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Music Class Offerings Beyond Bands, Choirs, and Orchestras in Nebraska High Schools

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MUSIC CLASS OFFERINGS BEYOND BANDS, CHOIRS, AND ORCHESTRAS IN NEBRASKA HIGH SCHOOLS

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As school music programs in the US evolve and adapt to changing demographics, the types of music courses offered have expanded as well. Today, schools offer more courses in music than just bands, choirs, and orchestras. Music appreciation courses, music technology courses, music theory courses, guitar classes, piano classes, and music composition classes are just a few of the types of music classes that can also be found in American high schools. While high school music class options are becoming more diversified, there has been little research done to profile what kinds of music classes are being offered in schools and how prevalent various music courses are. This thesis sought to describe and profile current music classes that fall outside of band, choral, and orchestral music offerings being taught in high schools, and to describe the experiences of music teachers who've developed such music classes within the state of Nebraska.

Keywords: general music, secondary music, nonperformance classes, nontraditional classes, alternative music classes, non-BCO music classes

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ii

TABLE OF CONTENTS iii

LIST OF TABLES vii

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY 1

The Problem 1

The Purpose 5

Research Questions 5

Definition of Terms 6

Delimitations 7

Basic Assumptions 7

Theory 8

Related Literature 10

Method 11

Participants 11

Personnel and Facilities 11

Materials 11

Procedure 12

Data Analysis 13

Significance of the Study 14

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 16

Introduction 16

Non-BCO Music Class Offerings 16
Non-BCO Music Class Teachers 17
Non-BCO Music Class Models 18
Music Technology Class Models 18
Guitar Class Models 21
Music Appreciation, Music History, & Music Theory Class Models 22
METHOD 24
Introduction 24
Participants 24
Development of the Instrument 25
Procedure 26
Analysis of Data 28
Summary 29
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS 30
Introduction 30
Quantitative Survey Findings 31
Participant Demographics 31
Research Question 1: Non-BCO Music Class Offerings in Nebraska. 32
Research Question 2: Non-BCO Music Class Offerings by School Size. 33
Research Question 3: Non-BCO Music Classes by Demographic Setting 34
Research Question 4: Non-BCO Music Classes by Music Program Size. 34
Research Question 5: Perceptions of Non-BCO Music Classes. 35
Qualitative Interview Findings 36

Participants. 36

Sites. 36

Analysis. 37

Research Question 6: Creation of Non-BCO Music Classes. 37

Research Questions 7: Impact of Non-BCO Music Classes. 52

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, & RECOMMENDATIONS 56

Summary 56

Research Question 1: Non-BCO Music Class Offerings in Nebraska 57

Research Questions 2, 3 & 4: Distributions of Non-BCO Music Classes 61

Research Question 5: Perceptions of Non-BCO Music Classes 64

Research Question 6: Creation of Non-BCO Music Classes 66

Desire to teach a non-BCO music class. 66

Open interaction and support from school administration. 67

Opportunistic Beginnings. 67

Finding Materials and Developing Curriculum: A Process. 68

Research Question 7: Impact of Non-BCO Music Classes 69

Expanding The Program: Depth and/or Breadth. 69

Change of Pace. 70

Better Use of Time. 70

No Significant Concerns. 71

Recommendations 71

REFERENCES 76

APPENDIX A: Survey Cover Letter 81

APPENDIX B: Survey Follow-Up Letter 83

APPENDIX C: Survey Instrument 85

APPENDIX D: Follow-Up Interview Cover Letter 89

APPENDIX E: Follow-Up Interview Consent Form 92

APPENDIX F: Sample Follow-Up Interview Questions 94

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 Demographics of the Sample Population by School Size Classification.....32

Table 4.2 Demographics of the Sample Population by School Setting.....32

Table 4.3 Non-BCO Music Class Offerings by School Size Classification 34

Table 4.4 Non-BCO Music Class Offerings by School Setting.....34

Table 4.5 Attitudes of Teachers Towards Adding Non-BCO Music Classes.....36

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The Problem

It is a well-documented fact that most students at the high school level are not formally involved in school music (Gerber, 1986; Lehman, 1988; Hoffer, 1988; Hughes, 1992; Abril & Gault, 2008). In 1988 Hoffer put that figure at 80% of the high school population, and over two decades later Elpus & Abril (2011) found that figure to have remained at a fairly static 79%. Elpus & Arbil (2011) further elaborated that the typical student populations enrolled in bands, orchestras, and choirs are not representative of the overall student population in American schools. Their findings were that students involved in school music programs were disproportionally white, from families with above average socio-economic status, native speakers of English, and had parents who had completed post-secondary education. However, Elpus (2013) found that 36.4% of high school senior students involved in the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics had completed at least one music course within their high school career. While this does show an improvement in student participation in school music than other estimates and findings, it remains clear a majority of students do not participate in school music at the high school level. An equally troubling find by VanWeelden & Walters (2004) was that less than 10% of the adults involved in school music continued on with their school instrument or singing into their adult lives. They concluded that music educators have two approaches to make

classroom music more relevant: (a) provide skills and experiences relevant and transferable into adult music making experiences, or (b) become more involved in creating community music experiences reflective of current school practices.

Given these findings, many music educators have championed the expansion of musical offerings in secondary schools to create more meaningful music experiences for a greater number of students (Palmer, Hughes, Jothen, & March, 1989; Hoffer, 1988; Gerber, 1988; Lehman, 1988; Thompson & Keister, 1997; VanWeelden & Walters, 2004; Kratus, 2007). The National Association for Music Education (NAfME, formerly known as the Music Educators National Conference [MENC]) has and continues to push for expanding curricular options available for high school music students. The Opportunity-To-Learn Standards for Music Instruction (MENC, 1994), published to guide curriculum in the public schools, recommended, "one semester-length music course other than band, orchestra, and chorus is offered for each four hundred students in the school. At least one of these courses has no prerequisites" (MENC, 1994, p. 17). The last sentence in particular highlights an inherent issue besetting the typical high school music curriculum model. In many high school programs with students participating in performance ensembles such as choir, band, or orchestra the students have typically received years of prior music instruction at the elementary and middle school levels. High school students wanting to join music classes at this later point in their schooling must enter these classes several years behind in instruction and in many cases without a pathway to catch up to their peers. As Lehman (1988) noted, this effectively locks them out of participating within the high school music program. This presents a major concern to the field of music education in efforts to increase student participation in school music. Bartel (1990) wrote:

> During the past several years, increased basic course requirements and mandated fine arts requirements have introduced problems for band, orchestra, and choral programs in high schools. These problems have brought into focus the need for teachers to provide music experiences for students who have had little if any consistent music education in the years preceding high school or for students who want a meaningful music experience within a single credit course. (p. 41)

While this concept of a general-type music courses at the secondary level is viewed as a positive development in music education, there is not a single unified approach as to the curriculum and content of such classes. As Reimer (1989) points out, few teacher education programs offer courses in teaching secondary music classes outside of the band, choral, and orchestral mainstream. This may be because there is not a stable model of what constitutes a secondary general music course. Hoffer (1989) stated that the middle school exploratory approach towards general music is not suitable for high school students. Rather, high school students would benefit more from a goal-oriented skill-developing course. Hoffer (1989) concludes that differing course offerings will likely result from each teacher seeking the best option to involve a greater percentage of the student population within their own school. Adding to the complexity of subject is the evolving nature of music itself. Bartel (1990) stated:

> When the first article on guitar appeared in MEJ twenty-five years ago, few educators would have guessed how popular the idea would be a decade later. By 1973, ‘guitar class’ was synonymous with the music teacher’s adaptation to changing times. Though many guitar programs

> continue to exist in 1990, the guitar has been overshadowed by the current symbol of a music teacher's contemporaneity: MIDI technology. (p. 40)

Abril & Gault (2008) found that in the United States, music courses other than bands, choirs, and orchestras in secondary schools vary from guitar classes, piano classes, general music courses, music theory courses, to composition classes. From these numerous options, there was not a single type of music class that appeared in more than half of all schools surveyed. Their research showed that there is not a single standard approach to these additional secondary music classes, and these music classes other than bands, choirs, and orchestras are not even present in most American high schools.

These music classes outside of the band, choir, and orchestra tradition are not only less common, but they are also less visible components of a school music program. Within the state of Nebraska, a music teacher can see another school music program's performance groups without ever communicating with the directors. The Nebraska State Bandmaster's Association (NSBA) has an annual state marching band festival and a concert band festival. The Nebraska School Activity Association (NSAA) hosts district music contests for school performing ensembles. Numerous schools and institutions host jazz and show choir festivals. Each of these events gives directors an opportunity to see what kinds of ensembles are present in other schools. Music classes outside of the band, choral, or orchestra domains don't readily enjoy this kind of exposure; the visibility of the class is more likely to stay within the school building. Due to the nature of these classes, music teachers may not be as aware of what other schools in the state or region are offering because those parts of the music program are not as visible as the performing band, choral, and orchestral ensembles. For secondary teachers wanting to add an

additional music class to their overall music program, it would be useful to know what kinds of classes are being offered in the area, and in what kinds of settings these types of classes are being offered.

The Purpose

The purpose of this mixed-methods study is to describe and profile music course offerings other than bands, choirs, and orchestras of Nebraska high schools, as well as to examine any relationship between these types of courses and selected demographic variables.

Research Questions

1. What kinds of music classes besides bands, choirs, and orchestras are taught in Nebraska high schools?
2. Are there any significant differences in the size of the school associated with the variety of music courses offered?
3. Are there any significant differences between the music course offerings in urban/suburban/rural school locations?
4. What is the relationship between the student population of the school music department and the number of kinds of music courses offered?
5. What are teacher perceptions about non-BCO music classes?
6. How are these non-BCO music classes created in schools?
7. What is the impact of these non-BCO music classes on the school music program?

Definition of Terms

The following terms will be used to define different types of music classes:

Band classes will be defined as any concert bands, symphonic bands, wind ensembles, jazz bands, marching bands, or pep bands that meet as a class regularly during the instructional school day.

Choral classes will be defined as any concert choirs, women's choirs, men's choirs, jazz choirs, swing choirs, madrigal choirs, a cappella choirs, or show choirs that meet as a class regularly during the instructional school day.

Orchestral classes will be defined as any string orchestras, full orchestras, fiddle ensembles, chamber orchestras, or chamber string ensembles that meet as a class regularly during the instructional school day.

Band, choral, and orchestral classes will be defined as an umbrella term for any band, choral, or orchestral classes covered in the previous definitions

Non-band, choral, or orchestral (Non-BCO) music classes will be defined as any music class outside the definition of band, choral or orchestral classes. As this is an invented term, readers should note that terms such as "general," "alternative," or "non-traditional" have been used by previous researchers to describe similar groupings of music classes.

Using the Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) 2013-14 Music Manual, the following school classifications will be defined as follows:

- Nebraska Class AA schools are the 36 schools with enrollments over 601 students.

- Nebraska Class A schools are the 19 schools with enrollments between 301 and 600 students.
- Nebraska Class B schools are the 39 schools with enrollments between 151 and 300 students.
- Nebraska Class C schools are the 84 schools with enrollments between 75 and 150 students.
- Nebraska Class D schools are the 121 schools with enrollments below 74 students.

Delimitations

The scope of this study was delimited to the 299 high schools within the state of Nebraska as listed by NSAA. Participants included Nebraska music teachers who taught classes at these high schools. In the state of Nebraska, some high school music teaching responsibilities may be limited grades 9-12 instrumental or vocal music, but others may include 7-12, 5-12, and K-12 combinations of instrumental, vocal, and general music. While non-BCO music classes may be offered at the elementary and middle school level, this study focused on non-BCO music classes offered to students in grades 9-12.

Basic Assumptions

In this exploratory study of non-BCO music classes, the following assumptions were made:

1. Measurement of school demographic and non-demographic factors related to the offering of non-BCO music classes is possible by means of a properly designed and implemented survey.

2. Responses of participants on the survey instrument and interview are reflective of their experience in teaching a non-BCO music class.
3. Members of the Nebraska Music Educators Association are representative of all music programs within the state of Nebraska.

Theory

As Lehman (1989) stated, larger schools can offer a greater variety of music courses than small schools. It would stand to reason that schools with larger student populations would be more likely to offer more non-BCO music classes. It would also stand to reason that schools with larger music programs with more music staff members would also be more likely to offer more non-BCO music classes. Abril & Gault (2008) found that schools in urban areas are more likely to offer more music classes than schools in rural areas. It would stand to reason this trend would also apply to non-BCO music classes.

While a teacher's own experience may influence their decision to start a non-BCO music class, research efforts into this area are relatively exploratory in nature. Bernard (2012) found some music teachers with non-traditional backgrounds were more amenable to incorporating student interests into their own teaching. However, the small sample size of seven interviews in the study is prohibitive of any greater generalization. Shouldice (2013) examined the background of a pre-service music teacher who pursued a career in elementary general music teaching rather than one in secondary instrumental music despite the teacher's strong background in instrumental music. This teacher's decision to change teaching preferences was found to be influenced by negative experiences with

"competitiveness" in band classes, positive experiences in general music classes, and his desire to center instruction on student experiences. While the findings of a single interview cannot be generalized to a larger population and the research contrasted secondary instrumental with elementary general music, it may stand to reason that a teacher's own experiences may in fact influence their decisions to teach non-BCO music classes. However, it could also be that teachers could be unaware of factors and experiences that influence their teaching practices. Conway, Eros, & Stanley (2009) found that music teachers who had recently completed their Master of Music degree viewed their academic training as a positive experience, but could not pinpoint specifics as to how earning such a degree impacted their daily teaching.

Additionally, the availability and accessibility of new music technologies may also play a role in the creation of non-BCO music classes. Dammers (2009) noted that as music technology continues to develop, educators have recognized the broadening possibilities for music educators. Dorfman (2008) stated that the incorporation of technology into instruction is not only an important within music education, but to education in general. He also expanded on the fact that the quickly evolving nature of music technologies themselves should inspire recurring study as the field is far from static. What may be found to be true at one point may quickly change as technologies advance. While the opportunities of technology use in music education grow, Reese & Rimmington (2000) noted that most teachers who used music technology relied primarily on informal training. While Reese & Rimmington called for more formal efforts to provide technology training for music teachers, Dammers (2009, 2012) found that self-directed informal instruction in the use of music technology remained the norm a decade

later. This trend may indicate that the use of music technology within a school is largely dictated by the individual experiences of the school music teacher.

Related Literature

While the topic of philosophy and merit of a secondary general music program has generated literature (Fowler, 1989; Howell, 2002; Hughes, 1992; Monsour, 2000), the actual study of what kinds of general music classes are taught in public secondary schools is relatively neglected. Lehman (1989) stated that the National Center for Educational Statistics had found 11% of schools offered 'general music,' 25% offered 'music appreciation,' and 35% offer music theory and/or composition at the 8th grade level. This shows that while secondary general music classes are not rare, they are still far from being the mainstream of American music education. In 1989, Johnson found a single high school of 650 students offered six non-performance music classes, from a required 9th grade general music; to creative listening (music appreciation); folk, rock, and jazz (music appreciation); musical theater; beginning voice class; and music theory. This profile did show that there was great diversity in the types of general music courses offered.

In 2008, Abril and Gault conducted a national study to profile secondary music programs as viewed by administrators. For the purposes of their study, they included middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools in their definition of secondary schools. They found that 93% of schools offered band, 88% offered choir, 55% offered jazz/rock ensembles, and 42% offered string orchestras. Of secondary general music classes, they found that 45% of schools offered general music classes, 40% offered music

theory courses, 19% offered guitar classes, 13% offered piano classes, 10% offered music technology classes, and 7% offered composition classes. While their study was not concerned with profiling general music classes in secondary schools, their findings are useful in continued study of what kinds of secondary general music classes are offered in schools.

Method

Participants. The participants for this study were the 518 Nebraska music teachers listed by the NMEA membership roster as having a high school teaching assignment.

Personnel and Facilities. The individuals contacted for this study were music teachers who self-reported a high school teaching assignment in the NMEA membership directory.

Materials. A questionnaire was generated (see Appendix A). It included questions about the school and music department size by student populations, the geographic location of the school, the building music staffing, and information about current music course offerings. Based on responses to their school's current class offerings, participants either answered questions about their non-BCO music classes or about their attitudes towards such classes if their school did not offer any. Depending on the participants' responses, the questionnaire contained either seven multiple-choice questions or eight multiple-choice questions with an optional short answer. Two peers

from the sample population, in addition to the three music education researchers of this thesis projects' faculty committee, reviewed this questionnaire and recommend edits and revisions to the survey mechanism. The survey was then sent out to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board for approval. Once approved it was then submitted to the research committee of the Nebraska Music Educator's Association (NMEA) for approval and authorization to be sent over the NMEA web mailing list server to selected registered members of NMEA.

Procedure. Once the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board approved the survey, the NMEA Webmaster sent out the initial survey over the NMEA web mailing list server. Because the list server database contains self-reporting information, including school names, the task of delimiting the sending list to a selected sample was not feasible, as "Generic High School" could be cross-listed as "Gen. High," "Generic HS," or "GHS." It should also be noted that teaching assignments are also self-reported. Members teaching high school classes full time may appear identical to teachers who teach a single class or direct a single activity at the high school and spend the rest of their instructional day in another grade setting.

The cover letter and a link to the survey were e-mailed out to NMEA membership who self-reported a high school teaching assignment. A follow-up e-mail including a second cover letter and a link to the survey was sent after eight days. Since e-mail is a standard means of communication amongst teachers and such communication eliminates paperwork, the choice to use it as a survey mechanism was to ease the administration of the questionnaire and encourage participation.

After the initial survey was complete, participants who had indicated they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview to discuss their school's music course offerings were contacted. Of these teachers, six consented and were interviewed about their experiences in teaching non-BCO music classes.

Data Analysis. The results of the surveys, once collected, were tabulated. Means for the various categories of types of non-BCO music classes and the school setting, the school size, and the music department were calculated. Chi-square analyses were done to find if the distributions of non-BCO music classes differed between different sub-group population categories based on school size and demographic location. A Pearson product moment correlation was calculated to find if there was any relationship between program size or staffing size of the music department and the number of non-BCO music courses offered.

Participants' responses to interview questions were either transcribed from the instances of in-person interviews or were simply collected from correspondence conducted electronically. The researcher then read the collected participant responses. After taking initial notes of the researcher's reflections to the responses, they were re-read and segments of the texts were labeled by topics that had been gleaned from the initial readings. From these notes and labels the broader themes from the interviews were generated.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study will be useful for secondary music teachers in Nebraska schools to know what classes are being offered across the state, and in similar demographics to their own school. For music teachers looking to start up a non-BCO music class this study could provide insight as to what is being offered at other schools. Additionally, teachers of non-BCO music classes will be more informed about their colleagues across the state, and may be informed of current practices in the field. Hopefully this knowledge can be used to encourage discussions on strategies and practices in the teaching of these non-BCO music classes. Furthermore, these findings may uncover that there is an opportunity for professional development in these non-BCO music classes that can positively impact many teachers and school programs.

In addition, these findings would be quite informative for the collegiate music education program looking to prepare future music educators to teach within the state of Nebraska. Knowing the types of music classes already being taught across the state is paramount to developing a teacher education program that adequately trains its students for the current needs in the field. By guiding future teachers towards best practices in all current and future job demands, music teacher training programs can better ensure successful teaching careers in their graduates.

Finally, in an era defined by budget cuts, standardized assessments, and teacher evaluations, it is in the profession's best interests to pursue research into best practices in all areas of the field of music education. Knowledge about the current trends in the field, practices that demonstrate success in engaging students, and practices that demonstrate richer learning opportunities for students are just some items educators need to be

successful in the current political-educational climate. An exploration of teaching practices in music classes not frequently researched may provide insights and evidence that may help music teachers support their current music programs and advocate for new musical opportunities for their students.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Discovering and describing the different kinds of non-BCO music classes offered in Nebraska high schools is the purpose of this study. This entails not only discovering what types of music classes are being taught in Nebraska high schools, but to describing the class content of these course offerings, describing the teachers of these types of classes, and describing why and how these new classes were created. A study of the current body of knowledge on non-BCO music classes was reviewed to better design this study. While the amount of research and writing espousing the merit of teaching various secondary music classes outside of the band, choir, and orchestra norm is expansive, the amount of research into what is actually happening in the field with non-BCO music classes is comparatively limited. This chapter is organized by information about relevant music course offerings, data about the teachers of these types of classes, and followed by in-depth research efforts into music technology courses and guitar classes respectively.

Non-BCO Music Class Offerings

Abril and Gault's 2008 study profiled secondary music programs as viewed by administrators. For the purposes of their study they included middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools in their definition of secondary schools. While their findings may be useful predictors of high school music course offerings, the inclusion of middle

school and junior high school music programs may skew the results so they do not accurately predict high school music course offerings. In any case, their study is the most comprehensive and most recent study that profiled secondary school music programs. They found that 93% of schools offered band, 88% offered choir, 55% offered jazz/rock ensembles, and 42% offered string orchestras nationwide. With regards to non-BCO music classes, they found that 45% of schools offered general music classes, 40% offered music theory courses, 19% offered guitar classes, 13% offered piano classes, 10% offered music technology classes, and 7% offered composition classes.

Non-BCO Music Class Teachers

As Dammers (2011) noted, new additions to a school's music course offerings are most frequently created by an individual music teacher taking initiative. Since individual teachers have created many of these non-BCO music classes, it is not uncommon to find schools with widely different music offerings, even within the same school district (VanWeelden & Walters, 2004).

To use the example of music technology classes, Dammers (2009) found that most teachers of technology based music classes do not have any formal specialized training with the technology or curriculum used in their music technology class. Rather, most were simply band directors who had gained competency with different music technologies through self-study. Marsters (2007) and Snyder (1998) acknowledged that teachers of guitar classes frequently share similar characteristics; they did not have an extensive background in guitar, and must learn competency skills on their own. Another trend that was found in a study of music technology classes was there was no correlation

between the age of the teacher with the presence of a music technology class in their school (Dammers, 2009). Young teachers through seasoned teachers were equally likely to teach a music technology course, the main commonality between teachers of music technology classes is individual initiative to teach the class. All teachers of music technology classes in the study had acquired familiarity with the technology used in the class through self-study, attending workshops, or other means, and had channeled their expertise into creating and teaching a new type of music class. Even though they taught in some cases several sections of music technology classes, a majority of these music teachers still taught a traditional music class such as a band, orchestra, or choir. In sum, this body of research suggests that teachers of these music technology classes are not specialized solely to teach these types of classes, but are simply high school music ensemble teachers who have taken it upon themselves to expand the music class offerings at their school through an area of their own interest.

Non-BCO Music Class Models

Music Technology Class Models. Using the latest figures, roughly 14% of all high schools in the nation offer some form of music technology class (Dammers, 2012). Most schools offering music technology classes are concentrated in the northeast while such classes are not as commonly found in the south and west. While suburban schools are more likely to have a music technology class than an urban or rural school, there was found to be no correlation between the socio-economic status of the student population and the presence of a music technology course (Dammers, 2012). An additionally finding

was that two-thirds of these music technology courses have been created after 2000 (Dammers, 2012).

While observing trends in music technology classes more in-depth on a smaller scale, Dammers' 2009 research found that 28% of high schools in New Jersey offered some type of music technology class. He found that 62% of students enrolled in these music technology classes were otherwise uninvolved in their school's music program, though some schools did not allow students to take a music technology class unless they enrolled in a traditional performance ensemble. 70% of these music technology classes were stand-alone course offered without a prerequisite. Garageband and Sibelius were found to be the two most commonly used software programs in these types of classes. Some music technology classes employed the use of recording devices and hardware, others used digital pianos, and a majority used MIDI controllers. There was not a common consensus on what specific content is taught in a music technology class as it was mostly left to the individual discretion of the music teacher who taught the class.

The scope of the music technology classes described by Dammers (2009) varied from school to school, but there were many common themes found amongst the population. Most music technology classes were found to emphasize creating original music. Many were also found to focus on teaching students how to use music-sequencing programs and sound recording equipment. A majority of classes also focused on exploring elements of music, frequently through manipulating sound files. Finally, most classes explored a plurality of music styles and genres. These findings could be surmised to state that music technology classes in New Jersey focused primarily on music

composition using music technology, and the exploration of musical elements across many different kinds of music.

Though Dammers (2009) found that there were several concerns common amongst all teachers who had undertaken the teaching of a music technology class. One was that their own school's IT department lacks knowledge of music software and are not always able to assist if problems arose, and teachers are often left to rely on themselves to resolve problems with the technologies used in class. A majority of school music classes, 60%, were found to use the Macintosh platform while 40% used Windows, though 7% of schools had cross-platform computer labs. For some schools, this meant the music technology computers ran a different platform than the rest of the school, which could be problematic, as a school's IT personnel may not be familiar with the computer platform. Additionally, 83% of the school's with music technology classes used MIDI controllers, another piece of hardware school IT personnel may not be familiar with. Considering microphones, digital recorders, and digital pianos were also found to be widely used in school music technology classes, the list of technologies exclusive to a music classroom can be quite expansive and beyond the knowledge of school IT personnel trained to handle technologies typically encountered in the average school classroom or office. A second major concern was the lack of professional development opportunities pertinent to the teaching of a music technology class, both from the local school community and professional music education organizations.

Dammers' 2010 case study followed the development and implementation of a music technology course in a suburban high school. This school's student population of 1200 students were 82% white, 12% African-American, and 6% Hispanic, with 21%

qualified for free-reduced lunch. The music department boasted two bands involving 60 students, two choirs involving 105, and two tiered levels of music theory classes involving 10 students. In all, accounting for students in multiple music classes, only 13% of school population was involved in some music class. Within the first year of the music technology class being created, 53 students enrolled one of three sections of the new class. The new class expanded the percentage of students in the building taking a music class by 4% and effectively expanded the music department's enrollment by 30% (Dammers, 2010).

Guitar Class Models. As noted by several of the guitar class teaching manuals (Snyder, 1998; Marsters, 2007), most school guitar teachers have little to no training in guitar. While some post-secondary institutions may have a teaching methods class that may cover guitar, in most cases it is either brief or non-existent. This circumstance has led to the creation of several nationwide guitar teaching workshops, such as those sponsored by partnerships between Guitar & Accessories Marketing Association (GAMA), the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) and NAfME, which aim to better train teachers to teach classroom guitar.

Many guitar programs make use out of one of several method books to be used in class instruction, much like beginning band classes at the elementary level. Classroom guitar beginning method books like the *Mastering Guitar* series by William Bay & Mike Christiansen, *The Complete Guitar Method* by Will Schmidt and Greg Koch, and the *Hands-on Training* series by Nancy Lee Marsters are often found in classroom use (Eckels, 2006). Many guitar educators recommend focusing on the teaching of guitar

playing technique as an essential feature of the course (Eckels, 2006; Schmidt, Marsters, & Shull, 1998; Marsters, 2007). Guitar classes also allow for the inclusion of different genres of music into the curriculum that may not be able to be included in other music class curriculum (Eckels, 2006). A single semester class is frequently the model of guitar classes found at the secondary level, though year-long classes and programs with additional advanced level courses in guitar can be found (Schmidt, Marsters, and Shull, 1998).

While the literature makes quite a case for the merits of a school guitar program, as of the writing of this thesis there is a dearth of information about the actual impact of guitar classes on the school music program beyond a few select case studies. Schmidt, Marsters, and Shull (1998) advocate that guitar classes have to potential to draw new students into a music classroom, help recruit new students into a school's traditional music ensembles, and do not negatively impact the traditional performance classes.

Music Appreciation, Music History, & Music Theory Class Models. It would seem that in many cases the students' experience in taking a high school music theory, music history (history of rock and roll, history of jazz), or music appreciation class depends largely on their teacher. Many such classes could be taught using one of several method or textbooks, along with several different supplemental materials. Literature on the merits and shortcomings of these various methods and inquiry into the frequency of their use is limited. As Raymond (1993) noted, for many classes, the resources used for non-BCO music classes can often be drawn from methods and texts used in the music

teacher's own training. It may be that teachers draw from their own student experiences in selecting materials for these music theory, history, and appreciation classes.

There is one particular course that has seen some standardization, AP Music Theory. For the last sixty years, the College Board has offered advanced placement (AP) exams across several subjects. These exams and curriculum models set forth by the College Board were designed to create college-level content courses for advanced high school students. Music Theory was added as a subject in 1978 (College Board, 2007). In the early years there were model exams, but no curriculum guides available, and teachers were left to develop their own curriculum (Raymond, 1993). More recently the College Board has released curriculum descriptions, teachers' guides, and a wealth of other resources to help teachers develop and deliver classroom instruction. While this standardization in the AP Music Theory curriculum by the College Board may lead to a uniformity in how the AP class is taught, schools that have had AP Music Theory offered before this standardization came about may still use many teacher developed curricular materials. In addition, some educators are looking to better incorporate music technologies into their music theory course, which again can lead to a greater diversity as to the course content and instruction between schools (Kuzmich, 2011). In Nebraska, there are currently 11 programs listed in the AP Music Theory course ledger, the majority of these schools located within the Omaha metro area (College Board, 2013).

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Introduction

This chapter will detail the methods and procedures used in this study. It will first describe the participant population, followed by a discourse on the development of the survey instrument, an overview of the procedures used, and a description of the methods used for data analysis.

Participants

All participants of this study were music teachers in the state of Nebraska who were registered members of the Nebraska Music Educators Association (NMEA), self-identified as having a high school teaching assignment, and included in the NMEA membership roster e-mail database.

While a stratified random sample selected from the population based on schools sizes and geographic region would be an ideal way to achieve a sample of schools representative to the distribution of Nebraska, such stratifications are not feasible to undertake due to the self-reported method used by NMEA to track membership. School assignments are recorded as entered into open text responses by each teacher; therefore there is no systematic way to organize the database by school, as school assignment data is not uniformly entered.

In addition to the initial survey, an additional selected sample was drawn from the participant population who indicate their willingness to participate in a follow-up interview. This interview was used to gather more detailed qualitative information about the participants' schools' non-BCO music classes. The selection of this sample of was based on three items: 1) Participant's consent to participate, 2) The presence of a non-BCO music class in said participant's school, and 3) An aim to acquire a diverse sample on different non-BCO music classes in different school settings.

Development of the Instrument

Using the web-based survey creator Survey Monkey, a survey instrument was designed by the researcher for the purpose of the study (see Appendix A). The survey consisted of three distinct sections: (a) questions designed for all teacher on school demographic data, (b) questions designed for teachers whose schools had non-BCO music classes, and (c) questions designed for teachers whose schools did not offer non-BCO music classes. Based on the responses on the first section, participants were directed to either the second or the third section of the survey, whichever better applies to their teaching assignment based on their own survey responses.

The first section of the survey consisted of demographic questions regarding the size of the school, the school setting, the size of the music program, the number of music teachers employed, and the types of music classes offered. From these questions, the survey then took the participant to one of two pages based on their response to the question about the inclusion of non-BCO music classes in the school curriculum.

For teachers who indicated their school offered at least one non-BCO music class, the survey mechanism presented the second section of questions that pertained only to teachers on non-BCO music classes. This portion of the survey consisted of questions pertaining to the size of the school's non-BCO music class(es), teacher perception of said class(es), an optional question about curriculum and materials, and an option for participants to indicate if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up study about their school's non-BCO music class(es). Once these questions were completed participants did not answer questions from the third section and exited the online survey.

For teachers who indicated their school offered did not offer a non-BCO music class, the survey mechanism presented the third section of questions that pertained only to teachers who did not teach non-BCO music classes. This section used a Likert-type scale rating the participants inclination to add a non-BCO music class to their schools music course offerings. In addition, participants were asked to select which kinds of non-BCO music classes they would be mostly likely to adopt into their own school music program. After completing this section participants completed and exited the online survey.

Procedure

After the survey and interview process were approved by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (IRB# 20140513690 EX) and approved by the NMEA research committee, a cover letter and link to the online survey was sent electronically to the NMEA Webmaster, who then sent both the cover letter and the survey link to the participant population. The e-mail cover letter explained the purpose of

the survey and included a link to the survey. All participants were asked to respond to all questions that presented in the survey. Since the survey was designed and programmed to skip and jump to questions based on participant responses, each participant may have answered a different number of applicable questions depending on their responses. Once the participants completed their survey the results were entered into the online Survey Monkey database. The Survey Monkey web program displayed results for the researcher, and allowed for the transfer of all responses into tables in Microsoft Excel software for analysis. Results were analyzed using descriptive statistics, chi-square analyses, and Pearson product moment analysis. In addition, responses to an optional free-response question about curricular materials were analyzed by identifying common or similar resources from those listed by participants.

Eight days after the initial e-mail letter and survey link was sent out, a follow-up e-mail and electronic link to the survey was sent out to participants by the NMEA Webmaster. This follow-up email encouraged participants who had not responded to do so, and based on the surge of responses in the two days following the reminder being sent out, it was successful in helping draw in a larger sample size for study.

After the initial survey, those participants who indicated their willingness to participate in a further interview were considered for a follow-up interview. The selection of participants was determined based on the participants' responses to the initial survey. A panel was chosen to achieve a representative selection of the survey population, including teachers from larger and smaller schools, different types of non-BCO music class offerings, and a spectrum of programs that have offered non-BCO music classes only recently and those with longer histories.

Analysis of Data

Descriptive statistics about the types and frequencies of various kinds of classes being taught were found and calculated to answer the first research question about the types of non-BCO music classes taught in Nebraska. Two chi-square analyses were done to explore any irregularities in the distribution of these non-BCO music classes between schools. The first examined if the distribution of non-BCO music classes in regards to the demographic setting of the school between urban, suburban, and rural locations. A second chi-square analysis examined the distribution of non-BCO music classes in regards to school student population sizes based on the school's NSAA size classification. Additionally, a Pearson product moment correlation was calculated to find if there are was any correlation between program or staffing size and the prevalence on non-BCO music classes. Additionally, descriptive statistics of participant responses to a Likert-type question on the survey were calculated to examine teacher perceptions about non-BCO music classes.

To answer questions about how some of these non-BCO music classes were created and what their impact was on the school music program, qualitative analysis methods were used. From the six participant follow-up interviews, interviewee responses were either transcribed from in-person interviews or collected from all correspondences conducted electronically. After gathering transcripts of all participant interviews the researcher then read through collected participant responses. Once all responses were initially read, the research then wrote some reflections, and used these reflections to then create codes for organizing the participant response data. The transcripts were then re-

read and segments of the collected texts were labeled and then grouped together. From this process broader themes from the interviews were generated to better organize the data.

Summary

This chapter outlined the methods used in this study. A description of the participants, the details about the development of the survey instrument, the procedure used to collect data, and the analytical methods used to study the data were presented. These methods were used to answer the research questions as outlined in Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe and profile the music course offerings of Nebraska high schools, specifically courses outside of the traditional band, choir, and orchestra classes. In the course of this study, there were seven guiding research questions this study sought to answer:

1. What kinds of music classes besides bands, choirs, and orchestras are taught in Nebraska high schools?
2. Are there any significant differences in the size of the school associated with the variety of music courses offered?
3. Are there any significant differences between the music course offerings in urban/suburban/rural school locations?
4. What is the relationship between the student population of the school music department and the number of kinds of music courses offered?
5. What are teacher perceptions about non-BCO music classes?
6. How are these non-BCO music classes created in schools?
7. What is the impact of these non-BCO music classes on the school music program?

This chapter will present the findings of this study in two main sections. The first section will cover the quantitative results gathered from the survey, beginning with a presentation of the demographics of the surveyed population and the results of the survey questions. Together these results will provide some answers for research questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 that explore the types of music courses offered in Nebraskan schools and the distributions of these classes across school settings, school student populations, and music department sizes. In addition the survey results inform research question 7 on teacher attitudes towards non-BCO music classes. The second half of the results section will cover the qualitative data gathered, beginning with a presentation of the demographics of the interviewed population and an overview of the responses in relation to research questions 5, 6, and 7 about the creation, impact, and teacher perception of non-BCO music classes on the school music curriculum.

Quantitative Survey Findings

Participant Demographics.

The survey was sent to 518 music teachers who were members of NMEA whose e-mail addresses were currently on the NMEA membership roster and had self-reported high school teaching assignments. Of these surveys, 94 were completed for an 18% response rate. However, as the NSAA recognizes 299 high school music programs in the state of Nebraska and only one teacher per school replied, roughly 31% of Nebraska high school music programs were represented. From the sample population, the following tables describe the teaching assignments by school size classification and demographic setting:

Table 4.1

Demographics of the Sample Population by School Size Classification (f_o)

School Size Classification	AA	A	B	C	D
Number of Teachers Reporting	29	12	13	24	16
(Percentage)	(30.9%)	(12.8%)	(13.8%)	(25.5%)	(17.0 %)

Table 4.2

Demographics of the Sample Population by School Setting (f_o)

School Demographic Classification	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Number of Teachers Reporting	14	25	55
(Percentage)	(14.9%)	(26.6%)	(58.3%)

Research Question 1: Non-BCO Music Class Offerings in Nebraska. Of the 94 survey responses collected, there were 67 (71.3%) who reported their school offered some type of non-BCO music class while only 27 (28.7%) reported no such class being offered. Music Theory was the most commonly taught class in the surveyed Nebraska high schools, being taught in 46 (48.9%) of the schools reporting. Music appreciation classes were the second mostly commonly taught class, found in 26 (27.7%) schools while guitar classes were close behind, found in 25 (26.6 %) of the surveyed schools. Other class offerings reported from the survey were music technology, present in 15 (16.0%) schools, music history in 10 (10.6%), class piano in six (6.4%), and music composition classes in three (3.2%).

In addition to the class options included on the survey, there was an opportunity to write in an "other" category, which was utilized by 20 (21.3%) respondents. Of these, six teachers listed before/after school small ensembles of brass, woodwind, and string players (thus not meeting the definition of non-BCO music classes). Another five teachers listed advanced sections of previously reported theory and/or guitar programs. Interestingly, three teachers listed handbell choirs, and another three teachers listed musical theater related classes. Also included in the write-in responses were a single contemporary music ensemble class and a single special education music class.

Additionally, the majority of respondents (56.7%) reported enrollment in non-BCO music classes in each school building as being 20 or fewer students. Upon further examination, the larger schools (classes AA and A) were the only ones reporting enrollments in non-BCO music classes over 80 students, and only schools in classes AA, A, & B reported total enrollments in such classes above 20 students.

Research Question 2: Non-BCO Music Class Offerings by School Size.

One of the most striking findings came from a chi-square test of independence that examined the relation between school size classifications and the prevalence of non-BCO music classes. A significant relation between these variables was found, χ^2 (4, N = 94) = 23.1, $p < .01$. Schools with the larger student populations (NSAA classifications of AA and A in particular) were found to have non-BCO music courses offered more frequently than smaller schools (schools under NSAA classifications of C and D) as shown in Table 4.3:

Table 4.3

Non-BCO Music Class Offerings by School Size Classification

	AA		A		B		C		D		Totals
	f	f_e	*f*	f_e	*f*	f_e	*f*	f_e	*f*	f_e	*f*
Schools With	27	20.4	11	8.4	10	9.1	12	16.9	6	11.2	67
School Without	2	8.6	1	3.6	3	3.9	12	7.1	10	4.8	27
Totals	29		12		13		24		16		94

χ^2 (4,94) = 23.1, p < .01, significant

Research Question 3: Non-BCO Music Classes by Demographic Setting. A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between school demographic setting and the prevalence of non-BCO music classes. No significant relationship between the variables was found, χ^2 (2, 94) = .824, p > .05 (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4

Non-BCO Music Class Offerings by School Setting

	Urban		Suburban		Rural		Totals
	f	*f(e)*	*f*	*f(e)*	*f*	*f(e)*	*f*
Schools With	11	10.1	19	18.0	37	38.9	67
Schools Without	3	3.9	6	7.0	17	15.1	27
Totals	14		25		55		94

χ^2 (2, 94) = .824, p > .05, not significant

Research Question 4: Non-BCO Music Classes by Music Program Size. Additionally, there was no significant correlation shown between the numbers of students in a music program to number of non-BCO music classes offered at that school. While there was a tendency for schools with larger enrollments in music programs to offer non-BCO music classes, there was not found to be a strong correlation between the two variables using a Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r = + .4802). In addition, the survey gathered responses on the number of teachers teaching within the school music

program as another metric to determine the size of the school music program. Another Pearson Product Moment Correlation calculated from this information also displayed a weak positive correlation between the number of music teachers to number of non-BCO music classes taught at each school, but this correlation was also not observed to be significant (r = + .4610).

Research Question 5: Perceptions of Non-BCO Music Classes. For the director's whose programs did not have non-BCO music class options, a Likert-type scale was used to gauge attitudes and predilections to add different types of music classes into their programs (see Table 4.5). Of the 27 directors whose programs did not have non-BCO music class options, 25 completed this final question. Mariachi ensembles were by far the least likely to be added to a music program, with a majority of music teachers (23, or 92%) labeling it as 'least' likely class to add to their school's music program and being the only class to have an average rating significantly higher than 4. While there was a clear consensus on mariachi, there was not a similar consensus towards other classes. Music Theory was the overall most favored class to add to a music program, being the only class option that averaged a positive rating, though the average rating of 2.48 on a 1-5 still reflected a relatively neutral stance. Class guitar, class piano, and music appreciation elicited the most equally distributed positive and negative responses of all the course options, and on average were slightly leaning towards being unfavorable. All the other class options were spilt with a stronger skew towards being less likely to be added to a music program and held average ratings between 3-4 on the Likert scale.

Table 4.5

Attitudes of Teachers Towards Adding Non-BCO Music Classes

	Most Likely (1)	More Likely (2)	Neutral (3)	Less Likely (4)	Least Likely (5)	Avg. Rating
Class Guitar	4	6	3	4	8	3.24
Class Piano	5	6	4	3	7	3.04
Mariachi Ensemble	0	0	1	1	23	4.88
Music Appreciation	4	4	7	2	8	3.24
Music History	4	5	3	2	11	3.44
Music Composition	4	0	9	2	10	3.56
Music Technology	3	6	5	3	8	3.28
Music Theory	9	5	4	4	3	2.48
Rock/Pop Ensemble	2	7	4	3	9	3.40

Qualitative Interview Findings

Participants. There were 18 individuals who indicated that they would be interested in participating in a follow-up interview. From this panel, there were ten initially contacted to participate in a follow-up interview. Of these individuals contacted about a follow-up interview, six responded and completed the interview. Two music teachers taught at AA schools, two taught at class A schools, one taught at a class B school, and one taught at a class C school. One music teacher identified as teaching in an urban school, two in suburban, and three in rural settings. Four of the instructors taught at least one music theory class, two taught a guitar class, two taught a music appreciation class, two taught a music technology/ contemporary music class, and one taught history of pop and history of rock classes.

Sites. Four participants elected to correspond via e-mail for considerations of time and distance. One participant opted for a telephone interview and another for an in-person

interview. Both the telephone interview and in person interview were recorded and transcribed with permission of the participants.

Analysis. Once the two interviews were transcribed, the six correspondence transcripts were compared using emergent category coding to find similar ideas and themes among responses.

Research Question 6: Creation of Non-BCO Music Classes. From the interviews, a four major themes emerged about the process of creating a non-BCO music class. First were the striking similarities between those interviewed about how they first began teaching the non-BCO music class(es) in their school. One teacher described the impetus for adding a non-BCO music course as:

> We have a high school graduation requirement of 1 semester of a Fine Arts course and offer something in each department [music, visual art]. We are also trying to reach those students not involved in the typical performance ensemble classes. We also wanted to prepare our students who were continuing a more in depth study of music beyond high school. (personal communication, June 25, 2014)

Another teacher expressed a similar experience: "They [school administration] had instituted a fine arts requirement for every student, so we had to give other options for the non-musicians…for a 5-credit [one semester] class" (personal communication, June 24, 2014). This common theme of school administration increasing or expanding fine arts requirements as an incentive to attract students not already involved in band,

choir, or orchestra (if offered) was recurring in the interviews, though the extent of requirements was not identical from school to school. The addition of a single semester fine arts requirement in particular was noted by half of the teachers interviewed. Yet some school administrations were supportive of increased music opportunities for all students regardless of graduation course requirements. One teacher working in such an environment reported their experience:

> The school I work in offers many non-performance music courses mainly to involve as many students as possible. The school likes to provide music opportunities that don't require the same amount of extra-curricular performances so that it may attract from a different student population. They also, to a degree, understand that involvement in music can help increase academic performance in other classes as well as it being a valued part of a well-rounded education. (personal communication, July 1, 2014)

Another teacher experienced a school administration that was very supportive of music classes with fewer extra-curricular engagements and prerequisites to encourage more student involvement in the school music program. This teacher's account was:

> Essentially, my wonderful superintendent, who at the time was both a 7-12 principal and superintendent, wanted an offering for students who wished to study instrumental music at a less serious and non-competitive level. He also wanted to use my abilities as an instrumental music teacher as completely as possible. I wanted something different, too many music teachers in small schools end up teaching random classes or even supervising study halls. I originally proposed a percussion ensemble and a

> music tech class, both designed for non-musician students. In the first year we has almost 1/4 of the 9-12 student population participate in the class we created which ended up being a hybrid percussion and guitar class. (personal communication, June 22, 2014)

This teacher's account also clarified another recurring theme. Several teachers' class schedules prior to adding a non-BCO music class included either a gap their administration requested be filled or had a class the instructor felt was underutilized, either due to low enrollment or lack of purpose. As one such teacher commented, "my principal asked me to fill a skinny [a ½ portion of a class on block scheduling], and told me it was up to me how I filled it" (personal communication, June 23, 2014). Another teacher explained that her schedule remains dependent on enough students signing up for a non-BCO music class:

> THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR [emphasis original] each semester is student interest. Very simply, if there are roughly 4-5 or more kids interested I can have the class. If fewer than that, then they re-assign me for a different course, like a distance learning supervision course" (personal communication, June 28, 2014)

In all, four of the interviewed instructors stated the impetus to add another music class initially came from their school administration wanting to add a class, who then left the task of designing and implementing that class to the discretion of the music teacher. The other two instructors had wanted to expand their own music department to better include students not involved in choral or instrumental music and approached their school administration with a proposal. One teacher recalled:

I personally wanted to involve more students in music. I had previously been the band director and worked my tail off to increase the numbers of the band. When I first started we had 36, my 8th and final year of band directing we had 115. That wasn't good enough. We had a staff meeting one day (beginning of my 7th year) that showed the test scores/G.P.A. of our top 20 students of each category within the junior class and how they corresponded…they showed the test scores and top 20 students. I had 18 out of those 20! (90% of the top students, and again only 8 % of the students in the building were involved in my classes.) 1 of the 2 that I didn't have was also involved in music, just not my classes [instrumental music]. That was amazing…but most importantly that was raw data looking me in the face boasting about how music students can achieve outside the classroom reinforcing my philosophy/belief. I went on to do some more research of my own. Our school has had a ridiculously low graduation rate…I checked out the graduation rate for students that were involved in my class from 2007-2012. The music classes that I taught could boast a graduation rate average during that 5 years [*sic*] time of 92%. Again that was extra corroboration of the effects of Music, Academic Testing and Graduation Rate! [*sic*] But, that wasn't enough. [*sic*] My classes were only reaching 8% of the student body, so I proposed the addition of Guitar to attract more students…Very different demographic that [*sic*] what we are trained to teach in college as well as a distinctly different generation. (personal communication, June 30, 2014)

Another teacher shared similar sentiments about why they wanted to add a non-BCO music class:

> I just had a middle school group that needed something to do. And that [pop & rock music history] seemed to interest them. I mean you look at all the Silver-Brudett stuff for middle school, and it's, it's stuff they don't care about. I hate to say it, but it is. And it [pop & rock music history class] just grew and evolved from there. (personal communication, June 24, 2014)

Though most of the interviewed teachers emphasized the benefits for students of creating a non-BCO music class, there was one teacher from a smaller school who characterized one their classes as being created for a different reason:

> As far as the [music appreciation] class, I did that for purely selfish reasons. I didn't want to be there every night 'til midnight building set [for school musical]. I had—I was a single mom, so it was like, "How 'bout–I have an idea for a class, what do you think?" and they bought it. We get most of our set built in class. Very seldom do we have to put in extra time. But it is—class purpose is for everybody. It's given them [students] another offering. It's helped me out time wise because when you're the only director, and the piano player, you don't want to be painting until midnight…[pause]…Our musical hits right after the show choir season, so from January until February I'm there from 7 in the morning until 10 at night. (personal communication, June 24, 2014)

This class the teacher further described the class as a hybrid of music appreciation and musical theater class:

> I go off a book. We get through about 7 chapters, but then we get into building the set. Everything the leads to a production these kids go through. We do advertising, we do program, sets, we do everything. Kind of a music theater hybrid. I cap that class at 12 because that's how many kids I can supervise in the shop at a time. (personal communication, June 24, 2014)

Once the incentive for creating a new class was created, the next step for every teacher was to get a class proposal approved by their building administration. Two teachers who had initiated discussion about adding a non-BCO course characterized those conversations as beginning informally with the building principal, continuing to the superintendent and, in one case, members of the school board. After this period of informal conversation a more concrete proposal for this non-BCO music class would develop, and in both instances the proposal was quickly approved and adopted by the administration and the school board. In each case the teacher reported their initial informal conversations taking place in the early fall or summer and the class being up and running for student enrollment for the next year. As one recounted, "It started with a full year of side conversations between administration, the board and myself. Once we created something agreeable to all involved we made a formal announcement in the spring prior to the course starting" (personal communication, June 23, 2014).

While in that instance the resulting course was developed quickly by a single music teacher, other teachers had more time to prepare and develop their non-BCO music

classes. In this preparation, all teachers reported this development process as being led primarily by themselves, or in one case, with other music teachers in the department:

> A team of music teachers met multiple times and researched courses and designed them with the end goals in mind…We had to design courses that could be taught in the current schedule and staffing structures of the schools. The design process followed the same pattern for adding/creating any courses in our district. We go through a curriculum review once every 7 years. (personal communication, June 25, 2014)

However, this experience was not the norm, as most teachers expressed that they had created most of their own curriculum and course content. One teacher recounted:

> I utilize various websites, including musictheory.net, some textbooks for examples, and my own curriculum…materials were acquired through experience (building worksheets over the years), graduate work, in-services, conferences, and the like…the course takes a 3-pronged approach: music theory, music appreciation, and music history. I feel it is important to intertwine these areas as much as possible, to build students understanding of music more comprehensively. (personal communication, June 30, 2014)

As the music teachers often generated their own curriculum, many noted that they gathered their course materials from a variety of sources. As one teacher shared, "I like a lot of the materials we have, but I don't have a specific one that is our main curriculum. I wrote the curriculum for our guitar that uses the best parts of all the books we have" (personal communication, June 28, 2014). In developing a curriculum from multiple

sources, several of the interviewed teachers reflected that their decisions to try out different materials came from their own knowledge, but also through a degree of trial and error. One teacher described their process as: "I bought a couple of books off the internet. I just started reading, putting together presentations, finding listening example… [pause] …but you know, it's going to be trial and error. They're going to learn right along with me what works and what doesn't" (personal communication, June 24, 2014). The teachers who stated or alluded to the use of trial and error in developing the class curriculum also expressed that the process was continually ongoing.

In the development of the different types of non-BCO music classes, each was tailored to fit a role informed by the teacher's philosophy and views of what their school music program needed. Some of the teachers who taught music theory noted that preparing high school students for collegiate music experiences was an incentive to offer a music theory course. One teacher recounted:

> It was clear that we had kids that had the desire to become music educators or pursue music performance degrees. Based on my experiences in college, I knew that our high school kids would benefit greatly from an introductory music theory class. (personal communication, June 30, 2014)

Another teacher of a music theory class expressed a similar rationale for the course's inclusion:

> [School name] encourages students to further their study in music. This is the primary reason to offer Music Theory - to prepare students for college music study. The course has been offered here for many years. In continuing the course, my emphasis continues to be future college music

majors. Although others take the course, the focus is college-prep. (personal communication, June 28, 2014)

While some of the music theory classes created by teachers were open to all students, all of the interviewed teachers shared similar beliefs that the music theory class primarily served as a means to prepare student already involved in the school music program with the skills to be successful in a collegiate music program. In contrast, the non-BCO music classes besides music theory were described as being created to give musical opportunities for students not already included in the program. One teacher of a guitar class and music technology class stated the purpose of the classes was simply "to reach a wider variety of students, and give them a highly engaging musical experience so that they may be enriched by a quality musical experience" (personal communication, June 30, 2014).

When describing their background in the subject matter there was a wide variety of comfort levels reported by teachers when they first began teaching their non-BCO music class. The three of the teachers interviewed who taught music theory (some in addition to a music appreciation class) said they had felt prepared to begin teaching their new courses, as their collegiate training had covered similar material. One teacher expressed their background preparation as:

> [I have] undergraduate and graduate degrees from UNL [University of Nebraska-Lincoln]…75% of our high school kids have very little knowledge of the basics. I have had kids who were the exception though, and who could master most everything I could throw at them, from

> difficult ear training dictation to spelling difficult 7th chords. (personal communication, June 28, 2014)

Another teacher comments highlighted that their college preparation was more than adequate to prepare them to teach a high school music theory course:

> In college I covered more music theory than my students will get through. Most of what we cover is just the basics: note-reading, building chords, intervals, maybe seven chords if it's an advanced group…but when you add in the song-writing activities and any history items you don't have time to cover what you got to in college theory. (personal communication, June 24, 2014)

While some of the teachers interviewed expressed a high level of familiarity with the subject matter and comfort level in teaching their non-BCO music class curriculums, instructors who taught non-BCO music classes other than music theory reported initially jumping into a new unfamiliar curricular area. One teacher's experience in preparing for teaching a non-BCO music class was as follows:

> I was really nervous about teaching guitars and openly had no clue how/where to begin. I actively searched for something to prepare me for the guitar portion of my course when they [school administration] requested that I teach that. I was unwilling to do so without something. When I approached the administration and board about the TGW [Teaching Guitar Workshop, but on by the Guitar and Accessories Marketing Association & NAfME] they were openly excited and agreed to pay for the experience. The TGW was a 5-day experience, probably 10-12

> hours a day with excellent guitar educators. My teachers were the guitar professors from George Mason University and one of the directors of the Cambridge (UK) Guitar Ensemble. It was designed to cover a year worth of a classroom guitar curriculum in 4 days. The course provided you with a free guitar, dozens of resource and method books, a smattering of accessories, and a couple of graduate credit hours. The TGW was probably the most educational and value-rich experience in my professional career. I felt ready and equipped for success. (personal communication, June 22, 2014)

Another teacher's experience was:

> After I got approval [to start the course] I started studying privately on guitar. But, I only had 6 months of private guitar instruction (or of guitar playing for that matter) before I began teaching. I have been sequencing and composing things on digital mediums for almost 15 years before I started teaching but was a novice/hobbyist at every other facet of MT [music technology]…I attended some summer Teaching Guitar Workshops which went through most of the available curriculum available…I wrote the curriculum for our guitar that uses the best parts of all the books we have…Things were recommended to me(great recommendations) and I need to stay ahead of the students for this to be successful…For music technology I have gone to various clinics, and worked with local recording studios and recording engineers from around the nation that I have had the luck to cross paths with sometime in my life.

> I also went to the national TI:ME (Technology In Music Education) convention my second year of teaching at this school. For Guitar I attended the Week (sic) long workshops—Teaching Guitar Workshops, both levels 1 & 2. I attended the workshops the past two summers. (personal communication, June 30, 2014)

It was interesting to note that despite attending the same workshop, the two teachers curriculums developed along divergent paths. The younger of the two teachers characterized his instruction of a guitar class as following the TGW curriculum while the more experienced teacher used a plethora of guitar resources from which to generate a unique tailored curriculum.

While the teachers of guitar classes had some formal or semi-formal experience and preparation to teach their classes, teachers of music technology classes and history of rock and pop music classes had less structured preparation for those classes. One teacher's response to what materials were used for various types of non-BCO music classes illustrates that though textbooks exist for music theory and music appreciation courses, music technology classes were more designed based on the equipment available for students to use:

> [Our] Music Theory and AP Music Theory use "Music in Theory and Practice" Vol. 1 & 2 by Benward & Saker, Music Consumers [music appreciation] uses "Popular Music in America" by Michael Campbell. The Contemporary Ensemble class uses Mac laptops, Garage Band, a USB mixer and microphones. They also have access to guitars, electronic drums and headphones. The class is driven by projects and is not centered around

a text. (personal communication, June 20, 2014)

The teacher of the history of pop and rock music classes described gathering the materials and curriculum for the class as follows:

> This class was designed in like, 19…85, and it has grown. So I started off with film strips, back then, took information off of that, and then just starting taking books that I could find and supplementing with that. It's totally my baby…[pause]...Just recently I've gotten a couple of books that I pull off of, and there's some—there's some decent middle school worksheets and stuff that I tell my kids are super easy, but they reinforce what we've talked about…[pause]…So, lots of music. We do lots of listening. On every test we have a listening test. They do projects where they—one of them's called 'Take a Stand,' and it finds a song that's associated with a political action and they have to research that and use iMovie for that. They also do a final project that is of their own choosing. Somebody that they are really interested in and what to share with the class. They can use any presentation tool they choose. (personal communication, June 24, 2014)

This teacher's account of designing curriculum was characterized as: "it's a process, you get some books, get some ideas, try it out…it's a learning process for you and for the kids" (personal communication, June 24, 2014). One such example of the trial and error nature of the course curriculum is as follows:

> I tried once to do a Blues writing unit. Where they had to write some lyrics and put them to music. Well, that doesn't work when you don't have

> musicians. So I tried to give them a canned blues riff, but they still don't understand how to put lyrics to music, so that's turned into a lyric writing project. (personal communication, June 24, 2014)

Regarding the financial ramifications of adding new classes to the music curriculum in a school, there were very different approaches experienced by the interviewed teachers. In two cases the new classes were given classroom equipment and supply budgets comparable to any other class in the building (e.g. English, math, science, PE) and separate from the pre-existing choral and instrumental music budgets. One such teacher's response when asked about how materials were purchased and acquired simply stated, "through our regular curriculum review and adoption funds, just as any class [all 9-12 classes]" (personal communication, June 25, 2014). However, the experience of receiving funding specifically for a new non-BCO music class was not found to be the norm. One teacher was given an increase to the entire music budget from which to draw the new classes expenses, which could be spent at the teacher's discretion. Another teacher was able to take advantage of a one-time budget surplus (referred to as a "wish list" fund) to purchase the necessary materials to start the class, but otherwise has to deduct yearly supply and maintenance costs from their preexisting music department budget. In this teacher's words:

> We had some changes in the district, so our school had received more funding than expected. We had—have a wish list of inventory and supplies that each department wants, but doesn't have the money to buy for that year in case admin have leftover funds. That year our school had more [funding] than usual, so they [administration] went to the smaller

> departments first and we used our portion to buy supplies to kick-start this class we wanted to add…Now that we have the equipment, the upkeep comes out of my budget, but there isn't much needed. (personal communication, June 24, 2014)

The other two teachers did not report having any additional funds available to start up nor maintain their non-BCO music classes. One teacher described the discussions of starting the class with administration as:

> They [administration] were really supportive. It's was just like, "well, we'd like to do it, but it's, just, well, we don't have a whole lot of money." –you know. And that's, that's [*sic*] a big thing. Um, when you're talking about a thing like that, that involves bucks. But other than that they're very supportive, and open to new ideas. (personal communication, June 30, 2014)

Another teacher commented on the financial impact:

> We just have a single music budget that is spent by me, so I can buy what we need for the program. When I want, or need, something for the theory class, or if any other expense comes up I have enough that I can free up something to cover it. We've got a big enough library that I don't need to buy new music every concert and sometimes I can hold off sending an instrument in for a tune-up if there isn't a student using it. The class doesn't really have any need for a lot of money, since we have a computer lab, so it's not really a problem. (personal communication, June 27, 2014)

Teachers who were given additional budgeted funding expressed different considerations when selecting course materials than those who did not. One teacher whose non-BCO music class was given its own budget stated the following considerations for selecting curricular materials: "They [materials] allowed the students to meet the curriculum requirements and they were flexible and offered support through technology. We reviewed a number of different materials and selected these that best met our needs" (personal communication, June 25, 2014). In contrast, teachers who did not have budgeted funding for the non-BCO music classes taught at their school did not express these considerations. Instead, materials were selected on a basis of accessibility and affordability. As one teacher stated: "Since we don't really have a budget, any materials I use have to be free or I have to find a way to buy them. Now with internet…it's really easy to just find things online and use them. I can get my examples from YouTube instead of having to buy and borrow CDs" (personal communication, June 24, 2014).

Research Questions 7: Impact of Non-BCO Music Classes. In terms of impact on the school music program, all teachers interviewed had overwhelmingly positive things to say about their non-BCO music classes. Participating teachers, particularly those who taught non-BCO music classes besides music theory, cited that non-BCO music classes increased the opportunities their school afforded to students. As one teacher said, "We have reached students we wouldn't reach otherwise and those courses have been successful in expanding the education of the students they serve. Occasionally we do inspire these students to also join one of the other music classes" (personal

communication, June 25, 2014). One teacher shared a particularly noteworthy achievement: "In the first year we had almost 1/4 of the 9-12 student population participate in the class we created." (personal communication, June 22, 2014).

The theory classes were rarely said to attract students who weren't already involved in either bands or choirs. One music theory teacher described the impact as: "A positive impact is noticed among those students who participate. However, as a disclaimer, those students are also enrolled (by and large) in either vocal or instrumental performance-based classes" (personal communication, June 30, 2014). One teacher did express the benefit of their music theory class as follows:

> With our schools schedule, not all kids can be in their band or choir class. Having the option of a music theory class gives them a chance to be in a music class, and sometimes it gives us an opportunity to perform with the various instruments and voices we have in the class in chamber groups we can break into around district contest. It also gives me an opportunity to work with students individually on their instrument or voice if the class is working on a project. Especially around contest, college auditions, and even honor group auditions. Sometimes we [students] can write music and perform their compositions for some of the composition projects. (personal communication, June 27, 2014)

Several of teachers made the point that their additional classes are a better use of their time and students' time, as they had previously had non-music class assignments or empty periods. Some teachers interviewed also made the point that the switch from

leading choral or band rehearsal to a different class-type setting was a welcome change of pace within the school day:

> It's kinda refreshing. You direct choirs or bands all day and then you go to a class with a whole different group of students, and they also want to be there. And if your ensembles aren't doing [rehearsing] well that day, like you have a bunch of kids gone, or it's just not there, you get a class that's kind of a chance to restart. (personal communications, June 27, 2014)

Other teachers seemed to enjoy the opportunity to work with new students within their school. One teacher remarked that, "I spent some time in the lunchroom and passing periods trying to recruit students I didn't already have in class" (personal communication, June 22, 2014). As many teachers started their non-BCO music to attract new students, the opportunity to work with a new student population was viewed as a positive impact by teachers.

The only negative impact gleaned from the interviews was from those teachers who didn't have additional funding provided by their school to teach additional classes outside of bands and choirs. Despite this apparent lack of resources, most teachers had the materials and supplies they needed to teach their classes. The only explicit comment about the lack of funding came from one teacher who commented that their future goals are out of reach due to issues of space and funding: "We thought it would be fun to create a keyboard [piano] class, but we don't have anywhere to put it, number one. And...start up money for a keyboard lab" (personal communication, June 24, 2014).

However, for classes such as music theory, technology, and music history, there were a plethora of resources used that mitigated the financial aspects. One teacher stated:

> I use many items available on the internet. For example, I use music theory.net and sonicfit.com as a good way to have student practice theory and ear training. I also use some materials that I have acquired over 25 years of teaching for the appreciation part of the course. (personal communication, June 28, 2014)

Additionally, teachers cited online resources like YouTube as the source of many listening materials and musictheory.net as a resource for instruction materials and exercises. Those with music technology classes pointed to and used resources like Apple Inc.'s GarageBand, which come pre-installed in computer labs for schools that use Apple computers in their building. While funding may be a concern, none of the teachers interviewed voiced concerns that any funding issues could not be easily mitigated by technology options.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, & RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

As stated in the previous chapter, the results of the survey indicated that music theory classes were the most commonly taught non-BCO music class in high schools across the state of Nebraska. Music appreciation and guitar classes were also found in roughly a quarter of the sampled schools and other types of non-BCO music class offerings were less common. While school's with larger size classifications were found to be more likely to offer non-BCO music courses than school's of smaller size classifications, no relationship was found between the demographic setting of the school and non-BCO music course offerings nor between the student population of the music program and non-BCO music course offerings. Teachers who did not currently teach a non-BCO music course viewed music theory classes as the class they would most likely add, and tended to view the other options as unlikely to be added into their school programs. However, teachers who did teach non-BCO music classes who were interviewed viewed the classes positively, citing them as rewarding to teach and providing opportunities for students. These non-BCO music classes taught by the interviewed teachers were created through a combination of teacher interest and school administrator support. Some of the non-BCO music classes were found to engage more students into the school music program, some provided more in-depth opportunities for music students, some allowed music teachers to teach additional music classes instead of

study halls, and others gave music teachers a welcomed outlet to teach music outside the context of the typical band, choir, or orchestra rehearsal.

Research Question 1: Non-BCO Music Class Offerings in Nebraska

From the survey results, it would appear that non-BCO music classes are a commonplace feature of school music programs within the sampled population. Music theory classes were show to be the most prevalent, appearing in over half of sampled school programs, while guitar and music appreciation classes were each found in about a quarter of the sampled schools. These findings would show that the prevalence of non-BCO music classes similar to the findings of Abril and Gault in 2008. While the sample of Nebraska schools had a higher prevalence of music programs include guitar and music theory courses, the Nebraska sample did not have as many class piano, music appreciation, and music composition courses in proportion to Abril & Gault's nationwide study.

While music theory classes are the most widespread across Nebraska, this may be problematic for the advancement of music opportunities for high school students who are currently uninvolved in their school's music program. As leaders in music education (Palmer, Hughes, Jothen, & March, 1989; Hoffer, 1988; Gerber, 1988; Lehman, 1988; Thompson & Keister, 1997; VanWeelden & Walters, 2004; Kratus, 2007) have asserted, there is a need for secondary music class offerings to included a larger percentage of the general high school student population. From the interviews, music theory classes primarily provide students already involved in school music classes an additional enriching experience in music, which, while valuable, does not further the cause of music

for all students. This is problematic because as music theory may be the easiest class to add to the music curriculum, it is also the least likely non-BCO music class to engage new students into the music program. In general, music theory is viewed as an easier class to teach (all music teachers interviewed undertook music theory in their collegiate training and are thus familiar with the subject), the required materials are relatively inexpensive (being limited to textbooks or free online resources), and the physical classroom needs are basic. While the prospect of adding a music theory class is a very low risk and low hassle endeavor compared to other alternatives, its low risk comes with a low reward of engaging a select minority of students into the music program. For a music teacher wanting a more rigorous music class to prepare future music majors, music theory seems a worthwhile endeavor. However, for a music teacher looking to expand their programs to include students not already involved in the high school music program, there are better alternatives.

Of those alternative class options, the guitar class and music appreciation class were found to be the two most popular non-BCO music classes in Nebraska, each found in 26% of the surveyed schools. Given their popularity across programs and based on the experiences of the teachers interviewed who instruct such classes, for the teacher wanting develop a music program, these classes were highly successful in bringing new students into the music department. It was also interesting to note that teachers who taught music history classes described their course objectives and their classroom activities similarly to teachers of music appreciation. Both groups of teachers used the phrase ‘broadening students horizons’ to describe one of their goals in the class, which both music appreciation and music history classes can aptly do. The key difference found between

the two types of classes was that music appreciation teachers organized their course content by topics of theory, history, and possibly performance, while music history teachers structured their classes by historical chronology (both instructors teaching music history classes start in the past and moved towards the present day). It was interesting that two separate teachers, one of a music history and another of music appreciation, included individual student research projects on musical figures and incorporated music composition and performance elements within their classes.

Given the concerns voiced by some teachers about financial concerns for the viability of a non-BCO music class, it is intriguing that music technology classes are a distant fourth in popularity. For the educator concerned about best use of their limited budget, it is easy to see why music theory and music appreciation classes are relatively popular, as the costs to offer such a class can be quite small, and with technologies like YouTube and musictheory.net, additional materials can be found for free. Yet guitar classes can be prohibitively expensive, as both teachers interviewed noted that they rely on a majority of students to provide their own instrument and plan to gradually expand their currently limited inventory over time. For some schools, this system is a viable option, but it may not be so for others. What is interesting is that of the both music technology instructors pointed to using programs that were free to purchase and use. For example, GarageBand (Apple Inc., 2014) is freeware that is prepackaged in all Apple computers. Other examples were the music notation software packages like Finale's Notepad (MakeMusic, 2012) or Musescore (Schweer, Froment, & Bonte, 2013), which are freely available to both Windows and Apple machine. Even music recording software like Audacity (Audacity Team, 2008) is freely available to download onto any computer.

Since the cost of teaching a music technology class could be substantially lower than that of a guitar class it is interesting that they are so far fewer in number than guitar classes. It could be that music teachers' perceptions of guitar are more positive than to music technology. Technology is ever evolving and guitar and music appreciation classes don't have to worry about content becoming obsolete on a recurring basis. A second reason could be that a music technology class is not perceived by music teachers to be as attractive to potential music students as a guitar class or music appreciation class. A third rationale could be the fact that method books for teaching guitar class, like the *Hands-on Training* beginning guitar series, are in abundance, while such methods and pre-existing curriculum for music technology classes are not. In the survey, there was an optional comment box for music teachers to list any curricular materials the used, to which 30 teachers listed resources, all of which were either piano and guitar method books or textbooks for music theory or appreciation classes. Given the vast resources and time necessary to develop a curriculum, it would be interesting to see if the availability of pre-existing curricular materials influences music teachers' decisions on whether or not to add a particular type of class.

Unfortunately for this thesis, there was not an opportunity to interview teachers of music composition or class piano. Class piano may be scarce due to the expense of needing to provide keyboards for an entire class, which limits the number of schools able to dedicate the necessary resources. It could also be partially due to teachers being uncomfortable teaching the content if they themselves do not have an extensive background in piano. The lack of an extensive background in music composition by music educators may also be a factor in the scarcity of music composition classes taught

in Nebraska. Due to the limited information collected on these two particular courses, not much can be inferred from these findings, but it would be a worthwhile endeavor to further explore these two types of music classes as they do have the potential to appeal to students both currently involved and uninvolved in their school music program.

While mariachi ensembles were not found to be taught in Nebraska high schools, it was interesting to note that in addition to not being found in any school music programs, they were also found to be the least likely class Nebraska music teachers not already teaching a non-BCO music class would add into their music programs. Given that Nebraska music teacher's exposure to mariachi ensembles may be relatively scare compared to that of music teachers in other regions within the United States, the minimal exposure and minimal opportunity to gain experience within the genre of mariachi music may contribute to the low interest. Mariachi ensembles have flourished particularly in the southwestern United States along with the rise in the Hispanic population (Clark, 2005), of which mariachi music is a part of the cultural identity. Given that Nebraska's Hispanic population has grown by 77% from 2000 to 2010 and is on pace to triple again by 2050, making it the fastest growing demographic group in the state (University of Nebraska-Omaha Center for Public Affairs Research, 2010), it will be interesting to see if Nebraska makes a shift to follow the national trend of expanding music offerings to include mariachi in the coming years.

Research Questions 2, 3 & 4: Distributions of Non-BCO Music Classes

While school size classifications displayed a strong correlation ($p < .01$) to the offering of non-BCO music classes, it was interesting that such correlation was not

significantly correlated to the population demographic of the school, nor the staff size or music program size. While the urban/suburban/rural setting of a school, the program size, or the staff size may not strongly influence the logistical considerations of teaching a non-BCO music class, as there was no correlation found in the survey nor did any of the interviewed participants cite any of those factors as key factors teaching in their non-BCO music classes. It is peculiar though that larger schools were strongly correlated to having such classes offered in their curriculum, as such schools tended to have the larger staff sizes and larger music departments, but those two factors alone were not correlated with additional music class offerings. While the most obvious distinctions between a class AA school and a class D school are the enrollment sizes and the staff sizes, there may be other factors influencing the decision to offer a non-BCO music class.

Three possibilities come to mind. First, a larger school may be likely to have additional resources, such as a larger budget for instruction and activities, so such schools may be better able to provide additional curricular opportunities. From the interviews, the two teachers from the class AA schools had a budget structure that was allotted by class, while the other teachers had a more generalized budget for the music department. While this may be a limiting factor, it is interesting that even the teachers who had initial budget concerns interviewed stated that financing such courses was not burdensome, with the availability of so much free software and resources on the internet. It could simply be a matter of trepidation of directors to commit to teaching a new class with budgets being reduced on a regular basis and having to do the same or more with less.

Second, it could be that larger schools have a different staffing structure that better enables music teachers to teach additional classes. In smaller schools it is not

uncommon for a vocal specialist and an instrumental specialist to split responsibilities between high school and middle/elementary school classes. While a high school may have two or three music teachers, it may be that they each only teach a couple or even a single class at the high school and then have to go teach a class at a different grade level, in some cases this can mean traveling to a different school building. Due to the time lost for commuting inside the school day, music teachers in such assignments would be more limited in their teaching loads. This may not be the case for music teachers working in larger schools, who may have enough students in the high school program to stay within a single building all day and are thus better able to add an additional class. It would be interesting to see how teaching responsibilities between those who teach only 9-12 and those who teach 7-12, 5-12, or K-12 impact a teachers desire and ability to teach music classes outside of bands, choirs, and orchestras.

Finally, the reason larger schools might be more inclined to offer non-BCO music classes than their smaller counterparts is that their larger enrollments make starting a new class easier. While a large music department was not found to be indicative towards whether or not a school was likely to have a non-BCO music class, having a large music department is not necessarily related to having a large student body. Generally speaking, the more students who sign up for a class, the more likely the school will continue to offer it. To quote one interviewee,

> "THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR [emphasis original] each semester is student interest. Very simply, if there are roughly 4-5 or more kids interested, I can have the class. If fewer than that, then they re-assign

me for a different course, like a distance learning supervision course."

(Teacher 5, personal communication, June 28, 2014)

These sentiments were echoed by the other music teachers. It was also interesting to note that those teachers from the class A, B, and C schools discussed enrollment requirements as deciding whether or not an entire "class" would be offered, while those teachers in the AA schools were apt to refer to classes in a manner such as "a section of music technology." Furthermore, the interviews with the music teachers in the class A, B, and C schools discussed recruiting for such classes multiple times within their interviews, the teachers from the larger schools touched upon the subject, but did not demonstrate as much concern as their colleagues. Of the interviewed teachers, all but one identified a minimum number of students needed to enroll in a class in order for it to be offered at their school and all of theses number fell between 5-15. It may simply be that by teaching at a larger school it is easier to have enough students sign-up for a class to be offered. However, other factors such as the culture of the school, popularity of an instructor, or the fact the some class offerings are more established than others may be more to credit for this phenomenon. As recruiting was addressed by teachers in smaller schools as being a critical component to offering an alternative music class, finding best practices for recruiting for non-BCO music classes should be a priority for teachers interested in expanding non-BCO music classes into the music program of smaller schools.

Research Question 5: Perceptions of Non-BCO Music Classes

All of the interviewed teachers had a positive opinion of the non-BCO music classes they specifically taught, and several commented about other types of classes they

had considered implementing and/or were considering to add in the future if the opportunity arose. Two of the teachers interviewed discussed considering expanding their course offerings, either within pre-existing classes or by creating new classes. Both highlighted the fact that there are multitudes of free resources available and the basic requirement to start up a course in terms of classroom space and other materials are quite minimal compared to other options like guitar classes. On the whole, teachers already teaching non-BCO music classes had positive opinions on such courses and were very open to pursuing other class options if the opportunity arose.

On the other hand, directors who did not already have non-BCO music classes in their school program have several different opinions as to which type of class they would be most likely to pursue. A majority had agreed that music theory was more likely to be added into their music program compared to other opportunities. This may be due to the low financial burden this class would place on the music department and that music teachers, having taken several years of music theory at the collegiate level, are most likely comfortable with the subject material. While there was interest in guitar, piano, and music appreciation amongst other class options, there was not a strong consensus favoring any one over the other. Further research into music teacher perceptions about non-BCO ensemble music classes from the perspective of music teachers who do not currently have such classes in their school music program would be a worthwhile pursuit for those wanting to expand such music course offerings it schools. It would be interesting to compare the perceptions of music teachers who teach those non-BCO music classes with those teachers who do not.

Research Question 6: Creation of Non-BCO Music Classes

From the interviews, an archetypal model inclusive of all interviewees' expansion of their music programs can be surmised as follows:

Desire to teach a non-BCO music class. While only a minority of teachers interviewed took the initiative to ask their administration to start a non-BCO music class, all of the teachers interviewed ultimately were left to their own discretion to determine what kind of music class they wanted to offer. As one such teacher commented, "my principal asked me to fill a skinny [a ½ portion of a class on block scheduling], and told me it was up to me how I filled it" (personal communication, June 23, 2014). In all cases, instructors chose a class model they were passionate about and actively wanted to teach.

This passion also directly relates to teacher competency in teaching whatever non-BCO music class a teacher decides to add to their program. Four of the teacher's interviewed taught a theory class to better prepare students who wanted to go on in the musical studies beyond high school. These teachers both wanted to teach a theory class and unanimously reporting being confident and comfortable in covering the course material. For the teachers of music technology, guitar, and pop and rock history classes, all three of the teachers were very open about all of the workshops, seminars, and resources they had used to prepare for the class months before ever teaching the class itself.

Open interaction and support from school administration. All of the teachers interviewed praised their school administration's flexibility, openness, and support. Even for those teachers who were asked to start a new class by their administration characterized it as a positive experience. For the two teachers who started classes in areas outside of the expertise, administrative support to pursue relevant professional development activities was characterized as crucial to their success in starting the new course. As one teacher related:

> I actively searched for something to prepare me for the guitar portion of my course when they requested that I teach that. I was unwilling to do so without something. When I approached the administration and board about the Teaching Guitar Workshop they were openly excited and agreed to pay for the experience. (personal communication, June 24, 2014)

Opportunistic Beginnings. All of the interviewed teachers discussed the creation of their non-BCO music class as starting from a request from their building administration or having their administration approve their idea to add a new course offering. All of the teachers interviewed had some resource, be it instructional time, class space, surplus budget funds, or some combination of those they capitalized on to create a new music class. In one teacher's experience, it was the move to block scheduling, leading the administration to need additional classes, which was the incentive. Another teacher had a new administration team that wanted more fine arts offerings, "for students who wished to study instrumental music at a less serious and non-competitive level." (personal communication, June 22, 2014) While some music teachers may cringe at the

notion of "less serious" music classes, the teacher explained the administration was really interested in finding instrumental music options students wouldn't need years of instruction just to meet the most basic of pre-requisites. Collectively, all of the interviewed participants had an opportunity that they took advantage of to expand their music program, and they all continue to teach the same classes they had started.

Finding Materials and Developing Curriculum: A Process. Depending on the type of class the teacher decides to offer, the acquisition of teaching materials was described one of two ways. For instructors of music theory and music appreciation in particular, a single selected textbook was described as the primary source of material used in the classroom, though they characterized the class curriculum as following the book's lesson guides along with supplemental activities and projects. Amongst the music theory teachers there was actually a wide discrepancy of how rigid the curriculum was year to year, one taught the same curriculum every year, two added and modified small projects within the curriculum, and one modified the class extensively given the background of the students in the class. Teachers of music technology, rock and pop music history and guitar classes tended to list a larger number of method books, textbooks, and other resources and characterized their experiences as developing their own curriculum from several different sources, all of these teachers also made a point to comment that this process was continuously ongoing.

Research Question 7: Impact of Non-BCO Music Classes

From the interviews, several recurring themes were discussed as developments within music programs that offered non-BCO music classes.

Expanding The Program: Depth and/or Breadth. All music teachers interviewed described their non-BCO music classes as expanding their music departments' offerings, but how their class expanded those offerings depended mainly on the type of class being offered. The interview teachers of music theory classes were unanimously upfront with the fact that such classes are primarily designed and catered to music students in the band and choral programs wanting to go more in depth with advanced music content. These classes occasionally have students who otherwise were not involved in the school music program, but teachers characterized such students as extremely rare occurrences. All of the teachers of music theory classes interviewed made a point to state that the music theory classes were not intended to attract new students into the music department, and the three teachers who taught additional non-BCO music classes noted that their other class options were there to serve that purpose instead.

All of the teachers interviewed about their guitar, music technology, and history of rock or pop music classes described them as being geared primarily to give students not involved in bands, orchestras, or choirs an opportunity to be involved in a high school music class and have an enriching music experience. While all of the teachers described these classes as being designed with the students not already involved in mind, all of them also reported that their band, choir, and orchestra students regularly enrolled in these classes.

One teacher mentioned that the use of non-BCO music class to recruit students for the traditional ensembles characterized their experience:

"In six years I've had maybe one…two students from the guitar class join the band program, guitar or bass in the jazz band. If anything it's recruited for the choir." (personal communication, June 21, 2014)

Outside of this single teacher, none of the other interviewed teachers commented on how many students in their non-BCO music class later joined their band, choral, or orchestral program. The main purpose of such music classes the according to the teachers was to "broaden student's musical horizons," and most teachers were content with providing a single semester-long classroom music experience.

Change of Pace. Five of the teachers interviewed commented on how teaching a non-BCO music class was a welcome change of pace during their instructional day. Of those five, four specifically mentioned the opportunity to work with students they would otherwise not see in a music class and teaching a class without needing to prepare for a concert were also characterized as positive impacts of teaching non-BCO music classes.

Better Use of Time. Four of the teachers interviewed had either supervised a study hall or taught a class outside of their endorsement area (theater classes and distance learning classes were specified) prior to starting their non-BCO music class. All four were very quick to comment on how their current class is much more relevant to their job and a better use of their teaching expertise than what they had been doing.

No Significant Concerns. None of the teachers interviewed had a negative opinion of their non-BCO music classes. While a couple described the prospect of teaching such a class intimidating at first, those teachers were also the ones who proactively sought professional development opportunities to prepare for teaching new content and they all expressed positive experiences from those opportunities. Initial budgetary concerns held by some teachers were also mitigated by discoveries of resources either from workshops or from web-based sources. While all teachers would welcome a bigger budget, all of the interviewees were content with the financial resources available to teach their classes.

Based on the descriptions of the interviewed teachers, if staffing and enrollment numbers allow the creation of a non-BCO music class, the benefits of expanding the offerings of the school music program by far outweigh the drawbacks.

Recommendations

John Kratus' 2007 article "Music Education at the Tipping Point," outlined a call for music educators to examine the relevancy of school music programs with the music experiences of their student populations. As music programs across the country continue to face declining student involvement, the continuation of music education in public schools is facing the reality of being left out of the school curriculum. Efforts to better recruit and retain students in traditional performance ensembles are a worthy endeavor for music educators, but even if performing ensemble participation increases there will still be a sizeable population of students not engaged in school music activities. Several scholars in music education (Palmer, Hughes, Jothen, & March, 1989; Hoffer, 1988;

Gerber, 1988; Lehman, 1988; Thompson & Keister, 1997; VanWeelden & Walters, 2004; Kratus, 2007; Woody, 2007) have argued that efforts to engage all students in school music should look beyond the performing ensemble as the only means to providing meaningful music education experiences. Alternative types of music educational experiences like those explored in this study were found to succeed in their efforts to include more students in music education, but this current state of affairs raise questions as to the future of these developments.

To begin, the importance of advocacy in the creation of non-BCO music classes cannot be overstated. In every instance the interviewed teachers made it quite clear that they alone were the driving factor in the creation of these classes. While administrative support was consistently noted, in the end the individual teachers themselves undertook their own training and preparation to teach new courses, which in most cases were unlike anything those teachers had experience in their own formal education and training. Though the successes of individual teachers in expanding their own music programs should be encouraging for those interested in embarking on their own endeavors, it would be interesting to see if a collective vision for such classes held and championed by a larger body, like a state or national association, would be more effective at the proliferation of such classes. With current trends in education policy such as the Common Core Standards and a National Coalition of Core Arts Standards drafted in response, a collective acknowledgement by music education organizations as to how non-BCO music classes fit into such a framework would undoubtedly assist, lend support, and unify what are currently individual and isolated efforts to reform music education in the state of Nebraska. Through the National Core Music Standards (2014), NAfME has begun to

clarify the widening scope of music education by broadening descriptions and categories of music classes within the standards. With dedicated strands in composition-theory, music technology, general music, ensembles, and guitar/harmonizing instruments NAfME has made explicit efforts to include a more diversified set of classes into the norm of school music. From these standards and the Model Cornerstone Assessments, NAfME has further clarified a framework and guide for these various types of classes, which stands to benefit teachers of such classes. With a current focus on standardization within subject areas, a presentation of a common vision for an alternative to current music education practices as opposed to several individualized alternatives to music education practices is likely to gather more school administrator support for changing practices in school music programs.

Given the individualized nature of current non-BCO music classes in Nebraska schools, a collective efforts by music educators to advocate and support a bridging of the many diverse class offerings to a common set of standards and outcomes in music education may be to the best interest of all music programs. As music teachers in Nebraska currently find themselves with considerable autonomy as to the curriculum of their non-BCO music classes there efforts to promote their school music programs are relatively isolated. However, if music teachers can present a more united front by relinquishing some autonomy to position their courses into a collective vision it may encourage a broader base of support for their school music program from neighboring communities in the state. By promoting how seemingly unique music are similar to other music offerings across the state and how these types of classes are becoming a new norm in music education, the long-term viability of such classes would be better ensured. If

non-BCO music classes are embraced by the field, it would stand to reason the continued inclusion of such classes in the school music program would not be volatile to the whims and desires of individual teachers and administrators. In these efforts, music educators need to collectively answer the following two questions about non-BCO music classes:

1. What are the desired outcomes of music education?

2. How do we best reach those outcomes?

Without finding a common cause in all of the non-BCO music class teaching efforts, any unified efforts to expand the scope of such classes would likely prove difficult in the current climate of education policy.

While the better-coordinated advocacy efforts of non-BCO music classes would be a promising development for expanding music education opportunities, it does present several challenges for music educators.

First, the preparation of music educators to teach such classes would need a multi-faceted approach. For teachers in the field, the continued availability of professional development opportunities for teaching such classes need continued support from professional development organizations and school administrations.

Second, to better prepare teachers for the current realities in the field it would be in the interest of post-secondary institutions to prepare future music educators to teach alternative music classes to the traditional band, choir, orchestra and general music. Given the findings in Nebraska, undergraduate music education preparation programs should at minimum address topics of teaching music theory, class guitar, music appreciation, and music technology. As stated with advocacy, this requires a clear idea of why these classes are offered and what they should look like.

Third, should these non-BCO music classes become more prevalent, it would necessitate the hiring of teachers to specifically teach these types of classes. This again would put pressure on the collegiate system to adequately prepare teachers for such experiences, but also push professional organizations and individual teachers in the field to respectively provide and seek opportunities to develop skill sets that teachers may find necessary to change teaching positions.

Finally, while non-BCO music class opportunities continue to expand, in Nebraska, it is not at the expense of traditional band, choir, orchestra, and general music classes. Every teacher in Nebraska who teaches a non-BCO music class still teaches a band, a choir, or an orchestra class. Even though teachers will more likely need additional training for teaching newer alternative music classes, the need for training in the teaching of band, choir, orchestra, and general music remains as important as it ever has. The biggest challenge facing music educators is the increasing necessity to be able to teach both traditional performance ensembles and non-BCO music classes. Teachers are now increasingly expected to have a breadth of musical expertise beyond the narrow band of band, choir, and orchestra. Now more than ever, music teachers need to be versatile and willing to adapt to evolving expectations of music programs.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY COVER LETTER

To: [e-mail address]
Fr: Nebraska Music Educators Association [on behalf of Dave Sanderson]

Sub: Dave Sanderson Research E-Mail

Dear Fellow Music Educator,

My name is Dave Sanderson, music teacher at Lincoln North Star High School in Lincoln, NE; and I am in pursuit of a Masters of Music degree at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I am conducting a survey on the prevalence of non-traditional performing ensemble classes offered in Nebraska high schools in association with Dr. Rhonda Fuelberth, and I would greatly appreciate your help

Participation in this study consists of taking a short online survey, which will only take 2-10 minutes to complete. You will be asked a couple of demographic questions about your school and the music course offerings available to students. Your responses will make an important contribution towards understanding current trends in music education opportunities for students in the state of Nebraska. Please click on the link below to access the survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KTBGX2Y

There are no know risks involved in participating in this survey, Exploring Nebraska High School Non-Traditional Music Course Offerings (IRB#20140513690 EX). Your responses will be recorded anonymously. For participants choosing to participate in a follow-up interview, the name and contact information provided will not be attached to the survey responses. When the data is reported in the thesis, at professional meetings, or in professional journals, it will be reported only as aggregated data. You are free to decide not to participate in this study without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator, the University of Nebraska, or your institution. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

In short, your decision to complete and submit this survey indicates your voluntary decision to participate. You may contact the investigator at any time at dave.n.sanderson@gmail.com. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator, or to report any

concerns about the project, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board, 402-472-6965.

Thank you in advance for your time and assistance in this research project.

Dave N. Sanderson
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Dr. Rhonda Fuelberth
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APPENDIX B

SURVEY FOLLOW-UP LETTER

To: [e-mail address]
Fr: Nebraska Music Educators Association [on behalf of Dave Sanderson]

Sub: Re: Dave Sanderson Research E-Mail

Dear Fellow Music Educator,

My name is Dave Sanderson, music teacher at Lincoln North Star High School in Lincoln, NE; and I am in pursuit of a Masters of Music degree at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I am conducting a survey on the prevalence of non-traditional performing ensemble classes offered in Nebraska high schools in association with Dr. Rhonda Fuelberth, and I would greatly appreciate your help

The other week, you were sent an email regarding an opportunity to participate in survey on the prevalence of non-traditional performing ensemble classes offered in Nebraska high schools. If you have not yet completed the survey, you still have 1 week to contribute to this research project.

Participation in this study consists of taking a short online survey, which will only take 2-10 minutes to complete. You will be asked a couple of demographic questions about your school and the music course offerings available to students. Your responses will make an important contribution towards understanding current trends in music education opportunities for students in the state of Nebraska. Please click on the link below to access the survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KTBGX2Y

There are no know risks involved in participating in this survey, Exploring Nebraska High School Non-Traditional Music Course Offerings (IRB #2014513690). Your responses will be recorded anonymously. For participants choosing to participate in a follow-up interview, the name and contact information provided will not be attached to the survey responses. When the data is reported in the thesis, at professional meetings, or in professional journals, it will be reported only as aggregated data. You are free to decide not to participate in this study without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator, the University of Nebraska, or your institution. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

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Thank you in advance for your time and assistance in this research project.

Dave N. Sanderson
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APPENDIX C

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

***1. What is your high school's Nebraska State Activities Association music classification based on student enrollment?**

- Class AA (more than 601 students in grades 9-11)
- Class A (301-600 students in grades 9-11)
- Class B (151-300 students in grades 9-11)
- Class C (75-150 students in grades 9-11)
- Class D (fewer than 74 students in grades 9-11)

***2. Which best describes your school setting?**

- Urban
- Suburan
- Rural

***3. How many students are enrolled in your entire school music program grades 9-12? (Including bands, choirs, orchestras, and other course offerings)**

***4. How many music teachers does your school employ for grades 9-12?**

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four or more

For this survey, the term "non-traditional ensemble" refers to any music class that is not a concert band, jazz band, marching band, choir, show choir, or orchestra.

***5. What kinds of non-traditional ensemble classes does your school offer for students in grades 9-12?**
(Select all that apply)

- [ ] Class Guitar
- [ ] Class Piano
- [ ] Music Appreciation
- [ ] Music Composition
- [ ] Music History
- [ ] Music Technology
- [ ] Music Theory
- [ ] None
- [ ] Other (please specify)

Non-Traditional Ensemble Class Information

For this survey, the term "non-traditional ensemble" refers to any music class that is not a concert band, jazz band, marching band, choir, show choir, or orchestra.

***6. About how many grade 9-12 students in your school are enrolled in non-traditional ensemble classes?**

- ☐ 101 and up
- ☐ 81-100
- ☐ 61-80
- ☐ 41-60
- ☐ 21-40
- ☐ 20 and under

7. (Optional) What curricular materials or method books do you use in non-traditional music classes?

8. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview about your music program?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

If yes please list a preferred phone number of e-mail address

Program Information

For this survey, the term "non-traditional ensemble" refers to any music class that is not a concert band, jazz band, marching band, choir, show choir, or orchestra.

***9. If you could expand your school's 9-12 music program beyond traditional ensembles which classes would you add?**

	Most Likely to Add				Least Likely to Add
Class Guitar	○	○	○	○	○
Class Piano	○	○	○	○	○
Maraichi Ensemble	○	○	○	○	○
Music Appreciation	○	○	○	○	○
Music History	○	○	○	○	○
Music Composition	○	○	○	○	○
Music Technology	○	○	○	○	○
Music Theory	○	○	○	○	○
Rock/Pop Music Ensemble	○	○	○	○	○

APPENDIX D

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW COVER LETTER

To: [e-mail address]
Fr: [Dave Sanderson]

Sub: Dave Sanderson Research Follow-Up

Dear [name],

My name is Dave Sanderson, music teacher at Lincoln North Star High School in Lincoln, NE; and I am in pursuit of a Masters of Music degree at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I am in the process of writing a masters thesis on the prevalence of non-traditional performing ensemble music classes offered in Nebraska high schools in association with Dr. Rhonda Fuelberth and am collecting data for that purpose. Recently you participated in an online-survey about your school's music program and indicated that you would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. The purpose of this letter is to ask for your assistance as a teacher of a non-traditional performance ensemble music class to participate in a short interview for this study.

Purpose:

This research project aims to identify current trends in non-traditional music class offerings in Nebraska high schools. The intent is to describe demographics of non-traditional performance ensemble music classes and music teacher perceptions of these classes. Understanding existing trends and perceptions in the field will aid in informing the profession about best practices and strategies in teaching these types of classes.

Procedures:

You will be asked to respond to various research questions concerning your experiences as high school music instructor. Researchers will record and transcribe these interviews in order to analyze the responses. If you choose not to be audiotaped, the principal researcher will take notes instead. If you agree to being audiotaped but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, the principal researcher can turn off the recorder at your request. The interview should last no longer than a half-hour and will be conducted at a mutually agreed upon location, by telephone, or by other electronic means.

Benefits:

There are no direct benefits to you as a research participant. The results of this study would be useful for Nebraska music teachers to know what classes are being offered across the state, and in similar demographics to their own school. In addition,

these findings would be informative for the collegiate music education program looking to prepare future music educators to teach within the state of Nebraska.

Risks and/or Discomforts:

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained during this study that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The principal researcher will audio record interviews and will transcribe those interviews upon completion. After transcription, the principal researcher will destroy all audio recordings. These data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the investigator's office and will only be seen by the investigator during the study. These transcriptions of data will be destroyed six months after completion of the study. The information obtained in this study may be published in professional journals or presented at professional meetings but will only be present as aggregate data.

Opportunity to Ask Questions:

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. Alternatively, you may contact the investigator(s) at the e-mails and phones numbers below. Please contact the University of Nebraska- Lincoln Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965 to voice concerns about the research or if you have any questions about your rights as a research participant.

Freedom to Withdraw:

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or your school district, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Consent, Right to Receive a Copy:

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to donate your time for an interview, please contact me at dave.n.sanderson@gmail.com to set up a date & time. Enclosed in this e-mail is an attachment with the informed consent form that must be signed prior to your interview. If you choose to participate in an in-person interview I can have a hard copy of this form available for you to sign. Otherwise, if you would prefer to conduct this interview over the phone or by e-mail, you may sign the form, scan it, and send it as an attachment.

Thank you in advance for your time and assistance in this research project.

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APPENDIX E

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

University of Nebraska Lincoln

GLENN KORFF SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Exploring Non-Traditional Performance Ensemble Classes in Nebraska High Schools

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This research project aims to identify current trends in non-traditional music class offerings in Nebraska high schools. The intent is to describe demographics of non-traditional performance ensemble music classes and music teacher perceptions of these classes. Understanding existing trends and perceptions in the field will aid in informing the profession about best practices and strategies in teaching these types of classes.

You must be high school music teacher currently employed in the state of Nebraska to participate. You are invited to participate in this study because you indicated you currently teach a non-traditional performance ensemble class.

Procedures:

You will be asked to respond to various research questions concerning your experiences as high school music instructor. Researchers will record and transcribe these interviews in order to analyze the responses. If you choose not to be audiotaped, the principal researcher will take notes instead. If you agree to being audiotaped but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, the principal researcher can turn off the recorder at your request. The interview should last no longer than a half-hour and will be conducted at a mutually agreed upon location, by telephone, or by other electronic means.

Benefits:

There are no direct benefits to you as a research participant. The results of this study would be useful for Nebraska music teachers to know what classes are being offered across the state, and in similar demographics to their own school. In addition, these findings would be informative for the collegiate music education program looking to prepare future music educators to teach within the state of Nebraska.

Risks and/or Discomforts:

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained during this study that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The principal researcher will audio record interviews and will transcribe those interviews upon completion. After transcription, the principal researcher will destroy all audio recordings. These data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the investigator's office and will only be seen by the investigator during the study. These transcriptions of data will be destroyed six months after completion of the study. The information obtained in this study may be published in professional journals or presented at professional meetings but will only be reported as aggregated data.

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University of Nebraska Lincoln

GLENN KORFF SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Exploring Non-Traditional Performance Ensemble Classes in Nebraska High Schools

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

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APPENDIX F

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Sample follow-up interview questions, organized by topic:

Rational for offering non-tradition ensemble classes:

1. Why does your school offer these particular non-tradition ensemble classes?
2. What factors influenced your decision to implement/continue teaching a non-tradition ensemble class?

Classroom Materials:

1. What materials are needed to teach your non-tradition ensemble class?
2. How were those materials acquired?

Curriculum:

1. What curriculum materials are used in your non-tradition ensemble class?
    a. Why were those curriculum materials selected?
2. What are the objectives in your non-tradition ensemble class?
    a. How/why were those objectives determined?

Starting a new class:

1. Describe the process and experience of creating a non-tradition ensemble class.
2. What were some of the most important factors that influenced decisions in that process?

Teacher Preparation:

1. Did you have a background with the material covered in your school's non-tradition ensemble class before you taught it?
    a. To what extent?
    b. Do you feel it was adequate preparation to teach the course?
2. Have you taken any professional development opportunities relating to teaching your non-tradition ensemble class(es)?
    a. Why/Why not?
    b. What were those experiences?