work to build trust and empathy. Such facilitation requires that the teacher takes care to include students from marginalized or minoritized communities in conversations about learning space and musical goals. When including those voices, teachers may seek to fully understand them (Goodrich, 2022; 2023a). Inclusion and understanding of the perspective of those students may benefit from rich dialogue and a sense of cultural humility (Benjamins, 2023; Hess, 2021).

The idea that peer mentoring promotes stronger empathy from students is grounded in research. Scholars have found that mentor empathy strengthens through the development of deeper understanding of the divergent natures of various mentees' experiences (e.g., Sinclair & Larson, 2018). Further, mentees tend to follow the model of empathetic care that their mentors provide, compelling them to mentor those who come after them (Joung et al., 2020). This shared development of empathy is consistent with

Greenleaf's (1977/2002) belief that a servant leader will compel followers to become servant leaders themselves.

Thus far, I have made connections to the servant leader virtues of humility, empathy, and altruism. There is, however, insufficient research to provide sufficient connections between peer mentoring and the virtues of gratitude, forgiveness, and vision. There is evidence that teachers can support mentor development (Goodrich, 2021; Johnson, 2015), but it is not clear, however, if the teacher's display of servant leader virtues relates to the display of those same virtues from student mentors. This study is oriented toward closing these gaps in the literature while simultaneously strengthening understanding of the role of altruism, humility, and empathy in peer mentoring in a high school band.

Peer Mentoring and Servant Leader Behaviors

The virtuous traits of the servant leader compel servant leader behaviors (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). In this section, I consider the way that the servant leader behaviors of empowerment, authenticity, stewardship, providing direction, and inclusion might be demonstrated in the extant literature on peer mentoring. The connections between servant leadership and peer mentoring are more robust around this topic; therefore, I examined teacher and students separately. I begin by considering the teacher's role as facilitator, after which I move on to the mentor's role as a student leader.

Teachers as Facilitators

Goodrich (2023b, 2018) suggested that a teacher's role in the peer mentoring process is to act as a facilitator. In the context of peer mentoring, acts of facilitation

include planning time, selecting mentors, observing interactions and offering providing the nurturing instruction that promotes positive mentoring (Goodrich, 2023b).

Additionally, Goodrich (2023a) also suggested that a teacher's facilitation of peer mentoring should include the creation of brave spaces, and important idea that I will consider in greater detail later in this section.

The teacher who facilitates peer mentoring is likely promoting student empowerment, which could be evident from the fact that teachers share power and give students a greater voice in the learning process (Goodrich, 2023b). Though teachers share power, facilitating educative peer mentoring experiences requires that teachers monitor and support students as they engage with one another (Goodrich, 2021; Johnson, 2015). Mantovani et al. (2020) found that peer mentors felt empowered but also recognize their role in providing empowered mentees with support to grow and change. Students also have indicated that they value the structured guidance of peer mentoring, as it helps provide focus (Bellon-Harn & Weindbaum, 2017) and builds cooperation (Funfar, 2022). The teacher's role of peer mentoring facilitator can be seen as an act that simultaneously empowers students while providing them with direction.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, knowing the students, including their strengths and weaknesses, can ensure that the teacher prepares them to succeed (Goodrich, 2021). Knowing students can inform how mentors and mentees are paired, which can impact student learning (Johnson, 2017). The individualized consideration of providing each student with the direction specific to their needs is one of the hallmarks of servant leadership (Anthony, 2017).

Facilitating peer mentoring can also be seen as an act of stewardship. When a teacher works alongside peer mentors to help mentees learn, they establish a collaborative culture where the teacher is not the sole voice of knowledge (Goodrich, 2021). The teacher is also demonstrating that they are putting the musical and social development of students ahead of their own desire for control (Goodrich, 2023b). Because many teachers cite negative impact on musical outcomes as a reason for avoiding student-centered practices (Scherer, 2021), teachers who facilitate peer mentoring could be seen to place a more holistic version of student growth ahead of the ensemble's musical outcomes, further indicating stewardship on the part of the teacher. Providing students with the opportunity to lead through peer mentoring in the context of ensemble rehearsals can promote increased musical independence from students (Weidner, 2020), which suggests that musical outcomes may not be negatively impacted.

Teachers who utilize peer mentoring provide students with opportunities to take a central role in learning, though there remains a need for the teacher to monitor the process to ensure that it remains purposeful and respectful (Goodrich, 2020, 2022, 2023b). Whereas some researchers have suggested peer mentoring can create safe spaces (Sánchez et al., 2018), Goodrich (2023a) advocated for brave peer mentoring spaces. Like safe spaces, brave spaces provide room for students to engage respectfully, but unlike safe spaces, brave spaces place an emphasis on honesty over the safety of avoiding difficult discussions, meaning that students can share views or experiences that may cause discomfort for other group members (Arao & Clemens, 2013).

Brave spaces require facilitation that enforces boundaries meant to prevent hate speech, ad hominem attacks, and disrespectful acts, such as interrupting, ignoring, or scoffing at another group member (Arao & Clemens, 2013). Without such boundaries, brave spaces may reify power imbalances by allowing dominant groups to avoid confronting their privilege (Palfrey & Ibargüen, 2017) while shifting the burden of explaining experiences of oppression onto minoritized participants (Heter, 2025). For example, without boundaries, minoritized individuals can be left to teach their privileged peers about the racism embedded in their lived experience, which can reinscribe the power imbalance (Heter, 2025). Facilitation of brave spaces that affirm each group member's dignity while addressing varied individual needs is consistent with stewardship as enacted in servant leadership (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

Authenticity from the teacher as a facilitator is not as readily observed in the extant literature on peer mentoring. However, in considering the humility it takes for the teacher to release control and admit that they do not have all the answers requires that the teacher be honest with their self and with students. By sharing this way, the teacher is displaying the authenticity of a servant leader (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Through the honesty of demonstrating that they, too, are still learning, the teacher shows growth mindset and fosters the same growth mindset and perseverance among students (Chan, 2016).

Incorporating peer mentoring in the classroom has been linked to the inclusion of students who have been marginalized based on race (Goodrich, 2022), LGBTQIA+ status (Goodrich, 2020), or disability (Draper et al., 2019; Fisher et al., 2019; Jellison, 2015).

Though there is always the possibility that hierarchies or cliques could emerge during peer mentoring, a caring teacher provides the guidance that ensures that all students have an equal voice in the process (Goodrich, 2023a). Creating an inclusive classroom through peer mentoring is similar to the way that servant leaders practice inclusivity (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016).

A teacher facilitating peer mentoring shares many similarities with the behaviors of servant leadership. Examining how a teacher who identifies as a servant leader incorporates peer mentoring into their practice may strengthen the connections made here in the preceding paragraphs.

Students in Peer Mentoring

Through peer mentoring, the mentors have opportunities to hone their leadership skills (Goodrich, 2023b). Here I examine how the leadership of a peer mentor might fit into the framework of servant leadership. These connections are a bit more tenuous than those demonstrated by the teacher, suggesting a need for more detailed research.

Peer mentors can make space that empowers their mentees. For example, in a band setting, when mentors share their experience with peers, mentees can then learn and ultimately take ownership of their own musical growth (Goodrich, 2023b). Mentors can provide guidance socially, too, which helps the mentee find their place within the band community (Goodrich, 2007, 2023b). Whereas leadership positions suggest a hierarchy, at times the mentoring relationships can flip, which gives both students the chance to empower one another (Goodrich, 2007). Students do not need a leadership position to be a leader through peer mentoring.

When peer mentoring includes authentic communication among mentor and mentee, there is an increased sense of community and trust for all involved (Sánchez et al., 2018). Authenticity may also be indicated in the way that mentors share their experience. By being open about where they might have struggled and how they worked to improve, the mentor is allowing themselves to be vulnerable (Sánchez et al., 2018).

During peer mentoring, mentors can help mentees learn the expectations, values, and culture of the ensemble through socialization (Goodrich, 2007), which can be seen as an act of stewardship. The mentor is caring for the organization's traditions while simultaneously making space for mentees to contribute new ideas and practices that the group might adopt (Harris et al., 2014). When mentors guide mentees on how to receive mentorship and how to be mentors themselves (Goodrich, 2023b), that can also be seen as stewardship. is also stewardship evident in the way that mentors care for mentees and hold them accountable for their shared expectations (Mantovani et al., 2020).

Peer mentoring is full of opportunities for students to provide each other with direction. Peer mentoring can also provide students with an opportunity to work together on the development of musical skills (Johnson, 2011, 2015, 2017). Students can provide direction through socialization (Goodrich, 2021). Socialization allows students to share their experience outside of the context of rehearsal, extending the mentoring relationship beyond the classroom (Goodrich, 2023b). Often, mentors find that providing direction causes them to think more deeply about the skills and direction they are providing, resulting in an improved understanding for the mentor as well as the mentee (Goodrich, 2021; Johnson, 2015).

When students have been provided with inclusive peer mentoring experiences, they might, themselves, become more inclusive individuals (Jones et al., 2020). In one study of elementary school music students working as mentors with peers with disabilities, mentors were able to help their peers participate more actively in music classes (Draper et al., 2019). Inclusive peer mentoring has also been linked to increased success for a broader, more diverse group of students (Majors et al., 2022).

Peer Mentoring and Follower Wellbeing

To connect peer mentoring to wellbeing, I primarily consider research that connects the peer mentoring process to student growth, engagement, and community. Student wellbeing may be the entire reason for considering peer mentoring in the first place. A teacher probably chooses peer mentoring because they believe it will benefit the students. This belief is confirmed in the literature, as will be shared below.

Students who engage in peer mentoring in band are likely to experience growth musically and socially. Students in peer mentoring tend to exhibit growth academically through stronger performance after receiving peer mentoring (Tucker et al., 2020). Music students who work together in peer mentoring have been shown to gain improved musical skills more quickly than their peers who did not receive peer mentoring (Johnson, 2011). Peer mentoring helps students share and develop knowledge, but also provides opportunities to contextualize that knowledge within their own experience (Draves, 2017). Mentors and mentees both tend to realize these gains in personal growth (Beltman & Schaebe, 2012).

In addition to skill acquisition, peer mentoring also provides opportunities for social growth (Draper et al., 2019; Goodrich, 2018) and a deeper appreciation for the differences in others (Darrow et al., 2009; Draper et al., 2019; Goodrich, 2022).

Socialization through peer mentoring provides students with varied conversational entry points that can help them to pull others into the community of the classroom (Gramm, 2021). Students engaged in peer mentoring that is consistent with the authenticity, empathy, and trust of servant leadership may feel a strong sense of community within their mentoring group (Sánchez et al., 2018). Whereas mentees establish belonging through peer mentoring, mentors experience increased satisfaction (Beltman & Schaeben, 2012) and gain increased senses of autonomy and competence (Dantzer, 2018).

Interestingly, the community that is established through peer mentoring may make the peer mentoring experience more enticing to others (Noufou et al., 2014).

Students also tend to show higher engagement in peer learning, though research has shown a notable exception where more affluent band students became less engaged when working with peers who were demonstrably less proficient instrumentalists (Johnson, 2017). That exception highlights the value of the teacher knowing their students as individuals. Reliable mentors may promote stronger engagement and mentee self-efficacy (Clarke-Midura et al., 2018). The increase in engagement gained through peer mentoring tends to come along with an increase in prosocial behaviors (Geddes, 2016).

Summary

Peer mentoring provides students with an opportunity to develop leadership skills (Goodrich, 2023b). When teachers facilitate peer mentoring, the ways they support mentor development and act to preserve an inclusive culture in the classroom are consistent with the behaviors of servant leadership (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). As peer mentors develop their leadership skills and follow the model of their teacher, it is possible for them to develop behaviors that are also consistent with servant leadership.

Teachers facilitating peer mentoring typically seek to know students' strengths and weaknesses and be prepared to offer them coaching on how to act as mentors (Goodrich, 2021). Researchers found that when bosses practiced servant leadership in business, followers were more likely to become servant leaders themselves (Lacroix & Pircher Verdorfer, 2017). It is unclear, however, if the same is true in a peer mentoring setting. Music educators would benefit from a more focused understanding on how the teacher's servant leadership attributes and behaviors might influence students engaging in peer mentoring in a high school band.

Conclusion

The leadership skills that students develop through peer mentoring in band have some relationship to the servant leadership framework. There are some gaps in the literature, however, which I sought to address through this current study. First, I looked to better understand the way in which the teacher's servant leadership disposition might relate to the way in which students engage in peer mentoring. Second, I also sought more concrete connections between peer mentoring and the virtuous traits inherent in servant

leadership. Finally, I focused on providing a richer understanding the relationship between the teacher's servant leadership behaviors as a peer mentoring facilitator and the servant leadership behaviors displayed by the mentors.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

In this chapter I detail the research methods I used to explore peer mentoring through servant leadership in a band program. The chapter begins with a review of my purpose for this research and the questions that guided me in the process. I then describe the method, an instrumental case study. In the instrumental case study description, I include information about case selection, data collection, and data analysis. Ethical considerations (e.g., pseudonyms use and consent procedures) are addressed along with the trustworthiness and reliability of the research design. This presentation of my research process establishes a foundation for interpreting the findings shared in chapters four through seven.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which peer mentoring and servant leadership interact with one another in a high school band setting. The research was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do students in a high school band engage in peer mentoring and servant leadership?
2. In what ways, if any, are the behaviors or dispositions of peer mentors aligned with those of servant leadership?
3. What is the teacher's role in supporting servant leadership and peer mentoring?

Method

To help me address these questions, the method for this research was an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995). According to Stake, a case study design allows researchers to observe a phenomenon as it occurs in the real world. Unlike an intrinsic case study, which prioritizes a thorough understanding of the specific workings of a unique case, the instrumental case study provided opportunity to focus on the phenomena of peer mentoring and servant leadership. By focusing more on the unique interaction between servant leadership and peer mentoring within a band program, and less on the unique aspects of a band program, including those that might occur beyond the scope of servant leadership and peer mentoring, the findings might lead to a more general understanding of how servant leadership and peer mentoring may interact (Stake, 1995).

Case Selection

Selecting the right case is vital to a case study and should be informed by the availability of rich data (Stake, 1995). Selection of the site for this case study was based on one primary criterion: The ensemble instructor needed to be a proponent of both peer mentoring and servant leadership. For this study, being a proponent meant that the educator believed in the value peer mentoring and servant leadership in an ensemble setting, but they also utilized both in their teaching practices.

I was already aware of a few programs that might fit the needs of the research inquiry. I used chain sampling to begin the process of finding a site (Creswell & Poth, 2017). I consulted with several trusted colleagues who were familiar with programs in the region where I reside. One program received unanimous support and was selected to

serve as the subject of this instrumental case study.

When considering this program, I needed to ensure that the case would maximize what I could learn about peer mentoring through the framework of servant leadership (Stake, 1995). The subject program provided an opportunity to consider the common critique that servant leadership may be limited to those who are most advantaged, particularly White men (Eaton, 2020; Liu, 2019), points upon which I will elaborate in forthcoming paragraphs. Additionally, the school was within driving distance to my home with a band director and school district administrators willing to open their doors to me.

Case Location

To maintain anonymity of the subjects, I refer to this school using a pseudonym: Eastboro High School (EHS). Eastboro High School is situated in a suburb of a major metropolitan area in the northeastern United States and serves approximately 1500 students. 61% of this school's student body is White with students of Asian descent making up the next largest group at 22% (State Department of Education, 2025). Black (3.8%), Hispanic (6.0%), and multi-racial (6.8%) students are less represented in the student population, but not to the degree of Native American (0.1%) or Pacific Islanders (0.1%) (State Department of Education, 2025).

The Band Program

The band director at EHS was Ms. Gallagher (pseudonym), a woman who had served in this position for more than five years but less than ten. As an educator, Ms. Gallagher regularly incorporated both peer mentoring and servant leadership into her

pedagogical practices, which suggested that the EHS Band might be an ideal program to observe how peer mentoring and servant leadership interact. It was also beneficial that her program was well-respected in the region, with a reputation for excellent musical performances and vibrant student participation.

A woman-led program was particularly appealing as a case for this research. Women have been reported to be underrepresented in high school band director roles (Zippia, 2025). Female identifying band directors have reported microaggressions (Shouldice, 2024) and other gender-based obstacles (Bovin, 2019) that have required greater persistence compared to male counterparts. Additionally, servant leadership has been critiqued as a romantic notion that underestimates the problems associated with the servant label on historically disadvantaged voices, including women (Eaton, 2020). A case study that included a woman who worked in a male-dominated field and who openly espoused servant leadership offered potential to address Eaton's critique as I examined how Ms. Gallagher navigated her role as a high school band director who facilitates peer mentoring. Though this is not the primary focus of the research, it should offer data that could suggest avenues for future study.

The EHS band program consisted of three ensembles. There were two curricular groups that rehearsed on opposite ends of the school day, a wind ensemble and a symphonic band. Membership in the wind ensemble was contingent on a successful audition. The symphonic band was open to any student in EHS, though all of the students had prior instrumental music experience. There was also the marching band, the EHS Marching Mustangs, an extracurricular group that was open to all curricular band

members. The demographics of the band program were consistent with those of the EHS student body.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred at the start of the school year in 2025. This time frame was set in collaboration with Ms. Gallagher to allow for varied opportunities to collect data. The time frame also fit neatly into the band program's calendar as it encompassed the start of the new school year when experienced leaders welcomed new members into the group.

Data collection for this study was achieved through a series of observations and interviews (table 1). I conducted observations and interviews to optimize the richness of data. The benefit of the observations was that I was able to witness the phenomena, peer mentoring and servant leadership, as they occurred in a high school band program (Stake, 1995). The interviews, on the other hand, provided the participants with a voice in this study (Stake, 1995). Including the participants' perspectives helped me to gain insights into their experiences with peer mentoring and servant leadership. In the following section, I provide a detailed explanation of both parts of the data collection process.

Table 1*Data Collection Visits: Methods, Participants, and Contexts*

VISIT	METHOD	PARTICIPANTS	CONTEXT
1	interview	Ms. Gallagher (director)	one-on-one interview, off-site
2	observation	student leaders (mentors) and Ms. Gallagher	leadership meeting
	interview	student leaders (mentors)	large group (ten) interview
3	observation	marching band students and director	band camp rehearsal and sectionals
4	observation	marching band students and director	Marching Mustang game day activities
	interview	student leaders (mentors)	six brief one-on-one interviews
5	observation	wind ensemble and symphonic band	in school rehearsals
	interview	Ms. Gallagher (director)	one-on-one interview
6	observation	wind ensemble and symphonic band	in school rehearsals
7	observation	wind ensemble and symphonic band	in school rehearsals
	interview	Ms. Gallagher (director)	one-on-one interview
	interview	symphonic band students (mentees)	group (six) interview

Observations

I visited Eastboro High School six times to observe students engaging in peer mentoring. These observations included structured rehearsals, but also less structured

time separate from rehearsals (e.g., breaks or student-led practice sessions). During my visits, I was able to collect information about how mentors, mentees, and Ms. Gallagher demonstrated traits of servant leadership in the peer mentoring process. Observation notes were recorded by hand in a field journal and transcribed within 24 hours.

To develop a complete understanding of how servant leadership is displayed through peer mentoring, I sought variety in the types of student interactions. I observed rehearsals of the two concert ensembles (symphonic band and wind ensemble) and the marching band (Marching Mustangs). I was also able to see marching band students during a dinner break and during their pre-game preparation prior to their performance at a home football game. I was also able to observe an off-site leadership clinic presented by Ms. Gallagher. Though the clinic was outside of the context of her band program, the observation provided a deeper understanding of Ms. Gallagher's beliefs about student leadership.

Interviews

When including subject voice in my research, I felt it was important that I sought data from several sources that included the teacher, peer mentors, and peer mentees. Interviews occurred on three separate occasions that aligned with the beginning, middle, and end of the research timeline. Most interviews were audio recorded using the voice notes app on an iPhone 16 Pro. My second interview with Ms. Gallagher was recorded on my backup device, a MacBook Air. Following each interview, the recordings were transcribed using Notta, an online audio transcription tool. The transcripts were reviewed for accuracy, and coded. Those steps took place within 24 hours of the interview's

conclusion. An uncoded copy of each transcript was member checked with the relevant participants for approval and/or clarifying comments.

Director Interviews

Interviews with Ms. Gallagher were conducted in two settings. The first interview was completed off site from Eastboro High School and occurred prior to the beginning of a new school year. The second and third interviews occurred at Eastboro High School. There were approximately four weeks between interviews. The timeline allowed for the interviews to feel connected and encouraged a steadier flow to the conversations while still allowing me to frame my questions in response to observations and student interviews. Each interview was approximately thirty minutes in length. The interviews were conversational and guided by a list of essential questions (Appendix A) that I hoped would be answered over the course of each discussion. Through these interviews, I sought to better understand Ms. Gallagher's background in music and music education, her thoughts on peer mentoring and servant leadership, and her journey as a music educator utilizing peer mentoring and servant leadership in her professional practice. In each interview, I provided time for Ms. Gallagher to address any questions or topics from previous interviews that she felt may deserve more attention.

Student Interviews

To glean from the students' points of view, the interview process began with an interview of student leaders that occurred within the first week of the study. This group consisted of 10 students with leadership titles who also served as peer mentors. I began with group interviews hoping that it would provide students with a more comfortable

introduction to me and the research process. The group interview also allowed me an opportunity to notice which students had a lot to say and who might have opinions that differ from the rest of the group. The leader group interview was conducted in an empty rehearsal space at Eastboro High School and lasted approximately 35 minutes. Like the interviews with Ms. Gallagher, this semi-structured group interview was guided by a list of essential questions that I hoped would be answered over the course of the interview (Appendix B). I tried as much as possible to simply introduce questions or topics and allow the students to lead the conversation. I intervened only to seek clarity on what a student said or to steer the conversation back on course if we veered too far off topic.

Several of the student leaders also participated in brief, semi-structured individual interviews, each of which lasted approximately ten minutes. Through these individual interviews, I was able to probe student leaders for their insight into their experiences. Questions for these individual interviews included general questions about leadership (Appendix B) as well as questions based on observation or previous interview answers, and which were specific to individual students. The mentors who sat for individual interviews were Paul, Dev, Jenny, Angelina, Kevin, Marty, and Billy (all pseudonyms).

I concluded student interviews by conducting a group interview with several younger students who were not titled leaders in the program. In this group interview, I asked questions aimed toward gathering student perceptions about the connection their band experience, connection to the band community, and the leadership of peer mentors. This interview was conducted in the fine arts wing at Eastboro High School and lasted approximately fifteen minutes. Students interviewed included Aarav, Calvin, Haim,

Kayla, Lily, and Zack (all pseudonyms). This group was chosen by Ms. Gallagher and their observed behaviors suggested that they range from highly committed to somewhat skeptical about the value of servant leadership in the EHS Band program.

Data Analysis

Within 24 hours of each observation, I transcribed those notes using Microsoft Word. I then reviewed and coded the transcriptions. Codes consisted of a numerical primary code based upon the servant leadership framework proposed by van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015). The primary codes were assigned based upon if the observed moment addressed compassion (1), servant leader virtues (2), servant leader behaviors (3), and follower wellbeing (4). As I began to analyze data, it became evident that I needed to add two additional primary codes. There were several indications that students were influenced to become servant leaders by their own experience as followers of servant leaders (5). I also realized that the case revealed interesting data about student leadership activities that occurred outside of the context of peer mentoring. This realization necessitated a code to indicate those observed behaviors that could be considered peer mentoring (6) in order to differentiate the mentoring aspects of student leadership from non-mentoring aspects.

Primary codes matched with a three-letter sub code. The use of subcodes provided specificity to the observation. For example, there are many individual servant leadership behaviors. These behaviors included the leader's empowerment of the follower (EPW) and the leader's authenticity in interacting with their peers (AUT). I entered this study with a set list of sub codes based on my framework. A table of primary and secondary

codes is offered in Appendix C.

The same coding was able to be utilized for review of the interview transcripts. I also wanted, however, to clarify if the student's remarks indicated positive or negative feelings about their peer mentoring experience or servant leadership. To achieve this, I added a plus sign (+) to any positive remarks and a minus (-) to any negative remarks. I indicated if remarks appeared neutral or unclear feelings by use of an equal sign (=) so that I could know it had been evaluated.

Once complete, transcripts were coded and analyzed for themes. Three themes emerged that clarified how servant leadership and peer mentoring interacted in the Eastboro High School Band. These themes were *empowered student voices*, *learning leadership*, and *flourishing together*. From those major themes, there were several subthemes that further illuminated the ways in which peer mentoring and servant leadership interact in a high school band setting. A detailed presentation of these findings can be found in chapters four through seven of this dissertation. The eighth chapter focuses on discussion of how the findings provide context that enriches understanding of both servant leadership and peer mentoring.

Trustworthiness and Reliability

In conducting research into peer mentoring and servant leadership, I must acknowledge my own bias. Both the topic and framework have been a part of my own personal practice. I have utilized elements of peer mentoring in my band program and train student leaders using servant leadership as a framework. I also have spent over two decades teaching servant leadership as an instructor with the George N. Parks Drum

Major Academy. My experience provided me with a greater degree of credibility as a teacher who was well versed in both peer mentoring and servant leadership.

In case study, triangulation of data strengthens the validity of data (Stake, 1995). For this study, triangulation was achieved first by utilization of multiple data gathering methods (observations and interviews). Data was also triangulated by the inclusion of interview subjects from each role in the peer mentoring process, including several mentors and mentees. Credibility was also strengthened the inclusion of subjects in the data analysis process. By offering subjects a chance to review my transcripts and findings, I ensured that their point-of-view was accurately represented (Stake, 1995).

Ethical Considerations

As part of the research approval process, the study was submitted to the Boston University Institutional Review Board. The study was also submitted to the school district for their approval. All students and their director received an informed consent letter that outlined the scope of the study as well as the requirements for participation. Along with the informed consent letter was a separate consent form to be signed and returned to indicate consent to participate in the study. The letter stated the participants' right to review and edit interview transcripts and to withdraw from the study at any point. Because of their status as minors, students needed to assent and obtain parental consent in order to be included in the study. Interview subjects were selected from those students who had returned consent forms that had been signed by both the student and their legal guardian.

The informed consent letter also clarified the way in which data would be gathered and that interviews would be audio recorded. The letter also indicated that participation was voluntary and without compensation. Additionally, the letter outlined the handling of the data, including the process for checking reliability. Lastly, the letter clarified that confidentiality would be protected by use of pseudonyms and that students would have a voice in the selection of their pseudonym in this case. A copy of the informed consent letter can be found in Appendix D.

During data collection, I utilized Notta, an AI powered service, to transcribe interview recordings. All transcripts were checked to confirm their accuracy, and they reflected an accurate representation of participant contributions. AI was not utilized to create or analyze any data or text presented in this dissertation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Introduction to the Findings

It is a cold and dreary fall morning in Eastboro, but as I approach the band room doors, I hear the excited din of a large group of students convening. The vibrant, warm energy emanating from the band room is a stark contrast to the weather outside. I am here to observe a rehearsal of the wind ensemble, the auditioned concert ensemble. I arrive roughly ten minutes before the class is set to begin and find that many students are already prepared for rehearsal, well ahead of the bell that would start their day. Students are chatting about last night's homework, an upcoming algebra test, and other varied concerns that high school students tend to share. Soon, young musicians begin to warm up their instruments. Long tones, scales, and short excerpts of repertoire fill the air.

Ms. Gallagher, Director of the Eastboro High School (EHS) Band program, greets me warmly. She lets me know that she is still coming off the high of a successful middle school band night, where band students from the Eastboro Middle School Band joined the EHS Marching Mustangs for a halftime performance. "Going from 50 to 120 students for halftime was a big deal! It was a lot of fun, but I am still tired," Ms. Gallagher tells me. With that, the bell rings, signaling that the day has begun.

A silence falls over the group as the Pledge of Allegiance and daily announcements are broadcast. Ms. Gallagher follows that silent attention with a greeting, "Welcome back everybody. We haven't met since last week, so let's take a moment to catch up with one another." Immediately, the students start to chat with one another in a way that indicates comfort and camaraderie. As I look around, I notice that

there are some students who seem to prefer sitting quietly, seeming content to listen to what others have to say. Just as the conversations starts to wane, Ms. Gallagher begins a countdown that guides the remaining conversations to end. As she arrives at one, most of the group comes to silence and Ms. Gallagher explains the plan for the day.

Vignettes for Participant Voices

The preceding vignette provided a glimpse into the vibrant community of the EHS Band. I chose to start this chapter with the vignette to place the members EHS Band right at the start of these findings. The vignette also revealed examples of Ms. Gallagher's own servant leadership practice, as she empowered students by giving them space to connect with one another and provided direction by gently winding down that activity and explaining the rehearsal goals. It was evident throughout the course of this study that Ms. Gallagher practiced the virtues and behaviors of servant leadership. She also made those traits an important part of her instruction, often taking rehearsal time to teach leadership lessons to her students.

In the forthcoming chapters, I share several vignettes that provide enriched understanding of the experience of the participants in this study. Each vignette is followed by an analysis and connection back to the framework of servant leadership. Through these curated stories, the reader can share in the lived experiences of members of the EHS Band in a manner consistent with the tradition of case study research (Stake, 1995). Further, the vignettes provide a deeper understanding of the ways that servant leadership and peer mentoring was experienced by members of the EHS Band.

This particular vignette was selected to open this chapter for the way it conveys a sense of the EHS Band community. The warmth and excitement that Ms. Gallagher brought to her engagements with her students and with me revealed an educator who enjoyed her work. When she prompted her students to connect with one another right at the start of rehearsal, she gave each of them a chance to share their unique experience while strengthening their interpersonal relationships. The way that each student had space to decide how to engage with their peers could be seen as Ms. Gallagher's affirmation of their dignity as individuals. And as that student-centered time waned, Ms. Gallagher provided direction by clearly articulating the rehearsal structure and goals.

Throughout the vignette, students mirrored their teacher's enthusiasm. They engaged with one another as they spoke. The students appeared to be genuinely happy to be together in that rehearsal. This sense of camaraderie was just one of many indicators of the EHS Band's sense of community that was observed throughout the study.

Themes

In the next three chapters, I present the findings thematically rather than chronologically, emphasizing the patterns as they occurred across varied ensemble settings with various students and their teacher. Participant voices are preserved through quotations and rich vignettes, capturing both the observable behaviors and the meanings that Eastboro High School Band students and their teacher attach to their individual and shared experiences. The data presented will portray the story of a band program where student experience was largely shaped by the principles of servant leadership and where

students had opportunities to take a central role in their learning, including through engagement in peer mentoring.

The ways that servant leadership and peer mentoring worked in the EHS Band can be understood through the three themes that emerged through analysis of the data. The first theme, *empowered student voices*, was indicated by the various ways in which Ms. Gallagher provided students opportunity to share their own thoughts and experiences to contribute to the co-construction of knowledge in the various bands that are part of the EHS Band program. The second theme, *learning leadership*, was evidenced by the ways that students acclimated to leadership through socialization and by copying role models. Student leaders indicated that their own experience as new members of the band program, as well as the influence of past student leaders, influenced both leadership acceptance and leadership behaviors. This theme echoes Greenleaf's (1977/2002) claim that a servant leader can inspire followers to become servant leaders. The third theme, *flourishing together*, addresses the way that servant leadership was enacted to promote student wellbeing. The development of a tight-knit community built, in part, through the efforts of Ms. Gallagher and the student leaders promoted a positive organizational culture within the EHS Band.

CHAPTER FIVE

Empowered Student Voices

With the first theme, *empowered student voices*, I portray the ways that Ms. Gallagher facilitated opportunities for students to be at the center of the learning process. These opportunities occurred in concert ensembles, marching band, and leadership meetings alike. Throughout the study, students helped make decisions about musical interpretations, logistical operations, and how goals might be achieved. In this chapter, I present examples of the ways in which students experienced empowerment through the actions of both Ms. Gallagher and the student leaders of the Eastboro High School Band.

Analysis of the data revealed several subthemes situated within the context of empowered student voices. These subthemes included *student voice in rehearsals*, *student voice in sectionals*, *student leaders took charge*, and *lateral leadership*. Each of these subthemes will be explained and contextualized to show how students in the EHS Band experienced empowerment to be active, agentic participants in their band experience.

To provide richer understanding of this empowerment, I utilize vignettes that bring the reader into experiences where students in the EHS Band were empowered to take a more central role in the learning. Following each vignette, I offer an interpretation of the data and connect the story back to servant leadership, and, where appropriate, peer mentoring.

Student Voice in Full Ensemble Rehearsals

Ms. Gallagher valued the contributions her students brought to rehearsal. Throughout several hours of rehearsal, she frequently asked students to discuss their thoughts in small groups or share their opinions with the full ensemble. She was quick to praise their contributions, thus affirming their value as members of the band. She regularly provided space for students to work through musical difficulties, and students often helped one another during those opportunities. These student-centered rehearsal practices suggested that Ms. Gallagher had a tremendous amount of trust in her students.

The band at Eastboro High School operated very differently than what Ms. Gallagher experienced as a high school student. “It was very much a man on the box, do what he says situation. Comply. Have a concert. What's next?” By contrast, she often sought opportunities to de-center herself and allow students to take the lead. Describing her beliefs, Ms. Gallagher shared that she does not want the students to see her as some all-knowing dispenser of knowledge. She remarked, “I don't have all of the power or all of the answers. This is [their] program, not mine.”

To demonstrate the ways in which student voices were centered, I offer a glimpse into a wind ensemble rehearsal. In the forthcoming vignette, I will show how rehearsal structure alternated from teacher-centered to student-centered activity. Ms. Gallagher was the architect, designing a lesson that was task oriented and kept students engaged. She kept the group moving toward common goals, but the students had a lot of opportunities to share knowledge and experience throughout the rehearsal.

Vignette—A Wind Ensemble Rehearsal

The members of the Eastboro High School Wind Ensemble are beginning to work on repertoire after a series of warmups and fundamental exercises. They are rehearsing in a circular setup, and Ms. Gallagher is seated in the middle. She picks up her baton and conducts a brisk three beat pattern. The students begin to play a whimsical dance, music I recognize as underscoring from a well-known movie. About twenty measures into the piece, Ms. Gallagher stops conducting and tells the students to keep playing. Several students, seeing the conducting cease, but not understanding what Ms. Gallagher said, stop playing. Soon the music grinds to a halt as the rest of the band confusedly stops.

Ms. Gallagher quickly responds. “That’s okay. Let me clarify. I might stop conducting a lot while we’re in this setup. Unless you see my hands up cutting you off, please keep playing. But this is an okay place to pause. I notice that a lot of you are moving as if you feel this piece in one broader beat.” There are some nods and statements of agreement. “We’re under performance tempo right now, but I’m wondering if you would prefer me to conduct in three or one. What do you think?”

The students turn to one another and discuss their thoughts. As the chatting dies down, Ms. Gallagher puts the issue to a vote, asking students to raise their hands when she says the pattern they would prefer. It’s not an overwhelming majority, but most students indicate that they would prefer to stay in three for the time being. Ms. Gallagher lets them know that that is what she will do, though she adds that the long-term goal is to eventually move to a feeling of one broader pulse per measure. The group plays again, and this time makes it up to a fermata at the end of the first section of the piece, around

fifty measures into the piece.

“Okay, talk to each other about tempo.” Ms. Gallagher instructs the students. Once again, the students are quick to engage with one another. Students point to parts of the music, with one or two opting to play fragments to demonstrate their point. Some begin to speak very animatedly about what they’re noticing.

“Now, what did we notice about tempo?” Ms. Gallagher asks. At once, several students speak, and the consensus is that the tempo was not very steady. Ms. Gallagher thanks them and praises the group for their perception.

“And clarinets, did I hear somebody say ‘metronome’? Do you think we would benefit from that? Yeah? I agree.” Ms. Gallagher continues as she reaches for her tablet. She sets the tempo, presses a button, and the sound of the metronome plays over a speaker in the room. It is not deafening or oppressive, but just loud enough that it might be heard over the ensemble. The group plays the opening section of the piece again. With the aid of the metronome, the tempo is steadier, though woodwinds do seem to struggle with some fiendish runs.

As she cuts the group off, Ms. Gallagher wastes no time. “That’s great! Much better consistency of tempo there. Now, could we do that again with just the woodwind accompanimental parts starting at measure 17?” It has become apparent that when Ms. Gallagher speaks during the rehearsal, most of the students sit very attentively. This may be due, at least in part, to how quickly she moves through the rehearsal process.

The young musicians play their accompanimental parts, and it sounds subdued. Ms. Gallagher offers, “Okay. Now, if you had to play this as a solo—you won’t have to

right now, but if you did—what would your confidence level be? Could you rate that on a scale of one to ten? Talk about that with your neighbors.” The students quickly get into discussion, and from what I can hear, most of them are not particularly confident. This matches the performance, where parts with dynamic markings of mezzo forte and fortissimo all sounded rather timid. Ms. Gallagher perceives this as well, and after about thirty seconds of student chatter, she tells the group, “So it’s clear that you’re not feeling too great about this. Let’s slow it down and build your confidence.”

Ms. Gallagher slows the tempo of the metronome considerably and the students play again. The music is much clearer, though the woodwind runs still fail to match the energy of other parts. As they finish, Ms. Gallagher exclaims, “Bravo! That’s getting better. We will want that to be much fuller sounding on Thursday, though. Your part is so interesting, and we need it to be louder. The audience is going to hear the melody. Of course, they will. That’s the part that they already know. We want to surprise them with the stuff that they don’t know.”

Several students throughout the ensemble reach for the pencils sitting on their music stands. In the clarinet section, students circle dynamics or bracket particularly difficult passages in their runs.

Interpretation and Connection to Framework

The rehearsal described in the preceding vignette was interesting for the ways that Ms. Gallagher moved back and forth between teacher-centered and student-centered instructional strategies. Ms. Gallagher offered a lot of instruction and set expectations for goals, but she also regularly gave students a chance to discuss their own thoughts, rate

their confidence, and share in decision making about tempo and patterns. In servant leadership terms, Ms. Gallagher provided direction while also empowering students to contribute their points of view.

A servant leader seeks to blur hierarchical lines to empower followers, just as Ms. Gallagher did for her students. The rehearsal in the vignette was hierarchical in structure, with Ms. Gallagher clearly leading the band. By frequently inviting students to converse and contribute, however, there was a non-hierarchical element to the work. Throughout the rehearsal, students engaged in conversations that were brief, non-hierarchical peer mentoring engagements. The students shifted between following Ms. Gallagher's lead and exercising their own leadership, approaching each other as equals as they shared their knowledge and experience in groups of two or three. The practice allowed for a hierarchical rehearsal to have the collaborative spirit of a non-hierarchical structure.

There is also something to be said for the thoughtful pacing of the rehearsal. Ms. Gallagher moved quickly enough to keep the students engaged. Student engagement was evident in their attentiveness, but also in the way that they so comfortably conversed with one another when called upon to do so. Planning a structured rehearsal was a demonstration of Ms. Gallagher's ensemble stewardship that was informed by her understanding of student needs and how they related to the common goals of the ensemble. At the same time, the structure of the rehearsal also provided students with direction that allowed them to accomplish shared musical goals.

The vignette demonstrated the way that Ms. Gallagher exhibited traits of servant leadership. Ms. Gallagher designed a rehearsal that promoted student empowerment by

including them in important conversations. Although students often led the learning, Ms. Gallagher still demonstrated stewardship by providing direction that kept the ensemble focused on their goals. These behaviors all align with van Dierendonck and Patterson's (2015) framework for servant leadership.

Student Voice in Sectionals

The large ensemble rehearsal described previously was largely teacher-centered with some student-centered engagement. By contrast, sectional rehearsals in the Eastboro High School Band were entirely student-centered. Section leaders in the various ensembles had a lot of leeway in deciding what work should be done. Interestingly, those leaders often shared that responsibility by asking for feedback from their peers, as was the case in the sectional observed for this forthcoming vignette.

Vignette—A Marching Band Saxophone Sectional

Marty is leading the saxophonists in a discussion of what to approach first. Students seem to be comfortable sharing their thoughts. Most of them agree that they should mark the drill sets on their music for part one of the show and then get to work on difficult passages in part two. The tenor saxophonists share that they feel like they would benefit more from working on a difficult part of the music rather than marking their drill sets.

“If you think that is the best use of your time, I trust you,” Marty tells them, “Go ahead and get to work while the altos write in our drill sets.”

While the alto saxophonists focus on marking the drill sets, some of the younger students begin to express confusion about what the instructions on the drill pages mean

and how the drill pages line up with the music. Marty, along with some older students, explain what the different moves mean and how the instructions explain which measures should be played during each movement. A younger student checks for understanding, singing part of the music and referencing a drill move.

“So this drill move lines up with that music?” she asks.

“Yes, that’s it. You’ve got it!” Marty affirms.

Marty then points out that a particular part of the music lines up with a sequence of quick halts and movements. One student says, “Ohhhh, that’s low key nice.” The older students agree with one adding that the drill tends to line up with the music, allowing the band to “look as good as we sound.”

Interpretation and Connection to Framework

The sectional here is a small group, hierarchical peer mentoring engagement. Marty, the saxophone captain, lead the group. Like his teacher, however, Marty blurred the hierarchical lines. He did this by including his peers in deciding what to do first. Marty’s humility was evidenced in the way he did not seek to exert control over the tenor saxophones when they wanted to get started on some difficult music right away. Instead, he empowered the tenor saxophonists to take charge of that work while he kept the alto saxophonists on task as they marked their drill sets in the music.

Marty’s willingness to empower his peers seemed to pay off. The other members of the saxophone section were not passive participants in the process. Rather, the students engaged in vibrant discussions and thoughtful practice as the students worked together to achieve their goals.

It is interesting to consider the ways that Marty's behaviors echoed those of Ms. Gallagher from the previous vignette. Like his teacher, Marty promoted the empowerment of his peers. He further demonstrated a willingness to consider the individual needs of his peers when he provided space for the tenor saxophonists the opportunity to work separately from the group to address the concerns that were most pressing to them. Such individualized consideration is a hallmark of servant leadership (Héjj, 2019). Marty's inclusion of his peers in decision making can also be seen as dignity affirming in the way he valued each point of view, which relates to compassionate love, the antecedent condition required for servant leadership (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

Student Leaders Took Charge

Student leaders of the Eastboro High School Band were selected after an application and interview process. That, however, was only part of the selection procedure. Ms. Gallagher paid attention to which students tend to be helpful, suggesting a sense of stewardship. The students sought these titles and the responsibilities that came with them. The student leaders experienced empowerment by the way in which they had a say in the way in which they take care of the responsibilities that they have accepted.

Leadership in the Eastboro High School Band had two distinct components. First, there was the work students did to prepare. Their acts of preparation provided an example of stewardship; service they undertook to care for the band members, equipment, and their rehearsal spaces. Though these acts were often unseen by the followers in the band, the tidy classroom spaces and the resultant smoother rehearsals made the band experience

a better one.

The second component of leadership was demonstrated by the ways in which leaders of the band engaged with their peers. EHS Band leaders tended to be kind and inclusive of their peers' points-of-view. They provided direction to their peers, and empowered their peers to participate in decision making.

To provide a holistic understanding of the ways in which those two components worked for the EHS Band student leadership, I share two vignettes. Following each vignette, I reflect and connect the stories back to peer mentoring and the servant leadership framework. In the first vignette, the student leaders of the EHS Band are working to get ready for marching band camp and the start of the school year.

Vignette—Leadership Behind the Scenes

On a beautiful late-summer's day, the student leaders of the EHS Band are busy getting things ready for the upcoming year. A few leaders from the music honor society adjourn to another room to discuss plans for upcoming events. Most of the students, including leaders from the wind ensemble and the marching band, remain in the band room sorting through crates of flip folders and lyres to make sure music will be ready for the start of the marching band's annual band camp.

Some students take charge of gathering and moving the crates, while others collaborate to figure out the next steps once the crates are all consolidated into a single space. A few more experienced leaders share what their recollections about this process the previous year. The less experienced leaders chime in if they had ideas about how to be more efficient or if they recall issues that they might have experienced in the previous

year. Throughout the process, Ms. Gallagher only interjects to provide necessary context. “The flip folders in that box are actually for some of the pep things we do with symphonic band. Please keep those separated,” she shares with the students when they find a crate full of flip folders with unfamiliar tunes.

While the leaders engage in this task, they also take opportunities to discuss upcoming plans or what they were hoping to achieve with their sections. Nothing about this work has been quiet, but it is not cacophonous or disorganized. As they connect, the student leaders seem to show genuine interest in one another’s stories. During these discussions, Dev and Paul, the band’s drum majors, step away from the group to begin making nametags for members of the marching band. The drum majors set to work at a table where Ms. Gallagher was sitting with her laptop working on her own set of tasks.

Before the drum majors begin working, Dev asked Ms. Gallagher, “What should we put on the name tags? Like name, instrument, and grade?”

Ms. Gallagher responds earnestly, “What do you think we should do?”

“I think that name and instrument should be enough. We don’t have a lot of space,” Dev responds.

Ms. Gallagher thinks for a moment and nods as she replies, “That seems great! That way, if we can find a lost name tag, we can put it into the appropriate section bin. That will help section leaders get those name tags back to them.”

“Great! Thank you!” Dev responds as he turned back to Paul. The duo gets to work. Each nametag is hand-written, placed in a protective sleeve, and added to a lanyard. Lanyards are color-coded so that leadership team members can be more easily

distinguished from their untitled peers.

After a while, Paul pauses. “Hey, Dev...what should I write, William or Will?”

Dev gives the question some thought and looks at the band roster. “I think we should go with whatever is on the roster and let them know that we can provide a new nametag if they’d like to change it.”

“That makes sense. Thanks!” Paul replies.

Interpretation and Connection to Framework

In the preceding vignette, the students worked to prepare for the upcoming marching band camp. The student’s work might not be anything that other members of the marching band would have known about. The leaders’ aimed their efforts toward making the experience better for their peers. Preparing name tags, for example, ensured that new and returning members of the band could more easily use one another’s names. Further, making sure enough flip folders and lyres were available for each section ensured that each member was set up for full participation in rehearsals and performances.

These behind-the-scenes operations provided an example of the stewardship that is germane to servant leadership. By taking time and care to prepare, the leaders took steps to ensure smoother operations of the band. In other words, the leaders placed the needs of the band at the front of their actions, even though the actions were unseen by peers and, thus, were unlikely to yield any recognition or praise.

Nested within these tasks were examples of peer mentoring. In the discussions surrounding flip folders and lyres, more experienced leaders shared their experience to

inform their peers of what had been done in the past. The less experienced leaders absorbed this information and still felt free to add their thoughts on how the past practice could be improved upon. The dialogical exchange exhibited by the student leaders provides a demonstration of the way that students have been empowered by their teacher to make decisions that impact the way their leadership team and band operate.

The exchange with the drum majors was a similarly non-hierarchical peer mentoring engagement. The dyad had a task to complete, and they worked together to decide how it should be done. Although Paul requested feedback from Dev, there was not a sense of hierarchy in their exchange.

In the vignette, Ms. Gallagher provided direction without limiting the student autonomy. For example, her question to Dev, “What do you think we should do?” allowed Dev to work out the problem on his own. When he provided a viable plan, Ms. Gallagher was quick to validate him, pointing out how Dev’s plan could be beneficial.

Having offered a glimpse at the behind-the-scenes preparation that leaders in the EHS Band had done, it is time to turn attention to what leadership looks like for the student leaders when they are face-to-face with their peers. In the next vignette, I share additional ways that student leaders took charge as they helped the marching band get ready prior to a football game.

The service demonstrated by students in their preparation for band camp parallels the stewardship described by van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015). The same is true for Ms. Gallagher’s role in facilitating this experience. By creating opportunities for students to serve the band, she empowered them to develop their own servant leadership skills.

The way empowerment worked in the EHS Band paralleled Greenleaf's (1977/2002) claim that servant leaders, —like Ms. Gallagher—would create conditions that make it more likely that followers—like the students—would become servant leaders. In the EHS Band, this seemed to be accomplished by Ms. Gallagher's facilitation of opportunities for students to practice and develop servant leadership skills. This point is exemplified in the forthcoming vignette.

Vignette—Before the Football Game

“Hey Band!” shouts Dev.

“Hey what?” they reply.

“Let's form a double arc!”

The students know what to do and create two arcs. Dev asks them to rotate slightly so that the sun, which is shining brightly just above the tree line, will not be in their eyes. This is a thoughtful thing to do, as it removes a potential source of discomfort and complaint for his peers. Once the group settles, Dev asks them to perform a warmup exercise. Theo, the drumline captain, taps the group into the exercise and the band begins.

After the exercise ends, Dev and Paul both share their excitement about the upcoming performance. Jenny approaches Dev and tells him something. “If you need gloves, follow Jenny,” Dev announces. Several band members follow Jenny into the building.

Dev asks the group, “Do you want to do Step-By-Step?” and the group responds, “Yeah? Okay, let's pick a scale.” The students discuss a little, and some begin to play.

“Okay, we’ll do E flat Major Step-By-Step,” Dev announces before cuing Theo to tap the band in. The group starts and some students play a whole note scale while others play a more rhythmically intricate exercise.

Dev stops the group. “Woah, let’s try that again. This is Step-By-Step.” Theo taps off again, and the band plays the exercise together.

When the band finishes the exercise, there is a small lull while Paul and Dev decide on the next step. Jenny, one of the band’s quartermasters, approaches the drum majors and they have a brief discussion. The din of voices is interrupted when Dev bellows, “Hey, Band!”

“Hey, what?” they respond.

“Listen to your quartermasters. Jenny is going to explain how we will distribute and care for our plumes this year.” Jenny then explains the process. Soon, the quartermasters and drum majors begin to distribute plumes to the band. Paul and Dev assist. Older members help younger members figure out how to insert the plumes into their shakos.

As the students finish putting on their plumes, Ms. Gallagher emerges from the school. “Hey, Band!” she chimes.

“Hey, what?” they respond once again.

“We can hear that they’ve already started some announcements. We’ll begin our march in a few moments, but first can we tune to a B flat. Let the tubas lead the sound.”

Interpretation and Connection to Framework

Although the student leaders were at the center of the action in this vignette, it is important to acknowledge that Ms. Gallagher empowered her students to take the lead. She trusted that the students could handle these responsibilities and that the leaders will keep the group on task, and that trust is well placed. The trust and empowerment modeled by Ms. Gallagher was echoed by the way in which Dev provided Jenny with space to fulfill her responsibilities. He listened to what she had to say and then stepped back so that she could handle her responsibility.

Ms. Gallagher trusted her students enough to relinquish control. In doing so, she facilitated opportunities for the drum majors to lead the band. That trust and empowerment is mirrored by the drum majors when they relinquished control to the quartermasters. This parallel will be explored in greater depth later in this dissertation, but it is worth pointing out here how the student leaders seem to behave in ways that empower their peers, much like they themselves have been empowered by their teacher.

Though peer mentoring typically occurs in dyads or small groups, the large group engagement in the vignette revealed several traits common to peer mentoring. To begin, there was a hierarchical structure where more experienced peers, in this case Dev and Jenny, shared their knowledge and experience with peers. Though hierarchical in structure, there was a non-hierarchical spirit to the work, as demonstrated by the way Dev included his peers in deciding which warmup to perform. There was also an element of socialization in the way Jenny explained the community expectations around plume care. She made it clear to her peers that the EHS Marching Mustangs take care of their

equipment. In these ways, we can consider that the exchange described in the vignette was a large group peer mentoring experience.

Seen that way, the mentor role shifted from Dev to Jenny. First, Dev took care of the musical warmup and provided his peers with the direction necessary to make sure the group worked together. When there was confusion, Dev offered a calm reminder of what was expected. He was firm yet not demeaning to his peers. Later, Jenny's mentorship was directed toward ensuring that students had the uniform parts that they needed, but also toward making sure that everybody knew the community expectations for uniform care.

There was one additional layer of mentoring worth noting. Once the plumes were distributed, several members, including many without any leadership titles, provided more detailed instructions or assistance to younger peers who may have required more personalized assistance. Though this occurred in the context of the full marching band warmup arcs, the mentoring in this case was smaller in scope. When necessary, older students shared their experience to help younger peers learn what they needed to know about plumes.

The fluidity of mentoring roles, shifting from Dev to Jenny, and then to individual members of the band suggests a horizontal model rather than a top-down approach. In the EHS Band, students are empowered to lead when they are needed, which may be indicated by the job description of a title, but also by the circumstances of the moment. These softened hierarchies are consistent with Greenleaf's (1977/2002) vision for servant leadership. In the next section, I delve into that idea more deeply and consider the ways in which any student in the EHS Band can make the choice to lead.

Lateral Leadership

Student leaders in the EHS Band shared their thoughts on servant leadership and peer mentoring. Some students seemed to bristle at the idea of a mentor/mentee relationship. When considering how to work together in an ensemble Angelina, a leader in the EHS Band through her role as a Wind Ensemble Council representative, said,

I think it's really important to treat people as if they're your friend and not as if they're your mentee when you're collaborating in a big ensemble... when I think of a [mentor and] mentee, I almost think of a certain power dynamic where one person is inherently established to be technically better or more experienced. And when you're working and performing in the same group, I think it's crucial that there's kind of like a two-way exchange where you're both giving and receiving. And I think that results in more of a friendly relationship.

For Angelina, a mentor/mentee relationship is naturally hierarchical and fraught with power imbalances. What she described as her ideal, however, aligned with what Goodrich (2023b) would call non-hierarchical peer mentoring. So here, the issue seemed to be one of misunderstanding. The students resisted the idea of a directive style of peer mentoring where the mentor is a more capable and experienced individual who would just tell the mentee what to do. The ideal, then, was a more dialectic approach where all parties had an equal say in the conversation regardless of ability, experience, or title.

Seeing how the EHS Band operated, it was evident why Angelina bristled at her directive conception of peer mentoring. Collaboration was a vibrant part of the band experience for Angelina and her peers. This seemed to be in large part to Ms. Gallagher's

empowerment of her students. The collaboration was further enriched by the student leaders who mirrored their teacher's empowerment supportive behavior when interacting with their peers. There was a synergy in the group aimed toward providing space for any person who had something to contribute.

The ways in which members of the EHS Band experienced empowerment and contributed to the learning seemed to function non-hierarchically, even when hierarchies had been implied by titles (e.g., band director, drum major, saxophone captain). These leadership structures experienced and preferred by students in the EHS Band were akin to what scholars call *lateral leadership*. In lateral leadership, traditional top-down hierarchies are eschewed for a more collaborative approach that allows for all stakeholders to contribute (Koçak, 2019; Kühl, 2025).

In the case of the Eastboro High School Band, leadership hierarchies did exist. The band had a director. Some students had leadership titles. The hegemony, however, that can often come with structures and titles, was softened by the inclusive spirit of the group. According to van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015), the inclusive spirit relates to an increased sense of meaningfulness among students because they have a say in how the group functions. The peer mentoring that occurred, even when more hierarchical in form, was egalitarian, providing room for all members to flourish.

Conclusion and Synthesis

The information presented in this chapter revealed several ways in which student empowerment occurred in the Eastboro High School Band. Presenting data through the subthemes of student voice in rehearsals, student voice in sectionals, student leaders

taking charge, and lateral leadership provided insights into the ways in which servant leadership enriched the peer mentoring experience for students. Also revealed were ways that empowerment included behind-the-scenes student leadership activity that, although not peer mentoring, provided preparation for more effective operations of the EHS Band.

Peer mentoring was an important component of the student leadership that occurred, even if the students were not quick to think of their engagement as peer mentoring. Those student-to-student engagements, however, do not tell the whole story. Leadership was also demonstrated in the ways that students took care to prepare and facilitate experiences for their peers. Examples of this preparation included students who tidied up the band room or moved marching band equipment to the field. But even those simple acts set the tone. In the EHS Band, students took care of their space and took care of one another.

The hierarchy of the leadership structure was somewhat blurred by the way that Ms. Gallagher invited student voice into the work. Similar blurring of hierarchical lines was achieved by student leaders when they included their peers in decision making. This blurring of hierarchical lines, exemplifying lateral leadership, created room for anybody to engage in the discussions that effected the group, regardless of if they have a title or not.

The band director, Ms. Gallagher, facilitated peer mentoring in several ways. She provided space for leaders to work together to complete tasks, solve problems, and help get the band warmed up. In each of those cases, students drew on their experience and prior knowledge to co-construct new understandings and pathways forward.

The peer mentoring that occurred in the bands at Eastboro High School was at times impromptu, and somewhat informal, as it was in the brief student discussions observed during the wind ensemble rehearsal. Other times, as in the case of the student-led sectionals, the peer mentoring was more structured and longer in duration. It was notable, though not surprising, that Ms. Gallagher provided more direction for those structured peer mentoring engagements when compared to the impromptu discussions in large group rehearsals.

As a facilitator, Ms. Gallagher approached her role with the compassionate love of a servant leader. She displayed humility in the way that she stepped back and allowed students to take the lead. She served as a model of stewardship while providing direction and setting parameters for peer mentoring engagements in full ensemble and sectional rehearsals. Students experienced empowerment through the assignment of responsibilities, and they gained autonomy by determining how to best complete their tasks. In this chapter, I provided a glimpse into ways in which students' leadership behaviors that often reflected those of Ms. Gallagher. In the next chapter, I examine the ways that students learn those leadership behaviors.

CHAPTER SIX

Learning Leadership

Students in the Eastboro High School Band learned leadership through a progressive process that began with observing others, deepened through social participation, and eventually culminated in their own enactment of servant leadership behaviors. In this chapter I portray how these processes unfolded through four interconnected subthemes: *Student Leaders Follow Models*, *Socialization*, *Leadership Lessons*, and *Leadership Without Titles*.

As in the previous chapter, participant voices are centered in these findings, and the experiences are contextualized through the sharing of vignette. The vignettes shared in this chapter illustrate ways that students in the EHS Band learned and developed their leadership skills. Following each vignette, I provide an interpretation and contextualize the data within the framework of servant leadership. Throughout these findings, participant quotes provide enriched understanding of students' beliefs regarding the process of learning leadership. Findings will be connected back to the servant leadership framework throughout this chapter.

Student Leaders Follow Models

The first step for students to learn leadership was for them to follow the model of past student leaders. As new band members, they followed the lead of their peers and observed how leadership in the band program worked. The leaders they found most effective became their models. In this section of the chapter, I consider how the

modelling provided by past leaders influenced the leadership behaviors of the student leaders who participated in this study.

Vignette— First Leadership Meeting of the New Year

Before the school year begins, leaders from the Eastboro High School Band are meeting to prepare for the upcoming school year. Ms. Gallagher encourages the students to consider what their role as leaders will require of them. While the students are considering their role, Ms. Gallagher asks them to reflect on past effective leaders in the program. “Take a moment and think about what made those leaders stand out”.

As students ponder their experiences, conversations begin to revolve largely around how past leaders had made this new group of leaders feel welcome. The stories students are sharing include simple acts. One student recollects being impressed by a past leader taking time to say hello in the hallway. Another shares that a past leader had helped them learn some new techniques on their instrument. Almost every anecdote revolves around acts of kindness and inclusion. As the conversation wanes, Ms. Gallagher speaks, asking the students to consider how the examples of effective past leaders might influence this new leadership team’s behaviors.

“Think about what you can do and take a moment to connect that to how you want to be remembered,” she instructs.

The students sit, thinking in silence for a moment, but soon they begin to chat again. The discussion picks up very quickly. The group is exuding excitement and a warm energy as they share ideas about how they can follow the model of past leaders to become models for future leaders of the EHS Band. Words like empathy, caring, fun, and

friendly are ringing in the air. Soon, as most of the conversations begin to wind down, Paul's voice carries over the group as he says, "I think we should aspire to be like the people who inspired us."

Interpretation and Connection to Framework

During the leadership meeting, Ms. Gallagher asked students to consider how past leaders had impacted their experience in band. In their reflection, students recalled their very first experiences as members of the Eastboro High School Band. Through reflection, the students considered which past leaders of the band program were models of effective leadership. There was consensus that the most impactful leaders had taken time to act inclusively to invite new members into the band community.

Ms. Gallagher made this activity more impactful by connecting the reflective activity to how the models might inform each new student leader's legacy. In considering how they wanted to be remembered while they reflected fondly on their own encounters with past leaders, it may be that the desired leadership behavior was reinforced. The options that the students discussed about ways that they should lead the band were like the inclusive behavior of their past leaders.

Paul's statement at the end of the vignette framed the impact of models. When he said, "I think we should aspire to be like the people who inspired us," Paul was acknowledging that the behavior demonstrated by past leaders could guide his own behavior. If he copied various traits of the leaders that inspired him, he might, in turn, inspire others himself. In other words, in this vignette, students reflected on models so that they themselves could prepare to become the models for others.

Student Impressions on Ideal Models

The leadership behaviors from the student leaders of the EHS Band frequently echoed the model of their teacher, Ms. Gallagher. Despite the modelling by Ms. Gallagher, students indicated that leaders from their early years in the band were their primary models. This makes sense considering it was likely easier for them to experience a vicarious connection through a peer nearer in age. Ms. Gallagher humbly suggested that she preferred things this way. She was aware that peers served as leadership models and noted, “I don't have all of the power or all of the answers. This is [their] program, not mine...I try to model that and not make it about me.”

The leaders of the Eastboro High School Band believed that one of the important things they learned from past leaders was how to make the band a welcoming place for their peers. Billy, the low brass captain for the marching band, shared about his experience as a new member of the EHS Band:

I remember going into marching band my freshman year. Older students, even some of the non-leadership members were great. I felt like really encouraged and welcomed by them. Some of them just went up to me and said ‘Hey! How's it going?’ or they helped me get set up with my flip folder or whatever. I feel like the impact of that was super important. Of course, helping with notes or rhythms is important, but more important was them being there as a friend to talk to and to help me inside or outside of music.

For Billy and many of his peers, the most important aspect of past band leaders was the ways in which those leaders made new members feel welcome and cared for. For

leaders in the EHS Band, care did not end when rehearsals or performances were over.

Dev, a drum major, elaborated on Billy's point when he said:

Yeah, I think, adding on to that, just creating a bond with someone or multiple people goes beyond the borders of marching band. Making a bond is making a friendship that exists outside of the music world. That's super important.

Both Billy and Dev seemed to understand that the care and wellbeing of their peers required relationships that extended beyond the scope of their time in band class. They had experienced similar care from past leaders and believed it was an important component of leadership. Their belief was in line with the emphasis on compassionate love in the servant leadership framework of van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015). This understanding underscored the value of models in the process of learning about leadership in the EHS Band. Further, the value that Billy and Dev placed on drawing members into the band community introduces the value of socialization. In the next section, I consider the role of socialization as a mechanism for learning leadership in the EHS Band.

Socialization

Socialization is an established byproduct of the peer mentoring process (Goodrich, 2023b). According to Goodrich (2007), peer mentors can help their mentees acclimate to the culture of the music classroom. Relating this back to the EHS Band students, Tim, a leader in the wind ensemble, offered this insight:

I'm excited to welcome the new band members...When we got to high school, we were, like, 'Oh my god, all these seniors!' They were so huge and scary. But I

think we have a chance to be welcoming to the class of 29, which is nice.

In saying that, Tim acknowledged that the transition to high school can be daunting for students. He expressed a desire to reverse that narrative by welcoming the students.

Welcoming new members into the band was the first step in socialization. After that, it seemed that the leaders were intent on finding ways to affirm their peers. Jenny expressed:

You kind of go out of your way to say hello or make conversation or make someone feel more comfortable in an environment they might not be feeling comfortable in. I think that a lot of good experience I've gotten from band has been because people have come up to me and just started being nice and friendly and not actually necessarily because of like the music we were playing. It's the people who really make it, at least for me.

The EHS Band leaders learned from models, but part of it appears to be that those models nurtured a culture of inclusion and care inside of their band. As the students were accepted into that culture, they learned that caring and supporting was an important cultural norm in the band. Mrs. Gallagher touched on that aspect of the band's culture, explaining that leadership was about "allowing every person to understand...that we're all bringing our unique talents, and sounds, and personality, and character into our space. And that should be celebrated."

In the next vignette, I share an observation of one student, Calvin, interacting with student leaders of the EHS Marching Mustangs. Following the vignette, I reflect on the socialization that occurred and what it suggests about the importance of socialization in

the EHS Band.

Vignette—Dinner Before a Football Game

It is a sunny evening in late September, and the students of the Eastboro High School Marching Mustangs are gathered in the cafeteria eating dinner before their performance at a football game that evening. Some older students trickle in with food from local restaurants. Other students are already seated across several tables, and nobody is sitting alone. Although a few students sit quietly as they eat, most are chatting animatedly about a variety of topics. Chatter about classes, classmates, and weekend plans can all be heard.

At one table, Dev, Theo, and Kevin are sitting among some friends, laughing and chatting as they eat. They talk a little about the performance that night, but most of the discussion involves what has been going on in their lives outside of band. Calvin approaches the table and is greeted warmly by the group. He asks Dev some questions about the evening's plan. With this, Dev stands up, turning to squarely face Calvin, and he listens and smiles. Once Calvin finishes asking his questions, Dev pauses to think for a moment and then answers the questions with a warm smile and nod. Calvin smiles and thanks Dev, who in turn thanks Calvin for checking instead of assuming. Calvin scampers back to his table with a smile on his face.

Interpretation and Connection to Framework

The story above illustrated how Calvin, a sophomore, interacted with leaders from the marching band. The leaders, particularly Dev, modelled an authentically kind and warm approach to peer mentoring. He listened to Calvin attentively, with body language

that made it clear in that moment that Calvin was valued, and his questions were important. His answer was thoughtful and communicated exactly what Calvin needed to know. The shared gratitude at the end of the exchange reflected the servant leadership culture that had been established in the band program.

The socialization did not occur because the dinner time was a social event. The distinction is important here. Not every social engagement guarantees an opportunity to integrate into a community. In this circumstance, socialization occurred because Dev genuinely connected in a way that demonstrated Calvin's presence was valued. In other words, socialization served two functions in this scenario: it was both a process through which Calvin learned what leadership looked like and a mechanism by which he was invited into the band community's collaborative culture.

Thus far, it has been revealed that the students in this study first learned leadership from observing the models provided by student leaders. The virtues and behaviors of servant leadership became engrained in students as they assimilated into the EHS Band community. In the forthcoming section I portray how those leadership qualities were reinforced for students through lessons taught by Ms. Gallagher.

Leadership Lessons

Because Ms. Gallagher valued the collaboration that the principles of servant leadership engender within the Eastboro High School Band, she spent class time each year teaching servant leadership principals. Symphonic band members received these lessons through a twelve-lesson curriculum that Ms. Gallagher designed. The wind ensemble students did not receive these lessons, though they did occasionally have

discussions about leadership.

Vignette—A Wind Ensemble Leadership Lesson

On a dreary autumn afternoon, wind ensemble has the extended block, and they are using that time to reflect on leadership. Ms. Gallagher wants to make sure her students are primed for an upcoming concert where they will be joined by members of the symphonic band and 8th Grade Band.

To start the lesson, Ms. Gallagher plays a video where a speaker reflects on the ways a leader's small gestures can have a big impact on followers. Ms. Gallagher chose this video to help get students into the right mindset for their upcoming concert. The wind ensemble has invited members of the symphonic band and 8th Grade Band to join them on stage, and Ms. Gallagher wants her wind ensemble students to be ready to make a positive impression.

As the video concludes, the students are asked to connect the video to their upcoming performance. The room buzzes with excited chatter. Groups of two, three, and four share their thoughts with one another. Some groups discuss how they might create special moments for their younger peers. Others relate back to their own experiences as younger students. As the conversations begins to wane, Ms. Gallagher asks if any students were willing to share their thoughts.

At first, the sharing is centered on students' past experiences as younger band members. One student recalls a teacher who taught them some cool techniques that helped them master a pop song. Several students share stories of older students being helpful or kind to them when they were middle school band members. The group seems to

agree that having somebody that they thought was cool take time to know them made them realize that the EHS band was a cool and comfortable place.

Soon, Ms. Gallagher encourages a shift in discussion toward what the wind ensemble students might do to provide a similar experience for this crop of younger students. One student says, “I think we should have extra pencils so that if any of the Symphonic [Band] or 8th Grade [Band] students don’t have them, they’ll know we have their back.”

The next student to speak up explains that the most important thing was treating these younger peers as equals. Several students speak up to endorse this idea and soon the conversation extends beyond the scope of the upcoming concert. The students become animated as they share various ways to support their peers—attending the younger bands’ concerts, seeking the younger band members out in the halls during school, taking selfies with them, and leaving post-it notes of praise on the band room doors.

While the students are still discussing ways to make connections, the bell rings. Ms. Gallagher sends them off to their next class, imploring them to think about how just one small gesture could have a huge impact on somebody. As the students leave the room, Ms. Gallagher plays a song by Earth, Wind, and Fire over the classroom speakers. Several students begin to dance as they make their way out of the band room.

Interpretation and Connection to Framework

The interaction here uncovers a similar pattern to the leadership meeting presented earlier in the chapter. The students considered past leaders who had made their band experience special and then pondered how that might influence their own behaviors.

The big difference here was that this lesson was not for a select group of leaders. This lesson was for everybody in the wind ensemble. Servant leadership was such a deeply rooted cultural norm for the EHS Band, and everybody had access to the information. Every student could consider how they might serve and how that service might have a positive impact on a younger peer.

The timing also seemed to be purposeful. The leadership meeting in the earlier vignette happened before the school year had started. The members of the EHS Band leadership team accepted the challenge to create magical moments for their peers in the band program. A couple months later, Ms. Gallagher asked the rest of the wind ensemble to do the same for another group of band students. Leadership was scaffolded in a way that provided all students with access to leadership lessons and leadership experiences. Ms. Gallagher, as the director, was facilitating the whole process, and along the way, she found opportunities to invite more students to engage in leadership behaviors that promoted a positive environment across the Eastboro High School Band.

Adding to the previously outlined steps—observing models and socialization—the students continued their leadership education through the reinforcement provided by leadership lessons. These steps provided all students with the necessary tools to engage as leaders. This chapter continues with an explanation of how students first come to apply their leadership skills in the Eastboro High School Band.

Leadership Without a Title

Ms. Gallagher often spoke about the concept of leadership without a title. By emphasizing the virtues and behaviors of servant leadership, Ms. Gallagher encouraged

the students to consider how the things they do for others impacts the experience of everybody. She shared that the things the students do to help the band when they are not a titled leader in the program often indicate a degree of readiness to lead. Put simply, students in the EHS Band program had the opportunity to develop their leadership skills before they ever have an official leadership title.

Leadership without titles also meant that anybody in the EHS Band could step up to take the lead when they found themselves in a position to help the band. The students in the EHS Band had largely bought into the value of this next-person-up model. Angelina, a member of the marching band and a leader in the wind ensemble, shared this about the nature of leadership in the band program:

One of the things that I think is really special about [our] band is that everyone has a way that is unique to themselves that they can contribute. For example, recently Billy and Jenny were both out of commission for a little bit. I figured that instead of leaving them with a ton of work to come back to, I'd take a little bit under my own responsibility to, you know, kind of help them out. Because everyone has moments where they're not at their best, and it's up to the non-titled members to recognize that and to step up when it's needed.

In sharing this, Angelina revealed her servant leadership mindset. First, there was an affirmation of every member's individual dignity through inviting their unique contributions. Second, Angelina viewed the work she did when she stepped up in the absence of two titled marching band leaders as an act of service ("you know, kind of help them out"). Her point connected to Greenleaf's (1977/2002) assertion that followers of a

servant leader are likely to become servant leaders themselves. The emphasis on the idea that any student could lead seemed to be, at least in part, a reason that there was such a non-hierarchical spirit to the way leaders and their peers interacted in the EHS Band.

The concept of leadership without titles was observed in the way in which all students were encouraged to share their thoughts during rehearsals. In that context, students frequently shared with one another through small group discussions. During those moments, all students were included in conversations that have an impact on the music making. Ms. Gallagher extended her inclusive practice by offering an open invitation to all band students to attend any of the weekly meetings of the band's student leaders. She offered this explanation:

The whole point for me as their director is to empower my students to understand that whether they are a leader with a title or not, they're leading other people.

When they walk down the hall and pick up a soda can that was being kicked around and they put it in the bin, someone else sees that and the interpretation is 'Oh, but we take care of things here. We care about the space. We care about the people in the space.'

Ms. Gallagher emphasized her belief that a leader may have to do the things that others may not wish or think to do. This should be seen as a call for shared stewardship of both the rehearsal space and the band members. Ms. Gallagher emphasized that anybody in the band had the option to participate in this stewardship, even without a title, which suggests that any student could be empowered to contribute.

Students, however, were not required to engage in these leadership behaviors. That element of choice might be seen as an affirmation of the individual needs of each student. Some may not have been ready to lead for any number of reasons, including lack of time, lack of interest, or lack of leadership efficacy. Students in the EHS Band could come to leadership when they decided the time was right.

To help students develop their leadership skills and assimilate into the culture of the EHS Band program, Ms. Gallagher used extended period schedules to provide leadership lessons to students in the symphonic band. Her hope was that the lessons would eventually stick and students would step up. Not every student would come to that decision at the same time, if ever. One symphonic band student shared:

I mean, I don't want to be a pessimist, but I feel like the leadership things we've learned, I haven't found many situations where I need to use them. They're not unneeded, but I guess I just haven't found anything that I need them for yet.

It was noteworthy that in this case, the student was open to the idea that the servant leadership lessons they have received might become valuable at some point. Though they had not been in a circumstance where they were compelled to lead, the student left room for the possibility that someday the lessons they had learned might inform the way they lead.

Lilly, another symphonic band member, had a different impression of the early leadership lessons. She had already experienced a shift in mindset. Lily explained when she shared:

I think it's kind of the opposite for me because even though we only had like one short session where we talked about servant leadership, I feel like I kind of learned to appreciate more of the effort that goes into our band. Ms. Gallagher is encouraging us to do little things. One of the things was saying thank you to like the custodians or other staff. I never really noticed how much hard work they put in until now so like that kind of changed my perspective.

For Lily, the lessons compelled her to notice more of the things that people do and to extend gratitude. Her shift in perspective had been less about actively leading and more about adopting an important virtue that is common to servant leaders—gratitude.

Some students may not see applicability right away. Others might experience a shift in mindset as they begin to emphasize the virtues of servant leadership. The next step requires some engagement in servant leadership behaviors. As Calvin said, “The lessons have changed how I think about leadership, but my actions have been the biggest change. I look for ways to help out and be a leader.” Calvin’s point illustrated the ways that the leadership without titles concept closed the loop on the learning process. EHS Band students were not leaders at the start. After observing and learning, they began to apply some of the behaviors and mindsets of a servant leader. Eventually, they became leaders themselves.

The leadership lessons that Ms. Gallagher taught her symphonic band students offered many entry points to leadership since so much of it was self-directed by each student. Experienced this way, the lessons seemed to support each student by meeting them wherever they may have been developmentally, socially, or emotionally. Ms.

Gallagher shared that sometimes she will see big changes from students, and used Paul as an example:

When it comes to Paul, if you had heard recordings, auditions, playing exams and assessments throughout the year, you might not think he was on track to become a drum major. He is not the strongest technical musician. But as a member of symphonic band, as soon as he started taking the once a cycle servant leadership curriculum, it's 12-chapter program. It was like a light went on in him, and all of a sudden every day he would come in asking, 'Can I help? What can I do? Do you need anything?' I think as soon as he was exposed to that pathway to be a top contributor to this program, he just took off. He's one of the students that many other students and parents have come up to me to say, 'I'm so glad he's a drum major. What a great call!'

From Ms. Gallagher's viewpoint, Paul's growth was a result of the leadership lessons and subsequent changes in his behavior. Paul himself attributed some of his success to great models, acknowledging the impact of, "the leaders who went out of their way to seek out new members of the band, to especially welcome them into the band and make them feel comfortable." Also, Paul's growth was less about his musical achievement and more about his developing a sense of stewardship over the band program. By seeking ways to help, Paul came to be seen by his peers and others as being a great choice for his leadership role. Paul's growth served to illustrate how a student went from not being ready for leadership, to adopting servant leadership virtues and behaviors before he ever had a title, and, finally, to being recognized as a valued leader in his band.

Conclusion and Synthesis

The students of the Eastboro High School Band learned leadership as a developmental process. They began as observers, watching servant leadership behaviors modeled provided by peers and their teacher. Through socialization, they were not only welcomed into the EHS Band community, but also internalized the shared values of care, humility, and service. Next, structured lessons provided reinforcement and contextualized the leadership concept through language and intentional consideration. Finally, students experienced empowerment to act without formal titles. Through those actions, they came to authentically engage in servant leadership behaviors, motivated by stewardship for their peers and band rather than titles or recognition.

These four stages, taken together, demonstrated that servant leadership in the Eastboro High School Band was cultivated as a shared behavior, and not a discrete skill. The result was a softened hierarchy in which power was distributed through relationships rather than positions. The culture of the EHS Band provided fluidity of rolls that allowed students to be leaders and learners, mentors and mentees.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Flourishing Together: Servant Leadership and Community

In the previous chapters, I demonstrated how servant leadership set the tone for student empowerment, and how students developed their leadership skills within that framework. The emphasis of the findings thus far has been primarily about how students in the Eastboro High School Band came to engage in servant leadership. In this chapter, the emphasis shifts toward illuminating the ways that servant leadership functioned to support student wellbeing. In the coming pages, I illustrate ways that Ms. Gallagher and her student leaders engaged in servant leadership to promote the wellbeing of band members.

This chapter begins with the subtheme *serving the group, growing together*, an examination of the intersections between servant leadership, peer mentoring, and community in the EHS Band, processes that supported student belonging and growth. Next, I elucidate the connections between the service-based community of the EHS Band and strengthened relationships that promote social and musical growth through the subtheme *doing good and doing well*. Finally, I close with a meditation on the cyclical nature of community building in the EHS Band—*honoring the past, adjusting for the present, preparing for the future*. As in previous chapters, the findings are centered on participant voices through rich descriptions and direct quotations. I also offer vignettes to vivify the lived experience of Ms. Gallagher and the students in the EHS Band.

Serving the Group, Growing Together

Members of the Eastboro High School Band experienced encouragement to engage in acts of service that would help their peers. Through these acts, the students grew as individuals and as an ensemble. In the following vignette, I share the collaborative way in which student leaders worked with Ms. Gallagher to establish the norms for their leadership team. The vignette illuminates the ways in which servant leadership beliefs informed student leadership behaviors in the EHS Band. These collectively established norms provide insight into ways that student leaders in the ESH Band sought to serve their peers.

Vignette—Setting Community Norms

Ms. Gallagher and the leaders are seated in a circle discussing their intentions for the year. In this meeting, they are deciding what they hope to achieve. Ms. Gallagher steers the students toward discussions of what these intentions meant for their operational norms. “I’m going to step out for a moment, but I want you to talk this over,” she says as she leaves the band room. The students quickly go about discussing. They stay intently focused on the topic, even in Ms. Gallagher’s absence. The volume and energy of the conversation picks up as the conversations continue. Words like respect, example, role model, fair, and kind are heard frequently.

As Ms. Gallagher returns to the room, the students naturally come to silence. As she approaches her seat in the circle, Ms. Gallagher asks students to share with the whole group what they thought should be their norms. No one student dominated this conversation and their collective list of what a leader in their program should be

included, accountable, creative, open to giving and receiving feedback, supportive, safety oriented, comforting, a good example, transparent, communicative, problem solvers, and efficient. Ms. Gallagher adds to that list that leaders should listen to understand, explaining that people are often so focused on what they will say in response to another that they fail to really understand what the other is trying to say.

Ms. Gallagher recounts the list of norms that the student leaders just established, offering her thoughts on what each norm meant to her. She relates her thoughts to how those norms might help the students as leaders in the EHS music program achieve their goals.

“I think that accountability means doing what I say I’m going to do,” Ms. Gallagher shares.

Grace, the High Woodwind Captain from the marching band, then says, “I agree, but I think it also means taking responsibility for your mistakes.” The students agree with Grace, and Ms. Gallagher affirms the contribution. “Great point! We’re all going to make mistakes. We’re human. But leaders need to be able to be honest and own those mistakes.”

Ms. Gallagher moves on to discuss the leader’s interest in creativity as a norm. “I like this a lot! This is especially important because leaders need to be creative to solve problems and can’t rely on what worked in the past”. She goes on to emphasize that leaders should be adaptable to the situations in which they find themselves.

“Giving feedback and receiving feedback. I feel like that’s self-evident, but what do you think?” Ms. Gallagher asks.

“It’s really important that the feedback is constructive,” Grace offers.

Ms. Gallagher agrees, suggesting that leaders need to be open to answering questions. “If you’re answering questions, you need to listen to what your peers are asking you,” she tells them. Students agree that being willing to listen was an important part of being a leader and that the feedback from their peers has value.

Next, Ms. Gallagher asks “Safety oriented and comforting. What does that mean to you?”

Student leaders share that they really value maintaining a sense of inclusion in their program and it was important to them that they make the space one that is inviting to anybody who wishes to be there. Ms. Gallagher reiterates the students’ assertion that each member of the EHS Band program is valued, and their contributions are appreciated. After a brief pause, the conversation continues.

Interpretation and Connection to Framework

Servant leadership was evidenced on two levels in the preceding vignette. Ms. Gallagher was the agent of servant leadership on the first level. She empowered her students by inviting them into the conversation of how their leadership should function. Ms. Gallagher did not seem to feel a need to tell them exactly what to do, instead preferring to provide guidance and direction that served to keep the group focused. The very activity in which they were engaged was consistent with the principle that servant leaders, in this case Ms. Gallagher, promote follower autonomy through shared power (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). By promoting student

autonomy, Ms. Gallagher had established conditions wherein students could enact servant leadership themselves.

The second level of servant leadership in the vignette concerns the student leaders who enacted servant leadership through the norms they sought to establish. I will consider a few of those norms and connect them to the servant leadership framework. In some cases, those norms shared enough overlap in purpose or function that I grouped them accordingly.

Accountable, a Good Example, Transparent and Communicative. In saying that this meant, “doing what I say I’m going to do,” Ms. Gallagher suggested an emphasis on honesty that builds trust. Trust has been linked to follower empowerment (Jeyaraj & Gandolfi, 2019). In music education, trust has been connected to caring relationships (Hendricks, 2025), and those caring relationships relate back to servant leadership (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

These three norms also combined to underscore the importance of authenticity on the part of leaders in the EHS Band. Student leaders held themselves to a standard of honesty and integrity and they would not accept behavior that would contradict that expectation. Student emphasis on transparency and communication as shared values suggested that they wanted to be forthright rather than withholding information. The leaders expected themselves to do what they said they would do, but also to be who they said they were—authenticity. Such behavior is consistent with authenticity as is enacted in servant leadership (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

Creative and Problem Solvers. Ms. Gallagher linked creativity to the leaders' abilities to adapt to situations. That could be seen as solving problems. Such adaptations would require vision on the part of the leader to be able to see and understand situation and chart a path toward the goal. Vision is one of the servant leadership virtues put forth by van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015).

Further, this idea of solving problems with creativity recalls the previously shared vignette, *A Wind Ensemble Rehearsal*. In that vignette, students engaged in non-hierarchical peer mentoring where they discussed their perceptions of problems they had encountered and how those problems might be solved. These discussions included sharing interpretive ideas about style, phrasing, and ensemble balance. The rehearsal experience was a practical enactment of the type of creativity and problem solving that the leaders had felt was important to their success.

Open to Giving and Receiving Feedback. Giving feedback is one way that a leader provides direction. In servant leadership, humility plays a role in the leader being open to ideas and feedback from followers (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

Supportive and Safety Oriented. By setting these norms, the students emphasized an interest in their peers' wellbeing and growth. The leaders of the ESH Band wanted to create a community of learners where students felt safe and supported. This connects to Greenleaf's (1977/2002) assertion that the servant leader's primary concern is the wellbeing of followers.

The leadership norms established by the student leaders of the EHS Band revealed what they considered to be their most important leadership functions. Each of these

norms connected to the traits and behaviors of servant leaders. Combined, they promoted student leadership that was individual affirming and community building. Affirming the inherent value of all members of the band could be considered an expression of compassionate love, whereas community building connected to the wellbeing of members of the EHS Bands (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

Modes of Service

In the Eastboro High School Band, servant leadership played an important role in promoting growth of students through the development of a tightknit community. Student leaders reported that the caring actions of previous leaders set a positive tone for their band experience. Jenny, a quartermaster for the marching band, provided insight when she said:

I think that a lot of the good experiences I've had in band have been because people have come up to me and just started being friendly, and not necessarily because of the music we were playing. It's the people who really make it, at least for me.

Theo expanded on Jenny's idea as he pointed out that past leaders had gone beyond friendly gestures, often helping the group work through mundane, but necessary tasks. He shared:

Something that was helpful in the freshman year going into Drumline was the fact that a lot of the older members did a really good job of making the more tedious tasks of marching band much more enjoyable. That made the overall experience much more entertaining. That helped me realize that some of the more tedious

tasks can end very quickly.

Theo's point clarified the way that leaders provided direction that helped the Drumline achieve their goals. A sense of play that made menial work less tedious, but also more meaningful and engaging, for Theo. Jenny and Theo's thoughts combined to suggest that servant leadership was enacted through two modes, stewardship and peer mentoring.

Leaders as Stewards

Stewardship was demonstrated in the way that leaders, titled or emerging, took steps to welcome new band members into the program. The efforts of past leaders to make the EHS Band a welcoming group had become a shared value and an expected behavior in the band community. Ms. Gallagher relied on student leaders to form social bonds with their peers. She explained:

Eventually the goal is to have [the leaders] become the social instigators, where they plan things like an after-school potluck at someone's home or a movie night, even if that happens at school. I hope that they will do things to create some social unity outside of concerts.

Stewardship was also evident in the way that leaders took care of their spaces. Ms. Gallagher regularly reinforced stewardship as a shared responsibility by modelling the things she expected of students. As an example, Ms. Gallagher shared, "I'll start [racking the chairs and stands] and try not to say a word and see how that spreads. That's a work in progress in the beginning." Eventually, though, more and more students would help. Ms. Gallagher emphasized that she did not want them to attribute the work to her, but rather consider that, "It's what we did together as a team."

Ms. Gallagher was not the only person providing stewardship through demonstrating community values. Student leaders also provided models of what service should look like in the EHS Band. Marty shared:

I think the most important thing as a leader is to lead by example...and to be a human being as well, because we're all just here in marching band, in high school, doing the same thing. So I try hard and also acknowledge that we're all going through the same stuff

In sharing his point, Marty was less focused on the tasks and more focused on treating peers well. In doing so, Marty adopted a humble stance that allowed him to affirm the dignity of his peers by accepting that they were on the same level.

As Ms. Gallagher and her students modeled the desirable behaviors, students begin to adopt these characteristics themselves. In the previous chapter, Paul's growth into leadership and Calvin's emerging desire to lead highlighted this shift.

The community of the EHS Band was built on acts of service. As previously mentioned, Ms. Gallagher and her students took care of their spaces and, more importantly, they took care of each other. They also worked to maintain and promote the shared values of their community. The servant leadership framework the group employed provided structure as Ms. Gallagher and her students worked as stewards to create and maintain a welcoming, collaborative space for all band members.

Leaders as Peer Mentors

Peer mentoring offered students opportunities to provide direction to one another. Previous chapters revealed the way that hierarchical peer mentoring tended to still have a

non-hierarchical spirit because the students tended to prefer dialectic engagements rather than directive ones. Servant leadership provided a framework that allowed leaders/mentors to promote peer empowerment by inviting them to be active collaborators. Mentors still provided direction through offering advice and feedback, but space was maintained for mentees to contribute their own ideas, particularly in small group sectionals.

The collaborative spirit that leaders fostered through peer mentoring engagements was another shared value of members in the EHS Band. Marty valued this spirit because he felt the group could, “get more perspectives on everything...from not just titled leaders but everyone in band.” Here, Marty showed respect for the individual viewpoints of band members, and he made a point to emphasize that that respect extended beyond the leadership team.

The collaborative approach to peer mentoring provided opportunities for students to provide direction for their peers. What kept sectionals aligned with servant leadership was the inclusive, collaborative spirit of the work. Even in more hierarchal engagements, the leaders never seemed to lose sight of the importance of the stewardship that compelled them to care for and with their peers.

Growing into Leadership

The student leaders in the EHS Band acknowledged that they still had much to learn about leadership. Although they had learned servant leadership through models, lessons, and practice, they were still new to their positions. The student leaders felt that Ms. Gallagher was there to support their growth.

Regarding this support, Dev shared, “She's super willing to help whenever we would ever need anything if it's band-related, leadership-related, or not. I know I can always reach out to her if I need something.” Grace elaborated on that point, and said, “I think she's also very supportive and understanding. And she knows all of us are pretty new to leadership roles. And so there's gonna be things we need to learn.”

Ms. Gallagher’s support provided a safety net for students. They knew that they would make mistakes but remained confident that they would be forgiven and supported. Kevin explained how Ms. Gallagher encouraged leaders:

During [our leadership meeting], she also made it very clear that everybody makes mistakes, which I think is something that is really impactful for Ms.

Gallagher to say, because it gives us the space to try something new as leaders.

But she's also trying something new by having new leaders come in. There's always going to be mistakes. And she's really accepting of that.

It was interesting that Kevin saw his new leadership team as a new experience for his teacher. This realization seemed to give Kevin a sense that Ms. Gallagher was not just there *for* them, she was also there *with* them.

Participant Thoughts on Servant Leadership

In working with students, Ms. Gallagher did not explicitly say the words “servant leadership,” when explaining her leadership beliefs. Throughout rehearsals and leadership meetings, she did talk about specific traits, behaviors, and outcomes that could be linked to servant leadership, though. She had a clear conception of what servant leadership should look like in the EHS Band. She believed that the most important virtues

were gratitude, empathy, and humility. She elaborated:

I think a lot about gratitude...I find that it makes my rehearsals more effective at the start, at the middle, and at the end. If I can be more conscious of that, for me, it changes the chemistry in the room. Empathy, for obvious reasons. It's what we do in music all day long. In humility, just allowing every person to understand, be empowered, to know that we're all bringing our unique talents, and sounds, and personality, and character into our space. And that should be celebrated. But it's the collective. So for me, it's those three in that order.

Ms. Gallagher's prioritization of those three virtues was evident in the way she interacted with her students as well as the way she structured instruction. In rehearsals and leadership meetings, Ms. Gallagher regularly took time to share her gratitude to the students but also provided space for students to express their gratitude, whether it had to do with band or not. By regularly centering students in instruction through dialogue and peer mentoring, Ms. Gallagher demonstrated her humility. In engagements with individual students, Ms. Gallagher regularly responded in a manner that suggested empathy. If the student was excited, Ms. Gallagher matched that excitement. If the student was frustrated, sad, or angry, Ms. Gallagher met them with a response that showed that she understood what they were feeling and that she cared.

When it came to servant leadership behaviors, Ms. Gallagher shared that she prioritized authenticity, empowerment, and inclusion. By her estimate, those behaviors were the ones that allowed students to be themselves in the most impactful way possible. Though she did not say it, the way that Ms. Gallagher modeled care for students and

spaces suggested an emphasis on stewardship as a behavior. She also encouraged students to do the things that demonstrated care. These caring acts included picking up stray piece of trash rather than leaving it for somebody else or racking chairs after a rehearsal. Ms. Gallagher and her students demonstrated care in the way that they took time to praise fellow band members for their contributions in rehearsals or performances, but also in the way that leaders in the group went out of their way to make connections with their peers outside of band contexts.

Ms. Gallagher was aware that not everybody would buy into the servant leader framework. She understood detractors in her community and beyond would contest the promotion of altruistic service over personal gain. When reflecting on the opposing viewpoints, she shared:

I think the naysayers and the pessimists who will hear me say, 'well, everyone's a leader, everyone has power, everyone has an effect on someone else,' will roll their eyes and create a sarcastic veil over it. That can...cause a little bit of extra friction and tension. I think that that's probably the drawback. I do think that there are people, kids and adults, who really value titles and accolades and status...I'm trying to think about a way to build people that care because it helps everybody else around them and then, 'oh look, it helps me too, lifts everybody up, but I'm also lifting myself up'. Why not?

While she acknowledged detractors, Ms. Gallagher was quick to attribute credit to her colleagues in the performing arts department at EHS. She was aware that teachers in other schools might not have the same support. Ms. Gallagher spoke from a position of

gratitude when she praised her colleagues, “Everyone rolls up their sleeves and helps each other here. There isn't scorekeeping. I feel privileged that I have colleagues that are very equitable and very fair, that lift each other up, that help.”

Student leaders valued the leadership structure of the EHS Band. Among younger students without leadership roles, the valuations were mixed. Disagreements among the younger band members made sense considering that learning leadership was a process that allowed room for individuality. The leaders were likely in greater agreement because they had already been through the process, learned the lessons, and adopted the behaviors. They were fully socialized into the leadership culture of the EHS Band.

Angelina provided a concise explanation of her thoughts on the value of her development as a leader in the EHS Band:

And I think, even as a [first year students], we learned how to be very thoughtful about how we carried ourselves and how we were helping the members of our sections or our bands. And I really like that about Eastboro. I think it's cool that we all are given opportunities to kind of step up and show what we've got, even if we're not a titled leader.

Angelina's words related to the previously shared process of learning leadership, but she also provided evidence that she was both grateful for and keenly aware of that process.

Community

At this point, it has been established that the Eastboro High School Band was a service-based community. Further, because Ms. Gallagher and her student leaders operated from a humble stance where they were open to accepting multiple viewpoints,

the community was also collaborative. Student leaders indicated that a sense of community was a large part of the reason they enjoyed band and decided to lead. Band was enjoyable and meaningful for them, and they wanted to make it enjoyable and meaningful for others. The nature of the EHS Band community allowed for them to grow into those roles.

The community of the EHS Band was somewhat segmented. Student leaders spoke of the whole band program as a connected family. Younger students in the symphonic band, however, did not all feel a strong connection to the members of the wind ensemble. Compared to some of his peers, Calvin indicated that he felt somewhat more connected, and he attributed that to his participation in marching band and other community building activities, such as playing in the graduation band.

Interestingly, Mitch shared, “I feel like there's not a strong connection between the two bands. Like, I know people who are in the other band, but I know them as people not as, like, band members.” Mitch’s statement recalls Ms. Gallagher’s point that she believed it was more important to know her students as people before she knew them as instrumentalists. Given that, alongside the student leaders’ emphasis on building relationships, it may be that the community was taking root interpersonally, even before there was a musical connection.

The symphonic band members had a developing sense of community within their own ensemble, as evidenced by their in-class engagements. The students worked collaboratively to co-construct knowledge in ways that somewhat paralleled the work of their peers in the wind ensemble. I say somewhat paralleled because community building

opportunities for symphonic band were more structured, with Ms. Gallagher providing increased direction compared to what was needed for wind ensemble. This was confirmed by Ms. Gallagher, who shared that the symphonic band students did typically require more direction to navigate these engagements.

The community of the EHS Band also made it possible for band members to engage in honest conversations. The community included conversations where students might not agree with their peers or Ms. Gallagher. In sharing details of a difficult situation with one student the previous year, Ms. Gallagher shared:

With that situation, I don't know if we came to a resolution or found consensus.

And I don't think that's actually a realistic expectation every time. The thing about me is I'm stubborn to a fault, so I will talk for a hundred hours if I need to, to get to a resolution where we both find common ground, whether it's myself and a parent, myself with an administrator, myself and a student. I do think that there are usually more supportive voices that are quieter than the contradictory opinions that I hear more often. And I'm not saying that I get a ton of them every year, just every now and then I'll have one student that might catch me off guard, like I had no idea that this was going on.

Ms. Gallagher acknowledged that while consensus is not always a realistic expectation, she would go out of her way to seek a resolution. True to her fashion, she expressed a sense of gratitude that the student had shared his conflicting views, "And I think that's a really healthy thing. And ultimately, if someone's sharing that with me, it means they're comfortable enough with me to let me know... Sometimes people just want to be heard.

And that's enough too.” In this comment, Ms. Gallagher revealed that she believed there was room in the community for everybody, including those who might not agree with her. Such inclusion could also be seen as a particularly compelling example of empowerment.

The community of the EHS Band provided opportunities for students to grow into the organization. Relationship building and service to the group were at the front of leadership behaviors that were aimed toward strengthening that community and promote a sense of flourishing within the EHS Band (Seligman, 2018). Students in the program appeared at various stages of integration into that community, and the students who engaged in multiple ensembles beyond Symphonic band seemed to integrate more quickly.

Doing Good and Doing Well

The walls of the band room at Eastboro High School are adorned with many posters of famous musicians. Each poster includes a quote from the musician featured. One poster featured Paula Crider, Professor Emeritus of conducting at the University of Texas. The words on her poster read, “Doing good is equally as important as doing well,” and this statement could be considered a concise summary of how the EHS Band operates. For Ms. Gallagher and her students, the pro-social acts of care and service they perform (doing good) created a collaborative community of musicians that took pride in their excellence (doing well).

Students expressed belief that the service-based community which they had built played a role in their success. Dev put it well when he shared, “We’re so connected in a

sense, and I think that actually helps us play more together on the field and in rehearsal. Rehearsals become more fun.” He went on to elaborate, “I think it's just something about being more connected, like subconsciously you listen more to the other people because you know what you should be listening for and you know the people that you're playing for.” Dev’s experience revealed the value of musical empathy in his leadership experience. He found that his relationships made him better attune to what his peers were doing musically, but also who they were as people.

Dev’s feelings that relationships made the music more meaningful were an intentional part of Ms. Gallagher’s vision for the band. Ms. Gallagher’s belief was that the connections provided by strong interpersonal relationships were an essential part of the program’s success, and she was sure to model that in the way she interacted with students inside and outside of rehearsals. Ms. Gallagher explained her beliefs:

So for me, if we're putting on excellent concerts and the product is great and our audience is impressed and the students leave feeling proud, that's wonderful. But none of that happens if you don't care at the very core about every single human being on that stage. So I try to emphasize that in rehearsal. It isn't just a case where the bell rings, the pledge happens, we tune, we start playing. It's important to me that they know that I value them as human beings first and then as bassoonists or saxophonists second.

It seemed, then, that for the EHS Band, the community built on service also promoted a sense of meaningfulness that compelled members to give their best efforts for one another. Relating back to Paula Crider’s quote, doing good through caring service

created a sense of community. That connectedness compelled band members to do well for each other. The next vignette brings the concept to life through a glimpse of the moments leading up to and following a Marching Mustangs performance.

Vignette—A Halftime Performance

There are only a few minutes left in the second quarter of the football game. On the north end of the field, the captains of the Marching Mustangs are leading their sections through warmups. Following a lip slur exercise, Kevin begins tuning the trumpet and mellophone players.

“You’re a little bit sharp, but your tone is great! Just pull out a little” he advises one of the musicians.

Soon, Dev and Paul gather the band into arcs. Ms. Gallagher arrives. With about two minutes remaining in the half, the band’s excitement for the pending performance is palpable.

“Detail to the ready” Ms. Gallagher commands, before calling the band to attention.

She then turns things over to the drum majors. Dev and Paul run the first twenty or so measures of each song in their halftime show. The clock is ticking down, but Ms. Gallagher remains calm and steady as she steps in to guide the band. With thirty seconds left on the clock, Ms. Gallagher addresses the band.

“I need eyes, and I need ears,” she says, waiting a moment to ensure she had their attention. Once all eyes are on her, Ms. Gallagher proceeds:

I am so proud of you right now. You're ready for a great show. We might not have done this for a couple of weeks, but this is your first performance in uniform. Every performance is unique. Embrace this one because it will be unlike any other. I want you to play for somebody. Find somebody in that audience and do this show to the best of your ability for them. And before I let you go, let's hear it for our student leadership team! They've done so much to help you be ready for tonight. Now, march onto that field and have a great show!"

With that, the band lets out a hearty cheer. I overhear one student exclaiming, "The band always wins!" as the band sets up to take the field. As the game clock ticks to zero, the members of the band take the field, setting up their opening set. Several students, some from the leadership team, others not, hand their instruments to peers and quickly set up some small props on the field.

The halftime show goes very well for the band. They play and march well and the crowd is very responsive.

After the performance, the band marched off the field, stopping on the track just in front of the stands. A student counts down "3, 2, 1" and all of the sousaphones hoist their instruments over their heads and rest them on their left shoulder. One remarks, "I love this! It makes us look so professional."

The students are smiling proudly, though they are also somewhat subdued. Paul cues Theo to begin tapping and the band follows Paul and Dev back to the south end of the track.

“Circle up,” cried Dev. On his cue, the band begins to coil around him, forming a dense spiral. As they come to a stop, one girl in the group shouts, “Hey, Band!”

“Hey, what?” the band responds.

“Hey, band!” she calls again.

“Hey, what?”

“Give me a breakdown!”

“A what?”

“I said give me a breakdown!”

And with that, they all shout “Ahhhhhhh!” Soon, the students are sharing exclamations of pride and excitement. The enthusiasm is now significantly more boisterous than what had been just moments before. The performance is done, and they are celebrating.

Dev speaks up. “Congrats on a great halftime performance, our first one in uniforms! And congrats to all of the soloists! You were great!” During this authentic moment of shared excitement, Ms. Gallagher is nowhere near the group. The moment is turned over entirely to the students, and they are in it together—with and for one another.

Interpretation and Connection to Framework

The preceding vignette provided multiple examples of leaders in the Marching Mustangs doing good before the band even played a note in their performance. The tone and demeanor of Kevin as he guided his section through a warmup and tuning process showed support and care. Ms. Gallagher’s message of pride affirmed the students’ hard work. Her willingness to shine a light on the hard work of the student leaders revealed a

willingness to give credit to others before taking any for herself. The way the band members took the field, with some handing off their instruments so that props could be set up, showed the groups willingness to do what needed to be done to set the group up for success.

After the performance, the good acts continued. When the sousaphones hoisted their instruments to one shoulder, that made one of the younger members feel a sense of professionalism. Perhaps more obviously, the exchange after the band encircled their drum majors provided evidence of pro-social behavior. First, the breakdown, led by an unknown student appeared to be a ritual for the band wherein they acknowledged their satisfaction at having completed a performance. Second, Dev's speech to the band, which echoed Ms. Gallagher's pre-game talk in the way he passed credit to others, gave students a chance to acknowledge their shared success. That night, the Marching Mustangs had done well, and they acknowledge that as they shared in celebration.

The way that both Ms. Gallagher and Dev used their positions as leaders to promote the hard work of others aligns with servant leadership. Both leaders demonstrated humility in the way that they were more concerned with crediting others before taking any credit for the hard work that went into the show. Further, by acknowledging the effort of others, both leaders demonstrated their gratitude. These actions served to validate student efforts.

The good that Kevin did as he led the high brass in warmups also provides a connection to servant leadership. In the vignette, he was seen providing direction regarding his peer's tuning. Rather than a brusque instruction to pull out, Kevin spoke

warmly and validated his peer's contribution when he added, "...but your tone is great!" This approach demonstrated Kevin's compassionate approach to providing honest feedback, an approach which is likely to engender a sense of trust from his peers. Further, because Kevin provided specific praise about an important part of musicianship, the interaction could be considered an expression of gratitude that honored his peer's musical contribution.

The student experience described in this vignette also connects directly to a sense of flourishing that fits the PERMA model—positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (Seligman, 2018). When the students engaged in their post-show breakdown, they performed ritualistic expression of joy, while honoring their accomplishment. The pride one student shared in looking "so professional," when the tuba section shifted their instruments was another positive emotional expression that also intimated a sense of meaning in the practice. Ms. Gallagher also encouraged students to deepen the meaningfulness of the performance when she compelled them to perform for somebody in the crowd. Peer relationships were evident throughout the performance in the way the students interacted with one another, particularly after the performance. The flourishing described in this vignette aligns with the servant leadership goal of follower wellbeing through promotion of optimal functioning (van Dierendonck & Patterson 2015).

Honoring the Past, Adjusting for the Present, Preparing for the Future

Although leaders in the Eastboro High School Band learned through copying models, there was not a fixed model for the structure of leadership within the program.

Even though titles existed, Ms. Gallagher allowed for flexibility in what those titles were. She based leadership positions on her perceived needs of the band, but also on feedback from past or upcoming leaders. For example, at the time of this study, the leadership for marching band had been extended to include two additional captains. The number of winds in the band had grown and students had expressed that it might be easier for captains to manage their job if there were additional positions. In response, Ms. Gallagher split the woodwinds and brass into high and low groupings. Marty valued this adjustment, and he shared:

I think it's really good to be able to focus on one section as a leader, instead of having to spread out my time across a bunch of sections, because it gives me the ability to do higher quality work. For example, the tenors, a lot of them didn't have a lot of the music and it was easier for me to help because I wasn't having to worry about the clarinets and the flutes also.

Whereas the spirit and basic hierarchy of the leadership team remained essentially same as it had been in past years, the specific titles shifted in response to the needs of the band as it existed at the time of this study. Students used their experience with past leaders as a basis for their own leadership practices, but there was still room for them to change things to fit their skill set or the band's needs. When it came to specific operations, doing things the way they had always done them was not a compelling reason for continuing the same way. For example, Jenny had suggested a change to the uniform distribution procedure that she believed would make the process smoother. She shared that she had collaborated with Ms. Gallagher and others to make tweaks to past procedure

that she believed had made the process more efficient.

Several times, Ms. Gallagher asked students to reflect on past leaders or connect to past experiences. Throughout these exercises, though, she allowed for the possibility that the lessons learned from experiences might suggest change. This was exhibited in the way student leaders set their norms, in the way they discussed what they hoped to achieve, and in rehearsal discussions about the musical direction of the band.

Leadership in the EHS Band was cyclical. Ms. Gallagher and student leaders reflected on the past, but they also engaged in leadership that was tailored to the present. While this was happening, the rest of the band members watched these models of leadership and learning lessons, suggesting that even though the band was engaged in their present activity, they were simultaneously preparing for the future of the band. Younger students already began to copy the models provided by leaders. Ms. Gallagher took notice of this and shared that those emerging leadership behaviors would be a factor in selection of future leadership positions later in the year.

Ms. Gallagher intended that the students would emerge prepared for life beyond the EHS Band after graduation. While she hoped they would continue to be musicians, she placed equal emphasis on how they might carry the lessons of servant leadership beyond their lives as musicians. She shared:

I hope students have the sense that who they are as a person impacts whatever environment that they're in. How they walk into a space and how they treat other people matters. I want them to have an awareness that they do have power, even if it's being the quiet person in the hallway who picks up the Coke can that got

kicked around by the ten people before them.

Throughout the study, it became clear that the culture of servant leadership had been well-established in the EHS Band. Students had learned from past leaders and those lessons helped in framing leadership for the current group of student-leaders. The leadership team and the way that they operated were adaptable to the unique needs of the band. Leadership in the EHS Band was a cyclical experience meant to promote strengthened relationships, mutual success, but also growth that extended beyond the students' time in the band program.

Conclusion and Synthesis

In this chapter, I examined the ways that servant leadership promoted student wellbeing in the Eastboro High School Band. The wellbeing of band members emerged with the development of a robust, service-based community. This community was cultivated and sustained through the actions of student leaders whose typical behaviors reflected the core attributes of servant leadership. Those attributes were evident through acts of stewardship and peer mentoring.

Development of community served as a catalyst for other elements of wellbeing aligned with servant leadership (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). The relationships formed within the bands engendered a sense of meaningfulness, as students came to see their musical contributions as acts of service to one another. Likewise, the prosocial behaviors and mentorship practices of student leaders created conditions that supported personal growth and musical success, allowing band members to flourish (Seligman, 2018).

There was a cyclical relationship between leadership and community in the EHS Band. Students drew on past experiences to shape leadership practices while adapting those practices to fit the current needs of the band. In turn, those leaders influenced the experiences of the next cohort of leaders. Through a cycle of learning, serving, and adapting, student leaders not only strengthened the band community in the present, but developed leadership skills they would carry beyond the walls of Eastboro High School.

Rather than functioning as an individual leadership style, servant leadership in the EHS Band was a shared way of being that influenced the way that students related to one another. In this way, the EHS Band provided opportunities for students to practice being in community, while also rehearsing music. These practices included listening, responding, supporting, and leading that extended beyond musical contexts.

Within the EHS Band, wellbeing was not limited to emotional positivity, but also expressed through a sense of belonging, shared purpose, confidence to contribute meaningfully to the ensemble, and collective success. After all, as one student noted, “The band always wins!”

CHAPTER EIGHT

Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to contextualize the findings of the study within the established scholarship on servant leadership and peer mentoring. Addressed first are the ways that the findings presented in chapters five through seven provided answers to the research questions. Following that, the theoretical, practical, and personal implications of this study are considered. Potential areas for future research are considered and followed by concluding remarks.

Summary and Interpretation of Key Findings

In this section of the chapter, each research question is addressed separately. Analysis and synthesis of the data from the findings chapters provides insight that reveals the ways that the data gathered throughout this study addressed the research questions. The section concludes with a sharing of insights that emerged outside of the scope of the research questions, as can be expected in case study research (Stake, 1995). To review, in this study I sought answers to the following research questions:

1. How do students in a high school band engage in peer mentoring and servant leadership?
2. In what ways, if any, are the behaviors or dispositions of peer mentors aligned with those of servant leadership?
3. What is the teacher's role in supporting servant leadership and peer mentoring?

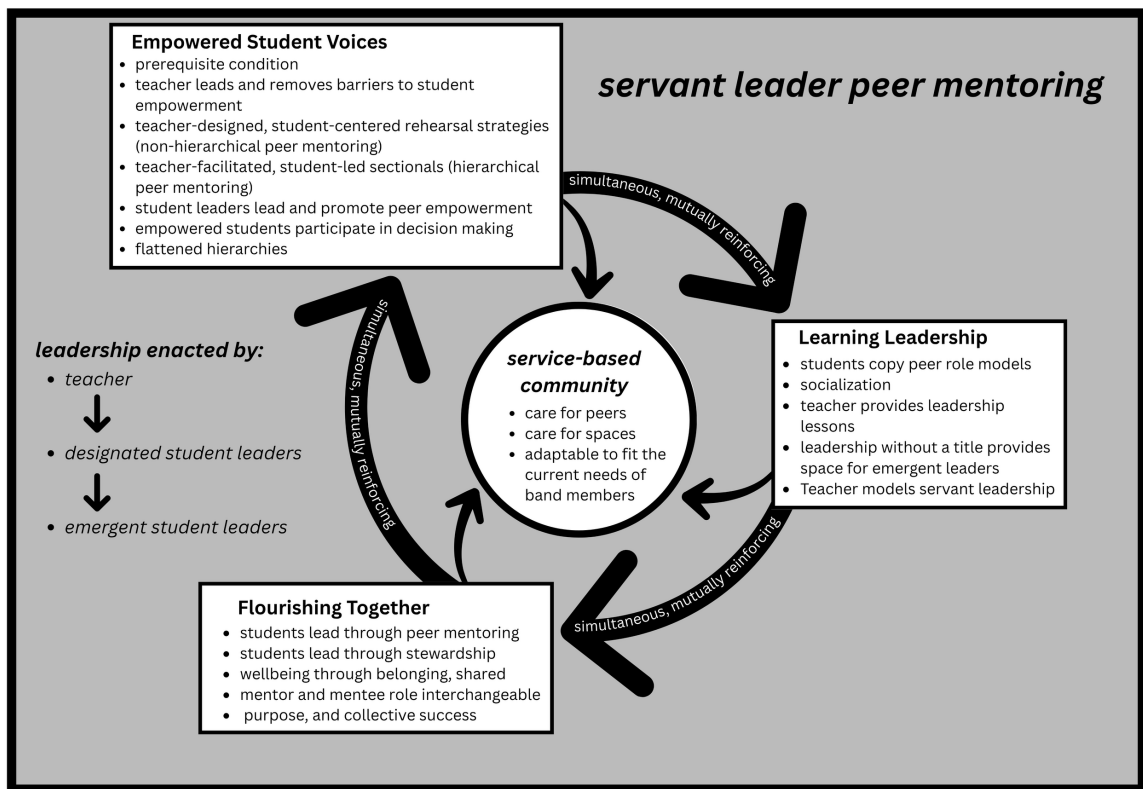
The three themes that emerged from this study—*empowered student voices*, *learning leadership*, and *flourishing together*—portrayed how the EHS Band was a community built on service and mutual support where the teacher and her students shared responsibility for making musical and organizational decisions. The themes were enacted simultaneously, with several overlapping activities that created conditions which allowed for each theme to support the others. For example, students experienced empowerment as they engaged in non-hierarchical peer mentoring in wind ensemble rehearsals, and servant leadership learned from role models and reinforced by lessons informed their decisions about how to engage (leadership without a title). The peer mentoring engagements, along with the autonomy to move between mentor and mentee roles, in turn, promoted band members' flourishing through development of meaningful relationships.

The convergence of these themes suggested *servant leader peer mentoring* (SLPM, figure 1), a conceptual model that emerged from analysis of the data. Through SLPM, leadership was shared between teacher and students in a way that softened hierarchies. As a result, leadership was observed to occur on three levels. On the first level, Ms. Gallagher led the group, in part by designing conditions that promoted student leadership. The second level of leaders was the band's student leadership, who often mirrored their teacher's empowerment supportive actions in hierarchical peer mentoring engagements. The third level, the rest of the students, experienced leadership as an emerging practice, learned by copying the models provided by peer mentors and reinforced by leadership lessons provided by Ms. Gallagher.

In the EHS Band, empowerment was the prerequisite condition that allowed for the leadership to develop. Empowerment in the EHS Band was not a case of Ms. Gallagher giving students power. Rather, empowerment could be seen as Ms. Gallagher and student leaders actively removing barriers that might have prevented others from exercising their own inherent power. Furthermore, SLPM was a cyclical, self-perpetuating phenomenon, wherein each group of leaders served as the models for the next group. Whereas the specific roles and operations of leadership were adaptable each year, the cultural norms of service and care remained the same.

Figure 1

Servant Leader Peer Mentoring



In the forthcoming section of this chapter, I address the research questions on the level of the findings to reveal the ways EHS Band member experiences aligned with the SLPM model. To promote an enriched understanding of how SLPM occurred, I also provide consideration of important findings that go beyond the scope of the original research questions.

Question One—Engaging in Peer Mentoring and Servant Leadership

Viewed through the lens of SLPM, students acted as servant leaders primarily through two separate activities: peer mentoring and stewardship. Peer mentoring allowed student leaders to provide direction while simultaneously promoting the empowerment of their peers through shared decision making. Stewardship was demonstrated by the way in which student leaders cared for their peers and shared spaces. These mentoring and stewardship activities combined to reveal leadership behavior that aligned with servant leadership (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). In the forthcoming paragraphs I further illuminate the ways that students engaged in peer mentoring that was consistent with servant leadership.

Students in the Eastboro High School (EHS) Band engaged in peer mentoring that allowed them to practice and demonstrate servant leadership skills. Peer mentoring occurred in formal and informal settings and ways, which is consistent with the way peer mentoring has been shown to occur in music education (Goodrich, 2023b). Formal peer mentoring engagements were those in which time was explicitly set aside for longer peer mentoring engagements. Informal peer mentoring occurred through shorter, more impromptu engagements. Though informal peer mentoring engagements tended to be

briefers, they occurred more frequently and seemed to allow for a greater number of students to step into the mentor role.

For example, formal peer mentoring was largely evident in sectional rehearsals, like the one shared in the vignette *A Marching Band Saxophone Sectional*. The formal engagement provided an example of hierarchical peer mentoring (Goodrich, 2023b) as the saxophone section was led by a more experienced section leader, Marty. In that vignette, Marty demonstrated humility by allowing space for his peers to have a voice in deciding what to do rather than seeking to control the activity. He provided the tenor saxophonists freedom to address their own needs, which were different from what the alto saxophonists felt was important. In that way, Marty promoted the empowerment of his peers to contribute to the learning, while still providing direction that kept his section focused on their goals. He led his sectional in a manner consistent with servant leadership, particularly through his humility, empowerment (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015), and inclusion of his peers varied viewpoints (Sims, 2018).

Informal peer mentoring engagements in the EHS Band were non-hierarchical because students could move fluidly between mentor and mentee roles, regardless of leadership titles (Goodrich, 2023b; Johnson, 2017). The fluidity was enhanced by the *leadership without a title* concept that Ms. Gallagher had espoused, and students had adopted. The way that ensemble rehearsals alternated between teacher-led instruction and student-led informal peer mentoring engagements paralleled a rehearsal model proposed by Weidner (2020). In Weidner's model, rehearsals alternated between director-led and student-led instruction within the context of the ensemble rehearsal space as a means of

promoting musical independence of student-musicians. The rehearsals observed in this study did alternate frequently between director moderated instruction and student-centered informal peer mentoring engagements. Further, the way that students were able to fluidly switch roles from mentor to mentee suggested musical independence as they were able to share their own unique interpretations and perceptions of the music they rehearsed. Musical independence might be seen to inform a eudaimonic sense of wellbeing, as the autonomy of the instruction allowed students to share their emerging senses of competency (Elliott, 2020; Ryan et al., 2008).

Even in the hierarchical, formal peer mentoring engagements, there was a non-hierarchical spirit. Because section leaders promoted the empowerment of their peers, the hegemony was weakened. That hierarchical manner of engagement along with the informal, non-hierarchical peer mentoring combined to promote shared leadership that was somewhat like lateral leadership (Koçak, 2019), where leadership is shared without hierarchies within an organization. This similarity, however, is slightly tenuous because hierarchies still existed. Ms. Gallagher still served as the primary leader of the group and titled leaders within the organization had clearly assigned roles that gave them a greater responsibility within the band.

Students valued the egalitarian nature of peer mentoring engagements in the EHS Band. For example, Angelina shared an aversion to peer mentoring, which she thought to be a directive exchange where the mentor held all the power. The peer mentoring in the EHS Band was dialectical, where power was shared, and students were able to choose the degree to which they engaged in leadership behaviors. The blurring of hierarchical lines

in the EHS Band promoted student empowerment and autonomy, aligning peer mentoring with servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977/2002).

Large group leadership engagements occurred where leaders in the band had an opportunity to facilitate experiences for several of their peers in the band. While peer mentoring is usually considered dyadic or smaller group experience (McManus & Russell, 2007), these large group engagements share traits with the peer mentoring experienced in the EHS Band. An example of one such large group engagement was shared in the vignette *Before the Football Game*, where the drum major, Dev, led members of the marching band in a warm-up and Jenny provided instruction on plume distribution. In that example, more experienced students shared their experience and knowledge in a manner consistent with peer mentoring (Goodrich, 2023b). In this larger group engagement, Dev and Jenny practiced servant leadership by providing direction that prepared band members for their performance while also promoting empowerment that invited other students to contribute to the process by selecting warm-up exercises and helping younger students with plumes (van Winkle et al., 2014).

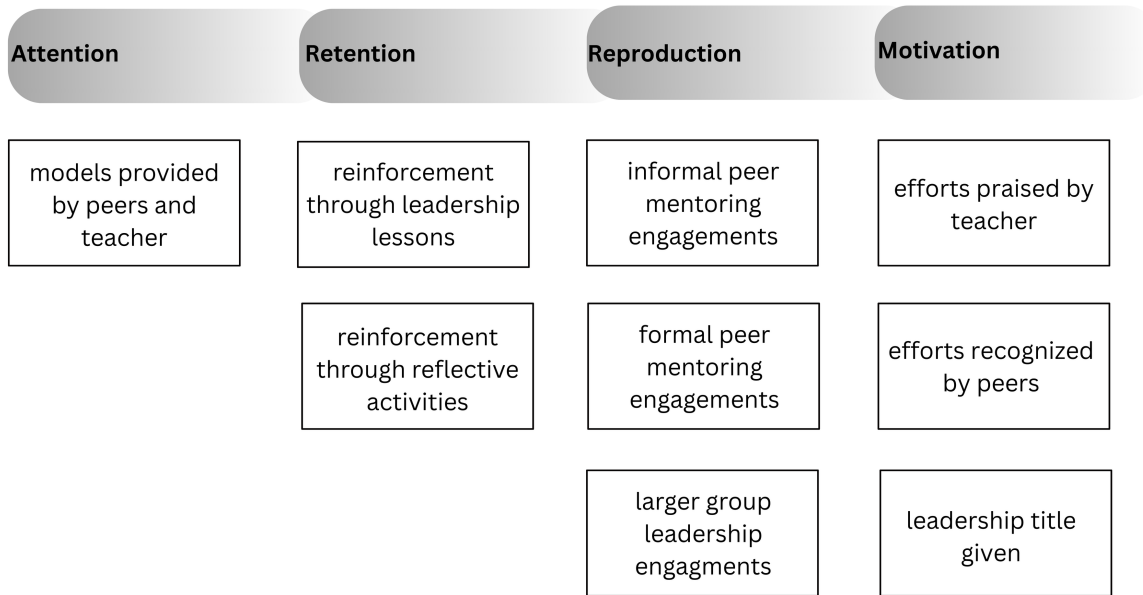
As previously mentioned, student leaders also engaged in leadership through acts of stewardship, a defining behavior of servant leadership (van Dierendonck, 2011). In the vignette *Leadership Behind the Scenes*, the student leaders in the EHS Band worked in preparation for their upcoming marching band camp. Those preparations provided one example of leaders doing tasks that needed to be done to promote group success the way that servant leaders tend to do (Gini & Green, 2014). The students did not act for any sort of personal gain, but rather for the good of the band, which once again revealed a

connection to servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Reinke, 2004). Stewardship also provided an entry point for novice leaders within the band program, as was the case for Paul, whose ascent to leadership began when he started to seek ways to help the band, as well as Calvin, who was just beginning to practice leadership. The culture created within the EHS Band promoted increased ensemble stewardship among all members, which supports previous findings by Hernandez (2008).

Leadership actions, including peer mentoring, were not limited to a select few, rather it was accessible to any student who felt a call to lead. This was made possible to the shared *leadership without a title* mindset, but also through the way leadership was learned in the EHS Band. This learning occurred through a process that was reminiscent of the four stages of Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory—attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (figure 2). Students entered the band program as novices and gained exposure to models of leadership provided by student-leaders. They observed (attention) and reflected upon which leadership practices were effective (retention) and valued by the group (motivation). Leadership lessons provided reinforcement of the important concepts (also retention) and allowed Ms. Gallagher to encourage students to engage in leadership behaviors, particularly stewardship (reproduction and motivation). Informal peer mentoring exchanges also provided low-stakes opportunities for non-titled students to provide direction and share experience (reproduction).

Figure 2

Relating Leadership Learning to Bandura’s Social Learning Theory



Students could accept the call to lead at their own discretion. A group interview with younger students revealed that their leadership acceptance occurred on a spectrum that could be marked by four stages (figure 3). Younger students fell into three orientations toward servant leadership: not yet accepting the value servant leadership and/or their ability to lead (*leadership avoidant*); accepting servant leadership as a framework, but not yet ready to lead (*leadership reserved*); or already practicing servant leadership behaviors (*leadership emergent*). The presence of established leaders in the band indicated the fourth stage where leaders had fully embraced and practiced servant leadership with confidence (*leadership acceptant*). This spectrum demonstrates Ms. Gallagher’s individualized approach to leadership education, in that she allows each student space to accept leadership (or not) when they are ready. It may be that the

students who are quicker to accept leadership in the EHS Band find that Ms. Gallagher’s leadership type more closely matches their ideal prototype of a leader (Lacroix & Pircher, 2017). Observational data gathered during student leadership meetings and conversations with student leaders suggest that the servant leadership practiced by Ms. Gallagher and past models of student leadership influenced the leadership acceptance of the band leaders from this study. This study supported Lacroix and Pircher’s (2017) finding that followers of a servant leader are likely to accept leadership when the opportunity arises, though the case study of this dissertation does not address how that might compare to followers of other types of leaders.

Figure 3

Spectrum of Leadership Avoidance/Acceptance in the EHS Band

Leadership Avoidant	Leadership Reserved	Leadership Emergent	Leadership Acceptant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unsure of servant leadership’s value • unsure of personal readiness or ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • values servant leadership • may lack confidence or a sense of opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beginning to practice servant leadership • emerging confidence in leadership readiness and ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regularly practices servant leadership • presents confidence in readiness and ability to lead

Students in the EHS Band engaged in servant leadership through peer mentoring, large group leadership activities, and stewardship. Throughout these leadership engagements, students regularly enacted behaviors consistent with core servant leadership principles with particular emphasis on empowerment, providing direction, and stewardship (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). The fact that all students could learn and engage in leadership when they felt ready suggested that servant leadership was an embedded practice within the community rather than a role for a few designated leaders.

Informal peer mentoring, then, served as an entry point for practicing leadership skills. The result of the convergence of servant leadership and peer mentoring was a community of shared responsibility in which students had autonomy to engage in leadership practices when they perceived a need and felt prepared.

Question Two—The Servant Leadership Virtues and Behaviors of Peer Mentors

Compassionate love and the subsequent core virtues and behaviors of servant leadership were consistently displayed within leadership interactions by peer mentors. In the previous section, the ways that peer mentors reflected the tenets of humility, empowerment, providing direction, and stewardship were shared. The next several paragraphs will further illuminate the ways that dispositions of peer mentors in the EHS Band were aligned with servant leadership. The section closes with an explanation of the ways in which the data revealed the SLPM conceptual framework.

Compassionate love was evident in the way that students regularly affirmed the dignity of their peers. When Dev interacted with Calvin during the vignette *Dinner Before a Football Game*, he was warm and showed genuine respect in the way he listened and responded to Calvin's questions. When Angelina spoke of her dislike for directive styles of peer mentoring, it was because she did not care for exchanges where one student would wield power that suppresses the voice of another. Instead of stifling followers, she and her peers on the leadership team worked to nurture a collaborative spirit that resulted in a learning environment that welcomed all learners to share their voice.

Regarding the virtues of servant leadership—humility, empathy, gratitude, vision, altruism, and forgiveness—evidence relied largely on observed behaviors that suggested

those virtues or direct references from student leaders during interviews. However, the best insight into these virtues can be found in the vignettes *First Leadership Meeting of the New Year* and *Setting Community Norms*. In those passages, students expressed values that were important to them. During the leadership meeting, when students shared how they wished to be remembered, they spoke passionately of care and empathy. The young leaders demonstrated humility in the way that they trusted and empowered peers rather than seeking to wield heavy-handed authority. When the leadership team sought to set their operational norms, students demonstrated an emerging sense of vision as they set a course that they believed would allow their band program to succeed.

Forgiveness and altruism were less readily evident during this study. The absence of forgiveness is likely related to a corresponding lack of interpersonal conflicts that required resolution during this case study. During the course of data collection, altruism was found in the student leaders' expressed desires to help make their peers feel welcome in band. These desires provide an example of reciprocal altruism (Vlerick, 2021), albeit indirectly since the leaders recognized they had reciprocated acts performed for them by previous leaders. This concept is known in the zeitgeist as paying it forward.

Gratitude was multi-dimensional in this study, and was expressed by students in expected ways, as students regularly thanked others for assistance or contributions. Some exchanges, however, indicated gratitude in unexpected ways, as was the case when Kevin praised his peer during the tuning process or when Dev brought attention to the soloists after the halftime performance (both examples are shared in the vignette, *A Halftime Performance*). In both cases, neither leader explicitly said thank you, but their words of

praise indicated appreciation for their peers' contributions, which was likely to make those peers feel valued. Similarly, in the exchange between Dev and Calvin during the vignette *Dinner Before a Football Game*, Calvin thanked Dev for his help in understanding the evening's schedule. Perhaps more importantly, Dev then replied with his own expression of gratitude and praise for Calvin's decision to seek information rather than assuming he knew the plan. Because this expression of gratitude was tied to praise, Calvin would have been more likely to engage in that desirable behavior again.

Gratitude was also shared in more subtle, but also more pervasive ways. To start, consider the way that current leaders looked to past leaders as models. When Paul suggested that he and his peers should do the things that the past leaders had previously done for them, he was suggesting that they return a favor, but to a new set of peers (the closing moment of *A Leadership Meeting*). A similar sense of reciprocity was exhibited in the non-hierarchical peer mentoring engagements, where students fluidly switched between leadership roles (as occurred in *A Wind Ensemble Rehearsal*). That fluidity of roles allowed students to return the favor of shared knowledge. Offering the gift of time and attention, as students did when they interacted socially, both within and outside of rehearsal contexts, were also seen as acts of gratitude shared between peers.

This study revealed an interesting connection between the relationships that students built and musical empathy. Dev shared his belief that building stronger relationships with his peers in the band had enriched the performances of the ensembles. He attributed that enrichment to a sense that he was performing for his peers, and the relationships deepened the musical connection of ensemble members. Dev believed that

his listening was heightened by his relationship with the people he was hearing, and his own performance improved because he wanted to give them his best. By engaging in the culture affirming and sustaining practices that were part of the EHS Band leadership's self-proclaimed mission, Dev found himself playing with and playing for his peers.

Dev's experience could be considered a form of musical empathy that was reminiscent of the caring *for* and caring *with* that is a hallmark of Compassionate Music Teaching (Hendricks, 2018; 2025). The connection here between servant leadership and CMT is sensible, given the importance that Hendricks (2025) placed on musical empathy as an important practice for music educators. That connection has implications for educators that will be discussed later in this chapter. Though Dev's sense of musical empathy was his perception and could not be experimentally verified, the data provide a compelling indication that musical empathy emerged through strong relationships rather than instruction alone. Because servant leadership prioritizes both empathy (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015) and the building of strong relationships (Mostafa, 2014), peer mentoring grounded in servant leadership in this study engendered a sense of musical empathy.

Of the servant leadership behaviors—stewardship, authenticity, empowerment, providing direction, and inclusion—student leaders in the EHS Band most consistently enacted stewardship, empowerment, and providing direction. During sectional rehearsals, section leaders included peers in decision making while still providing information and feedback. Leaders worked to prepare rehearsal spaces and materials.

The enactment of inclusion proved challenging to ascertain. Student leaders indicated that they valued inclusion during the meeting shared in the vignette *Setting Community Norms*. The way that student leaders interacted with their peers suggested that they held themselves accountable for that expectation. Students did not act in ways that seemed likely to alienate or disenfranchise another band member. It may have been that inclusion in the EHS Band was such an engrained expectation that it was an assumed condition by student leaders in the band. In this way, inclusion could be seen as normative rather than performative. That assumption could potentially account for the disconnect between ensembles that was reported by some symphonic band members.

Authenticity was also difficult to discern from student actions alone but could be inferred through convergence of data. There is a relational nature to authenticity which requires that a person's outer actions are perceived by another as representative of the actor's inner self. During interviews and observations, student leaders provided outward expressions of their internal beliefs. On several occasions, leaders expressed admiration for past leaders who had demonstrated genuine care for their peers. In separate observations, the student leaders provided similar care for their peers through acts of care, both in and out of peer mentoring contexts. This matching of values and actions provided evidence of authenticity.

While some virtues and behaviors— empathy, empowerment, providing direction, and stewardship—were frequently and readily observed, others—vision, inclusion, authenticity—were somewhat less evident. This may be an indication that these skills are still developing, even for the more experienced leaders.

Data from interviews and observations provide an indication that student-leaders are likely to continue to develop those skills. The student-leaders had a strong sense of the traits they believed necessary to lead their band, placing consistent emphasis on a belief that a leader should be kind, inclusive, friendly, and a role-model (figure 4). Of those most emphasized traits, only inclusive (inclusion) relates directly back to the servant leadership framework which guided this study. Inclusive, friendly, and kind all indicate a high degree of agreeableness (Crowe et al., 2018; Graziano & Eisenberg, 1997; Graziano & Tobin, 2017), a personality characteristic that indicates a willingness to work alongside others, and which has shown a strong positive relationship with the enactment of servant leadership (Sun & Shang, 2019).

Figure 4

Leadership Traits Valued by Student-Leaders in the EHS Band



Note. The size of the word is related to how frequently it was mentioned by Ms. Gallagher and her students. The larger and more-bold the word, the more frequently it was said.

Compassionate love and the resultant virtues and behaviors of servant leadership combined to inform SLPM, an egalitarian model of peer mentoring and student leadership development. Within SLPM, hierarchical peer mentoring engagements featured shared responsibility as peer mentors empowered mentees to contribute actively to decision making. In other words, hierarchical structures existed, but power was shared laterally through empowering actions of peer mentors. The collaborative spirit of hierarchical peer mentoring informed the non-hierarchical engagements as students worked together to co-construct knowledge, which aligned with the SLPM model. In those informal peer mentoring cases, students moved seamlessly between mentor and mentee roles, allowing for a more egalitarian distribution of power and equal access to opportunities to develop leadership skills.

Though the model's name seems to highlight peer mentoring, acts of stewardship were an equally important part of SLPM as it was practiced by students in the EHS Band. The importance of stewardship as a leadership behavior in the EHS Band is consistent servant leadership as it is conceptualized in the literature (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). McCown (2017) revealed a connection between stewardship and the development of mutual trust, which has positioned as an essential component in developing peer mentoring relationships (Goodrich, 2022; 2023a). Additionally, the enactment of SLPM informed peer mentoring provides opportunities for students to learn music together while simultaneously practicing and developing leadership skills. SLPM informs a unique understanding of the way that mentees are simultaneously learning leadership through processes that parallel social learning theory

(Bandura, 1977).

Question Three—The Role of the Teacher

According to Goodrich (2023b), the primary role of a music educator in peer mentoring is one of facilitation. Facilitation responsibilities include selecting peer mentors, providing time, promoting space that accommodates all learners, and nurturing peer mentors and mentees (Goodrich, 2023b). Nurturing behaviors include monitoring peer mentoring exchanges and providing feedback or instruction aimed toward promoting behaviors that engender positive peer mentoring exchanges (Goodrich, 2023). Ms. Gallagher's facilitation of peer mentoring and student leadership aligned with Goodrich's conceptualization of facilitation while providing enriched understanding of how peer mentoring and servant leadership might be nurtured.

For example, Ms. Gallagher provided regular leadership lessons to her students. These lessons promoted servant leadership behaviors among her students. In this way, Ms. Gallagher was nurturing of the behaviors required for effective student leadership in a way that is consistent with the facilitation of peer mentoring (Goodrich, 2023b). Of interest all students received these lessons, regardless of leadership or mentoring status. Most of the students engaged in these lessons before they ever served in a titled leadership role, meaning that leadership skills that promoted positive peer mentoring had been nurtured before students became formal peer mentors.

The leadership lessons seemed to inform the process of selecting leaders. Ms. Gallagher indicated that the evaluation that informed selection of student leaders was an ongoing process, not something that occurred only during the application process. To

clarify, both the leadership lessons and the evaluations of leadership potential were continuous activities that occurred simultaneously throughout the school year. Across the year, the *leadership without titles* practices in the EHS Band provided opportunities for students to practice leadership through informal peer mentoring engagements and acts of stewardship. This provided Ms. Gallagher with an opportunity to assess which students were most obviously absorbing and enacting servant leadership behaviors. The information Ms. Gallagher collected informed her selection of student leaders. Given that the selection of peer mentors is so strongly tied to the success of peer mentoring (Hobson, 2012) it makes sense that Ms. Gallagher considered the breadth of each student's engagement in acts of servant leadership.

Ms. Gallagher also nurtured peer mentoring by acting as an adult model of the servant leadership traits she espoused. Ms. Gallagher regularly demonstrated humility, empathy, and gratitude, which made clear her trust in and appreciation for students. Although student leaders were more likely to attribute their leadership behaviors to the influence of past leaders, many parallels existed between the ways Ms. Gallagher structured rehearsals to empower student voices and the way student leaders empowered their peers during peer mentoring and larger leadership engagements that suggested Ms. Gallagher may have had greater influence than students realized. This perception by students is likely because the students sensed more commonalities with the past leaders, allowing greater ease in vicarious identification (Bandura, 1986). Ms. Gallagher sensed, and even welcomed, these perceptions and included reflective activities meant to draw on the examples of those past models. Student leaders had previously found opportunities to

practice leadership in small ways before they had titles—recall Paul’s development. Still, the students seemed to benefit from reflective vicarious learning as the lessons they considered past models of student leadership, which informed their own practice once they had the opportunity to step into a titled leadership role. These findings align with findings by Yeadon-Lee (2018) who found that after initially learning by doing something, when students reflected on the successful behavior of vicarious models, they experienced enhanced insight that informed future performance.

Ms. Gallagher provided time for both formal and informal peer mentoring engagements. Informal, non-hierarchical engagements were a frequent part of ensemble rehearsals and leadership meetings, providing Ms. Gallagher with opportunities to observe interactions and promote engagement. At times, the informal engagements were focused on relationship building through discussions on life outside of the band room or leadership practices. Other times, the engagements involved musical tasks. Balancing these opportunities provided space for the students to know each other beyond their contributions to the band’s performance, which promoted stronger relationships between band members. By scheduling formal, hierarchical sectional rehearsals, Ms. Gallagher provided section leaders with a peer mentoring engagement that became a space to practice servant leadership behaviors, particularly empowerment and providing direction (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

The findings from this research provided a deeper understanding of the role of modelling in the facilitation process. Goodrich (2023b) suggested that modelling through role-playing demonstrations could provide peer mentors with strengthened

understandings of appropriate peer mentoring behaviors. Such role-playing should be considered an explicit modelling of expected mentoring behaviors. Based on the data collected in this study, Ms. Gallagher's demonstrations of servant leadership in her own actions served as a more implicit model. She regularly operated from a servant leadership stance, which allowed her to serve as both a leader and as an informed observer of peer mentoring and stewardship activities. Switching between leader and observer roles allowed Ms. Gallagher to maintain authority in the classroom while still providing space for students to take a more central role in decision making, both inside and outside of rehearsal contexts.

Even in her observational role, Ms. Gallagher still behaved in a manner consistent with servant leadership. In the vignette *Leadership Behind the Scenes*, when Dev approached Ms. Gallagher with a question, she listened to Dev's concerns and responded. In answering, she did not tell Dev what to do but instead asked an open-ended question ("*What do you think we should do?*") and provided supportive validation of Dev's ideas ("*That seems great! That way...*"). In this way, Ms. Gallagher modelled servant leadership by respecting Dev's autonomy and providing direction in the form of supporting his idea. Her actions maintained Dev's position as the leader in that moment. Throughout the study, it remained evident that Ms. Gallagher was the teacher in charge of the band program. However, because she regularly shared responsibility with her students, as she did with Dev, she allowed for them to wield their own inherent power and contribute more actively in shaping their learning.

Throughout the study, it was apparent that Ms. Gallagher's actions were informed

by her compassionate care for her students. Her engagement in servant leadership behaviors seemed like a natural, even unconscious, expression of what she believed to be important, but also who she was as a person. It could be said, then, that Ms. Gallagher embodied servant leadership, which positioned her as an authentic servant leadership model for her students.

In this case study, SLPM was enacted through the teacher's acts of facilitation in a manner that is typical of peer mentoring in music education (Goodrich, 2023b). What was novel, however, were the implicit ways in which servant leadership was modelled for students by Ms. Gallagher. The study also provided insight into the leadership selection process's connection to leadership lessons that promoted servant leadership, thereby providing conditions that made SLPM possible.

Emergent and Unanticipated Insights

The research questions primarily addressed the ways in which peer mentoring and servant leadership were enacted and the ways in which they intersected. During the study, data emerged that also provided insight into student outcomes that occurred while students engaged in SLPM-aligned practices. These outcomes centered on student wellbeing through community, purpose, and shared success. Students indicated a perception that their experience with those elements of wellbeing connected to the SLPM-aligned leadership which they enacted. Their perceptions seemed appropriate considering that follower wellbeing is the intended outcome of servant leadership (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015) and aligned with previous findings in servant leadership research (Maula-Bakhsh & Raziq, 2018; Panaccio et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2022).

When viewed through an SLPM lens, members of the EHS Band enacted forms of student leadership that reflected the co-construction and maintenance of a service-based community with shared values, goals, and successes. This community provided students with a sense of meaningfulness that compelled them to continue to serve one another in a manner that aligns with the self-determination theory of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This connection may be worth further scholarly exploration.

There was also an interesting discovery about the sustainability of the community of the EHS Band. There was a cyclical nature to the program where students entered the program as novices and emerged having developed servant leadership skills to varying degrees. The ways that the student leaders observed in this study relied on models provided by past leaders combined with the emerging leadership behaviors from younger students (e.g. Calvin had shared that he was already finding opportunities to lead) suggests that when a group of experienced leaders departs, a new group of leaders is ready to emerge. As novice students transition through the stages of leadership acceptance, they gain knowledge and experience through lessons and practice that prepare them to lead formal peer mentoring.

The cyclical nature of the community did not mean that the culture of the EHS Band required strict adherence to specific leadership procedures. On the contrary, whereas the culture rooted in care and service was consistent, the practices of leadership were adaptable based on community needs. For example, Ms. Gallagher adjusted the number and scope of titled leadership roles based on student feedback and her own perceptions. Also, students had flexibility in deciding the way to accomplish the

responsibilities inherent in their roles rather than simply repeating past practices. Seen this way, the continuity was centered on shared values rather than specific leadership practices. This view of continuity would seem to support the previously stated point that servant leadership in the EHS Band was a shared value rather than a discrete skill.

Although the topics in this section extended slightly beyond the original research questions, they merited inclusion here. These insights provide context of the way that servant leadership and peer mentoring were experienced in a high school band and may influence future avenues of research. The consideration given to wellbeing connects to the primary goal of servant leadership (van Dierendonck & Patterson) and begins to address questions of why SLPM might be valuable. Determining the degree to which SLPM may or may not promote wellbeing would be a valued addition to the extant literature. Similarly, by pointing out the cyclical nature of the culture in the EHS Band, I further clarify the positioning of SLPM as a conceptual framework for understanding how teachers and students may co-construct a dynamic and self-perpetuating culture that places students at the center of their learning.

SLPM and Rehearsal Ecology

To conclude this portion of the chapter, I consider the role that servant leadership and peer mentoring played in promoting a positive rehearsal ecology, a term I use in reference to the way that students and their teacher interact with one another and their environments. Positive rehearsal ecology is the result of rehearsals that are designed by the teacher to promote collective wellbeing among the group. This notion supports work by Boyce-Tillman (2020), who framed music experiences as an ecological interaction

among peers, materials, and environments, suggesting that such engagement can foster more ethical and respectful relationships, student autonomy, and meaningful participation. I contend that the rehearsals experienced by members of the EHS Band as described throughout this dissertation provide an example of positive rehearsal ecology consistent with Boyce-Tillman's assertions.

Note that the positive rehearsal ecology of the EHS Band was not a sporadic occurrence, but rather a carefully nurtured condition that depended on the ensemble stewardship that compelled Ms. Gallagher and her students to care for one another and their spaces. Through their shared responsibility, the EHS Band had co-created a sustainable culture where they were present, active, and connected to one another and their environment in ways that extended beyond their rehearsals into social engagements. This combination of action, presence, connection, and extension beyond the scope of rehearsal may have contributed to the meaningfulness the students experienced (Silverman, 2020).

As I considered this idea of rehearsal ecology, I found myself drawn to ideas of agriculture. I began to understand that SLPM somewhat parallels agriculture. Farmers show their care through stewardship of their land as they work to provide nourishment for the crops and their soil. The land, in turn, provides nourishing food for the farmer. The farmer can then extend that care beyond the land by sharing their bounty with others. Such stewardship aligns with the type of care (i.e., caring for and caring with) described by Hendricks (2018, 2025). Stewardship in that vein played a central role in the care enacted by Ms. Gallagher and the students of the EHS Band. The collective wellbeing

they supported might be seen as a different form of nourishment, that of the soul.

I will break this down on a thematic level. Empowered student voices can be considered the teacher taking steps to set conditions that make student leadership possible, much like a farmer prepares their soil for planting and plans their crops. The second theme, learning leadership, relates to the planting of seeds and the care that is undertaken to nurture growth. Flourishing together is like the farmer's harvest. Hard work has been dedicated to growth and, in the case of SLPM, the result is collective wellbeing of band members.

Consider the difference between orchard cultivation and seasonal gardening. The process of growing an orchard is a somewhat prolonged affair. In the first year, a bare root tree might be planted and pruned. The second year will include some more pruning to help shape the trees for optimal growth and production. In the third or fourth year, one might expect to see fruit. Over the course of those years, trees are monitored, watered, fertilized, pruned and nurtured. New trees will require care and patience, but in the end, abundant fruit will make the wait worthwhile.

By contrast, reflect on the gardener, who finds that each year is much like the previous. In spring, new seeds are planted in fresh beds. Careful planning is involved; crops might be rotated to optimize the soil usage and different vegetables can be planted in the same bed to maximize the yield. The gardener might plant flowers to help with pollination, but also to deter pests. Each year's fresh crops grow quickly and are harvested over the course of the summer and autumn months. The garden requires more constant maintenance (i.e., labor) than the orchard, and the yield is more immediate.

SLPM might be like both the orchard and the garden. Building a culture and tending to the care and development of adolescent musician-leaders requires that a teacher possesses the patience and long-term vision of an orchardist. This may be especially true when first integrating peer mentoring and student leadership into the rehearsal structure. However, once the culture is established, it becomes sustainable with just a little bit of care. As an example of such care, consider the ways that the EHS Band's leadership team was adaptable to meet the needs of students or how leadership lessons helped students develop the understandings that allowed them to engage in leadership behaviors when they were ready.

At the same time, teachers regularly engage in the labor of nurturing students, much like the gardener dutifully attending to crops. A teacher selects repertoire and plans events strategically to promote musical growth, but perhaps also to assist with recruiting and retention. Each rehearsal can be skillfully curated to maximize learning, and that takes further planning. Add to that the myriad other tasks that a teacher must do to meet administrative demands, connect with the community, or share learning spaces. All of this labor can, at times, feel like too much. With SLPM aligned practices, the teacher can share that labor with student leaders so that they might co-create learning spaces that engender the development of the future leaders.

In agriculture, agroecology is aimed toward finding ways to care for the land that optimize the harvest. Similarly, examinations of rehearsal ecology might seek to understand the ways in which a teacher's design relate to student engagement, which can either promote or impede the development of optimal conditions for growth (i.e.,

wellbeing). Findings in this research suggest that SLPM aligned practices promote a positive rehearsal ecology. By placing caring actions of stewardship and peer mentoring at the center of robust student leadership, Ms. Gallagher and her students engaged in caring servant leadership that affirmed the dignity and rights of each band member while simultaneously clarifying individual and collective responsibilities (Smith, 2026), a bountiful harvest, indeed.

Implications

In this section of the chapter, I consider the implications of this research. I will begin by consider ways that this study relates to current understandings of servant leadership. Following that, I will provide perspective on ways that this research might inform practice for music educators. I will close with a meditation on my role as a researcher and the impact this research has had on my own teaching and scholarly interests.

Theoretical Implications

This study extends servant leadership theory by introducing *servant leader peer mentoring* (SLPM), a dynamically situated form of leadership experienced within and across the varied ensembles that comprise a high school band program. In particular, SLPM extends servant leadership theory by accounting for peer-based enactments in both hierarchical and non-hierarchical settings and the role of a teacher facilitating such experiences. It is important to clarify that these findings emerged from a single case study and are not meant to be generalizable. SLPM, however, does offer a theoretical and conceptual contribution through the rich contextualization of how servant leadership and

peer mentoring interacted to promote community and flourishing within a band program. As Stake (1995) suggested, the single case study is well-suited for refining theory and illuminating processes in a way that can be transferable, though not predictive, across a variety of contexts.

Within the EHS Band, compassionate love, virtues, and servant leadership behaviors were enacted as a means of promoting student wellbeing, aligning with the model of servant leadership proposed by van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015). Wellbeing was indicated, in part, by the co-construction of a service-based community. Community was built through inclusive acts that built trust and belonging along with the encouragement of all students to engage in group leadership through non-hierarchical peer mentoring and a *leadership without titles* policy. Members of the EHS Band reported feeling a sense of community, at least within their insular ensembles. For students who performed in multiple ensembles, the sense of community appeared to be strengthened. This may be, at least partially, because concert band members who were in the marching band had increased exposure to the servant leadership provided by more experienced leaders of the marching band, all of whom were also part of the wind ensemble.

Data provided justification for extending the framework to include the virtues empathy (Spears, 2010) and vision (Patterson, 2003), as well as the trait inclusion (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Regarding empathy, Ms. Gallagher placed particular emphasis on empathy as an important part of her own servant leadership practice. She approached interactions with students from a position of seeking to understand and demonstrated

empathy in the way she responded to their demeanors. Student leaders also spoke of empathy, along with inclusion as they discussed their leadership norms.

The role of empathy in SLPM is of further interest in considering the ways in which SLPM-aligned experiences promoted an increased sense of musical empathy. Recall that Dev shared that he believed the relationships he had developed with his peers had made him more aware of their musical contribution and his responsibility to play well for them. For Dev, his musical contribution functioned within an implied social contract with his peers. He appreciated their effort, so he gave his best. Dev's account illustrates the way that relationships informed music making in the EHS Band.

That social connection to music making has important implications in music education when considering the aesthetic goals of music making. It seems that in the EHS Band, aesthetic goals were enriched by the more praxial goals of building community and promoting the flourishing of students/peers. SLPM, therefore, reveals ways that music education can put the humanity and dignity of students ahead of artistic concerns, consistent with philosophical work by Elliott and Silverman (2014), while still allowing for enriched aesthetic musical engagements (Reimer, 2022). Additionally, if one were to consider the aesthetic goals as a form of meaningfulness and the praxial ones as a form of belongingness, straight lines emerge that connect servant leadership to student motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and eudaimonic wellbeing (Ryan et al., 2008).

The findings of this study combine to suggest that servant leadership in secondary band settings is enacted less as a fixed leadership style and more as a relational, participatory process embedded within ensemble communities. The fluid movement

between mentor and mentee roles challenges binary distinctions between leaders and followers through dialectic engagement, wherein authority and learning are continually negotiated. Fluidity of roles suggests that servant leadership may function most effectively in adolescent contexts when leadership roles, and thus authority, are accessible, reversible, and developmentally responsive. Further, that fluidity provided students opportunities to gain experience in both mentor and mentee roles. Seen that way, SLPM offers a bridge connecting servant leadership to *communities of practice* theory (Wenger, 1999) that supports prior leadership education research from Smith et al. (2019).

Understanding of servant leadership is further enriched by data that provided rich contextualization of the ways that students in the EHS Band learned leadership. Because servant leadership had become a shared community practice, new members were able to learn leadership through two modes: leadership lessons and a social learning process. The modes were separate but worked in tandem to bring students from a novice stage, through points of understanding and emergence until they accepted leadership responsibilities. The social learning process was in alignment with theorization by Bandura (1977) and provided clarity and structure to the way that socialization was enacted that allowed students learned the values and norms of the EHS Band. The leadership lessons provided reinforcement of the concepts and often provided students with opportunities for vicarious reflection that supported the social learning processes. The data combine to reveal that servant leadership is learnable through a combination of explicit instruction and immersion in servant-leadership-informed experiences.

The study also revealed considerable commonalities between servant leadership and Compassionate Music Teaching (Hendricks, 2018). The student leaders' emphasis on authenticity, trust, and empathy as norms, for example, connect directly to CMT. The model of servant leadership that Ms. Gallagher provided for her students simultaneously exemplified the practices of a compassionate music teacher. The previously mentioned promotion of musical empathy is another point of connection. These connections position servant leadership as a compatible model of student leadership for a CMT aligned music educator seeking to incorporate empowering student leadership opportunities into their practice. In that light, servant leadership can be seen as a mechanism for operationalizing CMT at a student level, promoting more compassionate peer-to-peer engagements.

Taken together, these implications position SLPM as a theoretically promising mode of servant leadership. Although bounded within a single case, SLPM provides a transferable lens for understanding how peer mentoring and servant leadership can promote student wellbeing through mechanisms that strengthen students' senses of belonging, purpose, and shared success.

Practical Implications for Music Educators

Considering that a music educator's primary role in enacting peer mentoring is one of facilitation (Goodrich, 2007; 2021; 2023a; 2023b), it is sensible to begin discussions of practical implications with rumination on how this study might inform facilitation of SLPM. Of particular interest is the idea that a teacher's own display of servant leadership traits offers an implicit model that, in conjunction with peer models,

has potential to influence students' acquisition of the same servant leadership traits.

Educators interested in enacting peer mentoring consistent with SLPM might consider the ways in which they themselves embody those virtues and behaviors of servant leadership. For Ms. Gallagher, the traits of servant leadership appeared to be a natural, authentic expression of who she was, but that may not be the case for all educators, at least not with all traits. Whereas one music educator might naturally have a strong sense of empathy and regularly practice gratitude and inclusion, another might feel more confidence with forgiving while providing supportive direction to students. In both cases, those educators might lean on those strengths while seeking to develop the other areas where they are less comfortable. Sharing this journey of growth with students from an authentic and humble stance would further model servant leadership while simultaneously letting students know that their teacher is learning, too. Such a practice would put music educators in alignment with SLPM.

Music educators might also consider the implications that the findings of this study have for informing rehearsal ecology. Ms. Gallagher provided a model of a music educator who espoused servant leadership, not just in teaching leadership, but also in the way that she structured learning time. By providing space for students to learn and practice leadership, she empowered those learners to take a more active role in making decisions about musical expression and decisions about the management of aspects of the band program. The student-centered engagement was achieved through processes aligned with SLPM and allowed students to mentor one another while also serving the band through acts of stewardship. Music educators might consider how Ms. Gallagher's model

could inform their own practice to promote a more collaborative rehearsal ecology. An ensemble director wishing to incorporate more student-centered pedagogy might start by integrating informal, non-hierarchical peer mentoring engagements into rehearsal time. As students gain confidence and experience, they may be prepared to proceed to more formal, hierarchical engagements with some students given explicit leadership roles—titled or not.

Another point that might be of interest to music educators hoping to incorporate SLPM informed practices was the time Ms. Gallagher took for leadership lessons. Most of these lessons happened in short encounters during class time. Music educators may want to plan rehearsals that include short lessons during class time. These lessons could occur at the start or end of the rehearsal period but could also work between musical selections. The lessons outside of class time occurred during leadership meetings. Like Ms. Gallagher, music educators may want to consider finding times to hold leadership meetings, such as during lunch or before or after school. Although many educators cite worries about losing rehearsal time as a reason for avoiding student-centered practices (Scherer, 2021), SLPM as enacted in the EHS Band required Ms. Gallagher to integrate leadership lessons, as well as peer mentoring engagements, into her limited rehearsal time. However, students reported a greater sense of investment in the learning and an appreciation for the increased autonomy that they gained through SLPM, which supports previous research by Scherer (2022).

SLPM as it emerged in this study might not be a peer mentoring framework for all teachers. If a teacher does not believe that a servant leader is an ideal prototype of leader,

it is unlikely that they will embody servant leadership in their own actions (Lacroix & Pircher, 2017). Ms. Gallagher believed strongly in the benefits of servant leadership and practiced it in her own stewardship of the group. A teacher's contrary stance may impede students from adopting the pro-social traits of servant leadership in numbers significant enough to influence ensemble culture (Burton et al., 2017; Lacroix & Pircher, 2017; Newman et al., 2017). Students followed their teacher's model, and many became servant leaders themselves. From that position, they shared in the co-construction of a service-based community, which they continued to nurture through socialization that invited new members to join the group and bring their unique contributions.

Hopefully, the findings presented in this dissertation might compel ensemble directors to incorporate peer mentoring into their practices. Whereas band directors consistently cite a lack of time as the primary reason for not incorporating student-centered practices (Scherer, 2021), the findings of this study suggest that facilitating peer mentoring that aligns with SLPM could save time in the long run. When students engage in ensemble stewardship, they can share responsibility for many of the auxiliary tasks that might normally be left to the director alone (i.e., setting up chairs, copying music), freeing time for the director to complete the work that student either cannot or should not do. Students also enact ensemble stewardship when they build caring relationships with their peers, providing those peers with a greater breadth of authentic relationships within the ensemble than the director alone can provide.

SLPM aligned practices may also save time in rehearsal. By alternating between teacher-centered instruction and student-centered nonhierarchical peer mentoring, in the

manner of Ms. Gallagher, a teacher is creating conditions wherein students gain greater musical independence (Weidner, 2015; 2020). Further, peer mentoring tends to result strengthened musical skills for both the mentor and the mentee (Goodrich, 2021; Johnson 2011; 2015). With increased musical independence and skill, it may be that the students are more capable of learning much of the music without teacher instruction or supervision, which should increase the time available for refinement of ensemble performance. In summary, SLPM informed practices distribute responsibility and control more evenly between the teacher and students, which may provide the teacher and students with increased rehearsal time to focus on higher order musical concepts that lead to more refined ensemble performances.

Personal Implications—My Roles as a Researcher and Teacher

I entered the research process as a long-time believer and practitioner of both servant leadership and peer mentoring but also somewhat in doubt of some long-held beliefs around the viability of servant leadership. Completing this case study led to many findings that deepened my understanding of both servant leadership and peer mentoring.

I hope to continue exploring the potential for servant leadership and peer mentoring, together and separately, to promote student-centered education. I feel that this study is a first step in what could potentially be a long and fruitful series of inquiries. This research process has left me with more questions than I had at the beginning, as good scholarship does. I emerge, however, with greater certainties, too. First, I contend with resolved conviction that servant leadership provides a way of breaking down hegemonic structures and resisting authoritarianism. Given the realities of modern global

leadership, increased attention to the ways that servant leaders can be developed becomes increasingly more important. Second, I am emboldened in my belief that music education can provide students with spaces where they can both experience and enact care. The beautiful ensemble culture co-created by Ms. Gallagher and her students serves as a guidepost for educators looking for a model of such a space. I hope that my future research can continue to light the path further.

As an educator, I emerged from this research process reinvigorated and confident that servant leadership still has a place in my pedagogical practice. Although I continue to be proud of the culture my students and I have built in Westborough, I find it enlightening to evaluate my methods against the SLPM model to seek ways I might better serve my students. It has been fairly easy to enact a leadership without a title policy, though most students are still in the earlier stages of leadership avoidance and reservation. To me, the most compelling development was naming and understanding the role of stewardship in the leadership process. I have taken steps to define the term for my students and use it frequently, particularly with my student leaders. In the context of SLPM, stewardship as a term is like a container that gives a care shaped form to acts that seem tedious and might go unnoticed. Stewardship identifies the acts as caring leadership, allowing students to better view the acts as a worthwhile service to their peers. I have noticed increased engagement in stewardship already.

My personal servant leadership renaissance is not without some tension, though. The traits and behaviors of servant leadership—particularly altruism, empathy, inclusion, and humility—seem almost like an act of rebellion in the face of educational policies that

reify hegemony and oppression through the destruction of policies meant to protect the most vulnerable among us. Whereas these fears are based on the reality of an unpredictable and chaotic political climate, I choose to remain committed to promoting servant leadership among my students with hope that they might emerge from our band program as compassionate and just young adults ready to make the world better. After all, it may be that the best way to counter the uncaring is through increased focus on compassionate, caring acts (Smith, 2026).

Limitations

The time frame of this study may have been a limiting factor, though I did reach a point of data saturation. This study, as it was constructed, provided a clear understanding of the ways that servant leadership and peer mentoring were enacted in the EHS Band. Interpretation of how leadership was learned and accepted, however, relied on inference from various data sources and no single student was explicitly observed moving through all stages of leadership development within the time frame of this study. A more longitudinal approach may have yielded greater clarity about the ways that students moved from leadership avoidance toward leadership acceptance.

Although mentees/followers are represented in this study, increased focus on their experience through additional interviews would likely have provided more enriched data on their experience. These interviews could have taken the form of follow up interviews with the individuals represented in the data, separate interviews with other mentees/followers, or both. Despite the limited data, the contribution of the younger students was immensely valuable in shaping understanding of how servant leadership and

peer mentoring intersected in the EHS Band.

Finally, because this study was bounded within a single case, the findings are not generalizable (Stake, 1995). Though that is a limitation, it is worth reiterating that the findings and the SLPM framework they revealed may be transferable, though without predictability of outcomes.

Recommendations for Future Research

Though I have already insinuated some potential avenues for future research, here I outline additional potential avenues for scholarly inquiry into servant leadership and peer mentoring. Researchers could further explore the avoidance and acceptance of leadership by students in large ensemble settings. The data from this study suggests that students experienced readiness in varied stages based on their acceptance of servant leadership principles and self-perceptions of readiness or opportunity. A longitudinal study across several years could provide greater insight into how adolescent music students might move between the various stages from avoidance to acceptance. Such a study might also provide insight into how adoption of specific virtues or behaviors might align with current understandings of adolescent development.

Whereas this research provided qualitative insight that demonstrated a connection between SLPM and wellbeing of ensemble members, academia would benefit from quantitative exploration. Researchers could use a survey instrument to investigate a large population of students. For example, they examine the attitudes of mentees to explore the connections between their perceptions of servant leadership traits from mentors in addition to their own senses of wellbeing. A study such as this one would provide

valuable insight into which traits, if any, are most significantly linked to wellbeing for adolescent learners. That knowledge could provide guidance to educators seeking to incorporate servant leadership training with their students.

Through analysis of the data gathered through this study, the concept of ensemble stewardship emerged. Ms. Gallagher and her students regularly engaged in acts of care for their spaces and each other, acts which combined to demonstrate stewardship over each ensemble and the EHS Band program. The term ensemble stewardship, along with its positioning as an act of compassionate leadership by teachers and students, appears to be an emergent contribution to the literature, though much research exists that could be readily connected to the concept (i.e., Goodrich, 2022; Hendricks, 2018, 2023, 2025; Hendricks & Smith, 2024; Tan, 2014). Ensemble stewardship may provide insight into how student leadership and ensemble culture are cultivated through acts of care that occur on individual, human levels, as well as broader programmatic levels. As such, the concept merits further theoretical and/or philosophical consideration. Researchers might also seek to provide empirical insight into ensemble stewardship, both within and outside of the contexts of the servant leadership framework. Such research might examine the relationship between stewardship behaviors and student perceptions of relatedness and motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000) or how those behaviors impact student choices relate to student leadership efficacy.

Additionally, researchers could consider the role of the teacher in shaping SLPM practices. Comparative case studies examining different educators with varied degrees of the traits of servant leadership may help clarify how teacher dispositions impact the

adoption of servant leadership principles by students as they engage in SLPM.

Finally, researchers might provide critical challenges to the viability of servant leadership as it informs peer mentoring. This could be achieved through examining the ways SLPM-aligned practices are experienced in marginalized communities. The study of this dissertation was conducted in an affluent community with White and Asian students making up the majority of the student body. The field would benefit from similar case studies in more economically disadvantaged communities and communities with greater representation of students of color. Greater attention might also be given to the follower experience across varied ensemble and community contexts to determine the way that student lived experiences might shape their acceptance or rejection of servant leadership as a leadership construct. Scholars might also examine how or when SLPM is a viable framework to examine servant leadership and peer mentoring beyond the context of an ensemble music setting, including those where there might be fewer or more rigid hierarchical structures.

Concluding Remarks

The findings shared in this study provided insight into one way to enact student leadership and peer mentoring. The resultant conceptual model of Servant Leadership Peer Mentoring (SLPM) provides a framework for incorporating student leadership that supported the development of community through acts of care and service. The student experiences as members of the EHS Band indicated that SLPM may offer one way to address issues of hegemony in ensemble music settings. This study also provided insight into the way students come to develop leadership skills and accept leadership

opportunities when they arise. My hope is that this study contributes to ongoing scholarly and practical discussions centered on ways that students can play a more central role in their learning through peer mentoring.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE DIRECTOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Director Interview #1:

1. How do you utilize peer mentoring in your program?
2. What role does servant leadership play in your program?
3. Can you think of any ways that servant leadership is reflected in the peer mentoring process?
4. Are there any parts of servant leadership that you believe are most beneficial to peer mentors?
5. Do you offer any training in peer mentoring and/or servant leadership? If so, could you please describe it?
6. Aside from formal training, are there any other ways that you support the students?

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Mentor Group Interview #1:

1. What is your role as a peer mentor in your band?
2. What kind of mindset does do you think is necessary for mentoring your peers?
3. What does leadership in your band program mean to you?
4. What made you want to be a leader and mentor in your band?
5. Was there a leader in your band program in past years that you look to as an example of leadership done right?
6. How does your teacher support you as a leader and mentor?
7. What do you know about servant leadership?
8. How does what you know about servant leadership relate to what you do as a peer mentor?

Mentee Group Interview #1:

1. Are there any students in your band who you would describe as peer mentors?
2. What about that person/those people makes you feel that way?
3. What is your relationship with your mentor like?
4. What are the things that the mentors have done so far that have helped you?
5. How would you describe your peer mentors? This could be about their personality, their actions, or anything else that comes to mind.

APPENDIX C: CODES USED IN DATA ANALYSIS

Table C 1

Codes Used in the First Round of Data Analysis

Code	Meaning	Element	Subcode
1	compassionate love	Dignity	DIG
		Trust	TRU
		Care	CAR
2	Servant Leader Traits	Humility	HUM
		Empathy	EMP
		Gratitude	GRA
		Vision	VIS
		Altruism	ALT
		Forgiveness	FOR
3	Servant Leader Behaviors	Stewardship	STE
		Authenticity	AUT
		Empowerment	EPW
		Providing Direction	PDI
		Inclusion	INC
4	Wellbeing	Optimal Functioning/Flourishing	FLO
		Community	COM
		Meaningfulness	MEA
5	Become Servant Leaders	-	-
6	Peer Mentoring	Teacher Facilitation	FAC
		Socialization	SOC
		Skill Development	DEV
		Shared Experience	EXP
		Hierarchical	-H
		Non-hierarchical	-N

Table C 2*Themes and Subthemes for Final Data Analysis*

Color	Theme	Subthemes			
	Empowered Student Voices	empowerment in rehearsal	empowerment in sectionals	leaders take charge	lateral leadership
	Learning Leadership	learning from models	socialization	leadership lessons	leadership without titles
	Flourishing Together	serving the group, growing together	doing good and doing well	honoring the past, adjusting for the present, preparing for the future	community

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

INFORMATION LETTER FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Peer Mentoring and Student Leadership

Evan Doyle

Date: July 17, 2025

Dear Parent:

Please read this letter carefully. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information about your child taking part in a research study. If anything in this letter is unclear, please let me know. We would be happy to answer any questions.

The purpose of this study is to learn more about how adolescents develop leadership skills through peer mentoring in a band setting.. This study will take place from August through October. There will be three interviews. These will be audio recorded, but you can always decide not to have the interview recorded. There will be observations of the teaching and learning during a variety of rehearsal and performance settings. Observations will not be video recorded. There will also be observations of students mentoring each other outside of class. In this study the researcher will not include any information which could identify your child or the site.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information about the study. Before your child can participate, your permission is required. A separate consent form will be provided for both you and your child to review and sign. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and your child may choose to withdraw at any time without penalty. Choosing to participate—or not—will have no impact on your child’s standing in class or their grade.

If you have any questions about this study or your child’s rights as a research participant you may contact the researcher via email at ecdoyle@bu.edu or phone [REDACTED]

Thank you,

Evan Doyle
School of Music Boston University



Protocol Title: Leadership through peer mentoring in a high school band

Principal Investigator: Evan Doyle

Description of Study Population: a high school band program and their teacher

Version Date: June 21, 2025

Study Summary

The purpose of this research study is to enrich understanding of the ways in which students develop and practice leadership through peer mentoring in a secondary band program.

Participants who take part in this research study will be in this research study for 2-3 months. During this time, researcher will make 5-6 study visits to [REDACTED]

Participants taking part in this study will be observed in a variety of contexts that are typical to their experience as members of the band program. There will also be a series of interviews with the teacher, student leaders, and student followers. Each group will be subject to 2-3 interviews with possibility of email or zoom follow-up meetings if necessary to accurately understand the participant's point of view.

There are no risks to participating in this study.

Introduction

Please read this form carefully. The purpose of this form is to provide you with important information about taking part in a research study. If you have any questions about the research or any portion of this form, please ask. Taking part in this research study is up to you. If you decide to take part in this research study the researcher will ask you to sign this form. The researcher will give you a copy of the signed form.

The person in charge of this study is Evan Doyle. This dissertation research is for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree and is being supervised by Dr. Andrew Goodrich at Boston University. Evan can be reached at ecdoyle@bu.edu or [REDACTED]. Dr. Goodrich can be reached by email at andrewg@bu.edu. Evan will be referred to as the "researcher" throughout this form.

What should I know about a research study?

Participation in research is voluntary, which means that it is something for which you volunteer. It is your choice to participate in the study, or not to participate. If you choose to participate now, you may change your mind and stop participating later. If you decide not to participate, that decision will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Why is this study being done?

The purpose of this study is to investigate the ways in which students develop leadership through peer mentoring in a high school band program. The researcher seeks to better understand the role of the teacher in the development of student leadership through peer mentoring.



The researcher is asking you to take part in this study because your band program is known to place a strong emphasis on student leadership and peer mentoring. The members of your program and your teacher are the only subjects that will take part in this research study conducted at [REDACTED].

How long will I take part in this research study?

The researcher expects that you will be in this research study for 2-3 months. During this time, the researcher will make visits to your school for observations and interviews.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you agree to take part in this study, the researcher will ask you to sign the consent form before conducting any study procedures.

Study Visit 1

Visit 1 will take about 3 hours to complete. At this visit, the researcher will:

- Interview you about your experiences with leadership and peer mentoring in your band program.
- Observe you as you engage in your typical operations as members of the band program.

Study Visit 2-3

Visit 2 and 3 will each take 4-6 hours to complete. At this visit, the researcher will:

- Observe you as you engage in your typical operations as members of the band program.

Study Visit 4-6

Visits 4, 5, and 6 will each take about 3-4 hours to complete. At this visit, the researcher will:

- Observe you as you engage in your typical operations as members of the band program.
- Interview you about your experiences with leadership and peer mentoring in your band program.

Loss of Confidentiality

The main risk of allowing the researcher to use and store your information for research is a potential loss of privacy. All participants in this study will be assigned an alias. The school will also be provided an alternate name. These measures of anonymization will be used throughout the dissertation. The real identities of participants and the school will not be included at any point in the dissertation. You will be informed of any significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may affect your willingness to continue participation.

Are there any benefits from being in this research study?

You may or may not benefit from taking part in this study. By taking part in this study, you may develop a stronger understanding of leadership, peer mentoring, and the role that both play in your



band program. Any benefits would be the result of a participant's personal reflection and are not necessarily an intended consequence of the study.

Others may benefit in the future from the information that is learned in this study. These benefits are resultant of an enriched understanding of the way that peer mentoring can promote student leadership, if at all.

What alternatives are available?

You may choose not to take part in this research study. If you choose not to participate, you will not be noted in observations, nor will you be interviewed.

Study Participation and Early Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is your choice. You are free not to take part or to withdraw at any time for any reason. No matter what you decide, there will be no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are entitled. If you decide to withdraw from this study, the information that you have already provided will remain in the data set and be kept confidential.

Audio Recording

The researcher would like to audio record you during the interview portions of this study. If you are audio recorded, it may be possible to identify you. The researcher will store these recordings on his computer and only his dissertation supervisor will have access to the recordings. The researcher will label these recordings with your alias instead of your actual name. The alias key connects your name to your recording. The researcher will keep the key to the code in the hard drive of a password-protected computer. Recordings will be stored until a time no later than 6 months after the final approval of the dissertation.

Do you agree to allow the researcher to audio record you during this study?

_____ YES _____ NO _____ Participant Initials

Use of Your Study Information

Private information collected from you during this study will NOT be used for future research studies or shared with other researchers for future research, even if the information identifying you are removed from the private information.

How Will You Keep My Study Records Confidential?

The researcher will keep the records of this study confidential by anonymizing the participants and location of this study. Participants will be provided a pseudonym, which can be a name of their choosing. The school and town will also be given an alternate name. The geographic location provided in the dissertation will indicate that the community is near a major metropolitan area in the northeastern United States. The study data will be stored on the hard drive of the researcher's personal computer.

The results of this research study may be published or used for teaching. The researcher will not include identifiable information on data that are used for these purposes.



Statement of Consent

I have read the information in this consent form including risks and possible benefits. I have been given the chance to ask questions. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in the study.

SIGNATURE

Name of Study Participant

Signature of Study Participant

Date

I have explained the research to the research participant and answered all their questions. I will give a copy of the signed consent form to the participant.

Evan Doyle

Name of the researcher

Signature of the researcher

Date

Legally Authorized Representative/Guardian:

I give permission for the person I am authorized to represent to participate in this research study.

Date (MM/DD/YEAR)

Legal Guardian Signature

Legal Guardian Name

Relationship to Subject **(This order must be followed. If there is a court appointed guardian, this is who needs to provide consent. If not, a health care proxy, followed by durable power of attorney and lastly, family members)*

- Court-Appointed Guardian
- Health Care Proxy (Attach Proxy and ensure there is express authority to make health care decisions inclusive of research.)
- Durable Power of Attorney (POA) (Durable POA may be limited to specific areas. Attach Durable POA and ensure it covers research.)
- Family Member/Next of Kin, *(in order of preference: spouses, parents and adult children).*
Specify relationship: _____

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