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UNL Faculty Course Portfolios   Peer Review of Teaching Project

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A Peer Review of Teaching Benchmark Portfolio for MUED 403 Student Teaching Seminar

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A Peer Review of Teaching Benchmark Portfolio for MUED 403 Student Teaching Seminar

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MUED 403 Student Teaching Seminar
Spring 2021

Abstract

This portfolio examines the course planning and delivery of MUED 403—Student Teaching Seminar. Taken concurrently in the final semester of the music education degree with full-time student teaching field experiences, in addition to fulfilling the ACE 10 requirement, this course provides an analysis of PK-12 music teaching with special attention to teacher certification, selected legal aspects of education, current issues in education, and professional communication. I chose this course for the *Peer Review of Teaching Project* to determine whether undergraduate music education students could successfully complete an action research project during their student teaching semester and if so, whether the addition of the new project improved the delivery of the student teaching seminar course. I collected data from student teachers throughout the semester by examining drafts of students' action research projects as well as written reflection assignments. Results indicated that students made improvements in understanding research methods, gathering information, designing an action research study, collecting and analyzing data, writing and sharing a research report, and reflecting on the purpose of action research. Comments from written reflections indicated that students felt better prepared for in-service music teaching and more empowered to take charge of their own classroom environments. Recommendations for future offerings of the course include providing students with additional guidance in the project planning stage, reducing the number of required resources needed in the literature review given the scope and timing of the course, and expanding the amount of time students have to collect and analyze data.

Keywords: Pre-service music educators, action research, exploratory study, portfolio

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Objectives of the Peer Review Course Portfolio

This portfolio will provide a broad overview of the entire MUED 403 Student Teaching Seminar course while focusing on guiding students toward the completion of an action research study. In creating this course portfolio, I would like the opportunity to gain insight and feedback from peers across UNL since I am considering overhauling my course, changing the objectives, and assigning a different cumulative course project. I am excited about the chance to try a new teaching idea and collect data to determine if the change results in a more positive experience for student teachers. I hope to use the course portfolio to document whether my revised course goals were met and to what extent so that I can communicate the effectiveness to my department and hopefully be confident in implementing the change in future offerings of the course.

Second, I would like to use this portfolio as evidence of my teaching excellence that can be used in my reappointment and promotion files. I am going up for reappointment this year and in my POP position, teaching constitutes the majority of my load at UNL.

Finally, I hope that this project provides a new energy to student teaching seminar for both myself as well as my students. I would like to work on an action research study alongside my students, giving myself the same due dates, so I can offer authentic research and writing strategies throughout the semester. At the conclusion of the course, I will hopefully have a finished study of my own that I can then submit for possible publication. This not only benefits my teaching and students but helps to advance my scholarly and creative activity agenda while demonstrating that teaching and research are interconnected. For students, I hope this project will give them the knowledge, skills, and tools they will need as in-service educators so they can identify and solve classroom problems efficiently and effectively. This will ideally help them to feel more confident, prepared, and ready to tackle their own classroom environments.

Description of the Course

Student Teaching Seminar, MUED 403, is taken concurrently with student teaching field experiences during music education students' final semester of their degree program. During this semester, students are assigned to a school site in their desired area and level of teaching. They report to the site every day throughout the semester and shadow their cooperating teacher for a full-time experience during the school day along with any other before or after school or weekend obligations that are expected of the in-service music educator. Five times during the semester, students are required to come back to campus for Student Teaching Seminar, a course that meets for approximately three hours at a time. This course provides an analysis of K-12 music teaching with special attention to teacher certification, selected legal aspects of education, current issues in education, and professionalism. This course is offered in both the fall and spring semesters; however, students typically complete student teaching in the spring semester of their fourth year of study, so enrollment during the spring semester is significantly higher than in the fall.

Course Goals

Student Teaching Seminar satisfies Learning Outcome 10 within UNL's Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) general education program: *Generate a creative or scholarly product that requires broad knowledge, appropriate technical proficiency, information collection, synthesis, interpretation, presentation, and reflection.*

When I inherited this course and in the three years I have taught at UNL, the scholarly product students are tasked with producing is a professional teacher portfolio. Students explore online and print resources for professional advancement in the field of music teaching, participate in various on-campus seminars and workshops, and attend discussion sessions led by

music education faculty, school district administrators, College of Education faculty, and UNL

Career Service specialists. Students' final project for the course is an electronic teaching

portfolio, which summarizes their educational philosophies, classroom teaching skills, and future

career goals. The course goals and objectives are that students will be able to:

1. demonstrate excellence as a professional educator through attendance, personal

   appearance, and conduct;

2. write lesson plans for the classroom teaching of elementary or secondary school students;

3. plan and deliver classroom lessons that demonstrate developing instructional strategies,

   teacher behaviors, and student interaction techniques;

4. reflect on their classroom teaching and other school experiences as a means of self-

   directed growth and professional development; and

5. summarize and present their educational orientation and competencies as a music teacher.

However, the above objectives relate more to the actual field experiences, which is a separate

course for students: MUED 497D/T. I would like to revise the course objectives for MUED 403

to reflect the difference between the field experiences and the seminar as well as to guide

students toward a deeper professional teaching experience. There appears to be a lack of

experience at the undergraduate level in identifying a classroom problem, implementing a plan to

collect relevant data, and using the data to promote positive change. Using research methodology

to problem-solve in the classroom, as opposed to trial-and-error approaches or the use of

anecdotal evidence, may empower educators, reduce burnout, and improve teaching and learning

environments. Conducting action research during pre-service education can give music teachers

the tools and experiences needed during in-service employment.

I would like for students to work on their professional teaching portfolio during MUED 497D/T, but I want to revise the cumulative project of MUED 403 Student Teaching Seminar so that students complete an action research study. In this project, I would like students to be able to design and implement an action research study in their student teaching placement site in which they create research questions, conduct a literature review, collect and analyze data, present and share their findings, construct recommendations, and reflect upon the process and outcome. In order to determine whether students are able to effectively design and implement an action research study, students will self-assess and reflect upon their work and peer review each other's projects. Students will also receive evaluative feedback from their cooperating teacher and building principal or administrator. Finally, I will use a rubric to determine whether the objectives were met and to what degree.

Rationale for Course Selection

I have chosen MUED 403 Student Teaching Seminar for the Peer Review of Teaching Project for several reasons. First, I teach this course every semester and feel it is a good opportunity to try a new idea and determine its level of success. This is the final semester of the program for music education students and this course is our last attempt to prepare these students as best as possible for their professional careers. Also, I have not been completely satisfied with student course evaluations for this class, particularly from students in the spring semester when enrollment is larger. Student criticisms of the course have included concerns such as being bored with topics, a sense that the course is a "waste of time" and that the content is not important enough to take students away from their placement sites for the 3-hour class, and most surprising to me, that students would prefer to have more to read or opportunities to further their growth as educators. While I have tried some different ways of engaging students and offering them

varying experiences during this course over the past few semesters, I admit that I am also growing bored of the content at times and would like to revamp the class to provide perhaps a more meaningful and challenging experience for students. Finally, I would really like to use this course as an opportunity to improve my teaching and set students up for greater success as they enter the profession.

Teaching Methods, Course Materials, and Class Activities

Teaching Methods

Student Teaching Seminar, MUED 403, is taken concurrently with student teaching field experiences during music education students' final semester of their degree program. Students are placed in several different districts, including many from out of town. Because of this, and especially because of impact of COVID-19, I will be meeting with students synchronously via Zoom for our student teaching seminar class sessions. During these seminar meetings, I will have guests join us to talk about different topics for each class session, such as Dr. Anita Breckbill (UNL Music Library), the UNL Writing Center, a current public-school administrator, a novice in-service teacher, and veteran in-service teachers. Each class session is 3 hours in length, so varying the instructional activities is important to keep students engaged. I will structure each class session to include a combination of instructor lecture, student group work and peer review of assignments, and discussion.

In-Class Instruction Methods

Student teaching seminar meets for 5 class sessions over the course of the semester, for 3 hours apiece. Below is an outline of topics covered during each of the 5 class periods.

1. Introduction to action research, overview of the action research process, brainstorm title, purpose statement, research questions; draft action research study report outline; field experience supervision, schedule, expectations

   a. Guests in class: veteran in-service teachers/cooperating teachers and UNL supervisors

2. Title page, abstract (working), research questions, references, literature review; applying for teacher certification and open job positions; classroom and time management

   a. Guest in class: Dr. Anita Breckbill, UNL Music Librarian

3. Research ethics, quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis; the job hunt and applications; interviewing; ethical and legal considerations

   a. Guest in class: David B. French, VBCPS administrator

4. Summary, conclusions, recommendations, implications, future actions (action plan); working with administrators, parents, and colleagues; ongoing professional development; teacher evaluation

   a. Guest in class: UNL Writing Center

5. Sharing results/presentation (poster presentation); reflecting upon research; the first years of teaching; adjusting to a new community, finding a mentor; budgeting and finance

   a. Guests in class: novice in-service teachers Dominic Loutsch, Casey Allen, Katelyn Hinderer, Asael Arevalo Gonzalez, and Austin Oltman

The action research study project was assigned in stages, over the span of our five class meeting times in the student teaching seminar course. The first stage consisted of *planning* for research, where the students were asked to submit a draft of their title page, abstract page, purpose statement, and research questions. In the second stage, *conducting* research, students

submitted a draft of their literature review, references, data collection, and data analysis. The

third stage consisted of *reflecting* upon research, in which students were charged with crafting

their conclusion, recommendations, implications, and action plan. In the final stage, *sharing*

findings, students communicated their work through a written action research study report as

well as a presentation of their work to peers and music education faculty members during finals

week. The figure below illustrates my plan to scaffold activities for the action research project.

Figure 1

Scaffolding Activities for the Action Research Project
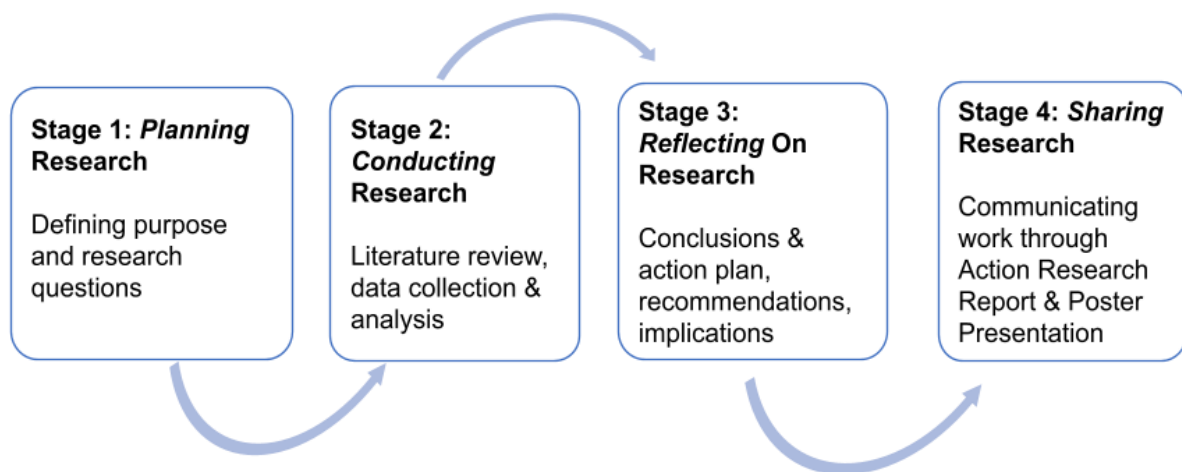
Course Activities Outside of Class

    During each class session, I will introduce a component of the overall action research study

and report, provide examples, and give students an opportunity to do some brainstorming and

group work together. There are typically at least two weeks in between each seminar meeting

when students will be expected to work on producing that component of their project which will

be due by the following class meeting. During class, there will be time for us to meet in small

group breakout sessions where students can peer review each other's work and provide feedback.

Outside of class, students will be expected to work on the components of their project, including collecting references, conducting a literature review, collecting data from within their assigned classroom setting, analyzing the data, and drawing conclusions. Also, students will submit their work to Canvas where I will provide individual feedback. The following is an outline of what will be covered during each class and what will be due by the next class to show what students will be expected to work on in between class meetings:

1. **Class 1:** Introduce action research; brainstorm title, purpose statement, research questions

2. **Class 2:** Discuss finding scholarly resources and conducting literature review

   a. **DUE:** Title page, abstract page, purpose statement, research questions

3. **Class 3:** Introduce and discuss qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis; give examples; guided practice in class

   a. **DUE:** Introduction, Literature Review, References

4. **Class 4:** Introduce writing conclusions (recommendations, implications, action plan) based on findings from literature and data collection/analysis

   a. **DUE:** Methodology (data collection and analysis), Results

5. **Class 5:** Introduce and discuss how to share findings through written action research report and "poster" presentation; reflecting on research

   a. **DUE:** Conclusions section (recommendations, implications, action plan)

6. **Finals Week:** Portfolio and action research "poster" presentation with music education area faculty

   a. **DUE:** Music education portfolio, including written action research report; "poster" presentation; final reflections on completing action research study project

Course Materials

Students will be asked to purchase the following text:

Mertler, C. A. (2020). *Action research: Improving schools and empowering educators*

(6th edition). Sage Publishing.

Students will be asked to read chapters of the text that correspond with the topics we will

be covering prior to class. The book provides helpful guidance on planning, conducting, and

sharing an action research study. I will ask students to format the project according to APA 7th

edition guidelines, so we will be working through the APA manual and related materials as well.

Finally, students will be collecting and reading through scholarly resources (i.e. journal

articles, academic books, dissertations, etc.) related to their topic of inquiry for their study. These

materials will assist students in completing their literature review section of their reports and will

also help them when drawing conclusions and recommendations based on the data they collect

within their assigned classroom environments.

Rationale for Teaching Methods

Rather than ask students to complete a full report and presentation at the end of the semester,

I think it would be most helpful for them to break apart the individual components of the report

into more manageable sections that are scaffolded (see Figure 1 above). The scaffolded "chunks"

of the project are:

1. Planning for research: defining purpose and research questions

    a. Criteria: determining information needed

2. Conducting research: literature review, data collection and analysis

    a. Criteria: information use

3. Reflecting upon research: crafting conclusions (recommendations, implications, and action plan) based on data and existing literature

    a. Criteria: disciplinary practice and enduring understandings

4. Sharing Findings: communicating work through written action research report and "poster" presentation

    a. Criteria: presenting findings

I also plan to complete this project along with the students, giving myself the same deadlines so students can view examples of my work and we can talk about the research and writing process together. Then, at the end of the semester, I hope to have my own completed report to submit for hopeful publication in an academic journal.

Connection to Broader Curriculum

Student teaching seminar is really the "capstone" experience for music education majors. It is their final semester of the program, and they are completing their full-time student teaching experience or internship at this time. My hope is that, by completing this project, students can gain real world experience in: defining a problem they see in the classroom in which they teach that they would like to improve; researching ideas from existing literature and experts in the field; collecting data that can be analyzed and assessed from their actual teaching environment; using the data to make recommendations and a plan for changed based on evidence that can be understood by all stakeholders in their classroom environment (i.e. administrators, school board or community members, parents, etc.); and communicating and sharing their results with others to make positive changes in the teaching and learning environments. Students will benefit from these experiences as in-service teachers and can use these strategies when working with students

of their own. Finally, by completing this project, I hope that student teachers graduate with

greater confidence in their own teaching and problem-solving abilities.

Analysis of Student Learning

During the Spring 2021 semester, course enrollment in MUED 403—Student Teaching

Seminar consisted of 21 undergraduate music education majors who were classified as seniors

and concurrently enrolled in full-time student teaching field experiences. Data collected for this

study included drafts of students' action research study report assignments that were due

incrementally throughout the spring semester and written reflections regarding students'

perceptions of the action research process. The action research study project was assigned in

stages throughout the semester, over the span of our five class meeting times in the student

teaching seminar course. The course was graded on a Pass or No Pass basis.

Action Research Project

In order to determine whether pre-service music educators can effectively plan, design,

and implement an action research study during their full-time student teaching semester, I

designed an action research study project assignment that was integrated throughout the spring

semester and evaluated the progression of drafts students submitted. The action research study

project was assigned in stages, over the span of our five class meeting times in the student

teaching seminar course. Each stage served as a criterion for evaluating the overall project and

was graded using one of three categories: exceeds expectations, meets expectations, or room for

improvement. The first criterion consisted of *planning* for research, where the students were

asked to submit a draft of their title page, abstract page, purpose statement, and research

questions. For the second criterion, *conducting* research, students submitted a draft of their

literature review, references, data collection, and data analysis. The third criterion consisted of

reflecting upon research, in which students were charged with crafting their conclusion, recommendations, implications, and action plan. For the final criterion, *sharing* findings, students communicated their work through a written action research study report as well as a presentation of their work to music education faculty members during finals week. After evaluating each criterion individually using the rubric found in Appendix B, students were assigned an overall project grade of Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, or Room for Improvement. The distribution of overall student grades for the action research report project can be found below in Table 1.

Table 1

Distribution of Student Grades on Action Research Project Report

Grading Category	Student Frequency (%)
Exceeds Expectations	9 (42.86%)
Meets Expectations	9 (42.86%)
Room for Improvement	3 (14.29%)

Note: n = 21

Reflection Assignment

In order to determine pre-service music educators' perceptions of the action research process and the value they place on conducting action research in the classroom, I examined written reflections students submitted at the end of the semester. Students were asked to provide a brief written response to the following prompts about the project to help students report or respond to the project, repackage what they learned to communicate the outcomes to others, and reconstruct their experience in light of the new information and skills learned:

1. What is the most important or interesting thing you learned while using information to complete this project? (**reporting/responding**)

2. If you were interviewing for a job or internship and the interviewer asked about this project, what would you want them to know? (**repackaging**)

3. If you were to do it over again, what would you do differently? (**reconstructing**)

Of the 21 total students in the class, 20 students completed this assignment. After examining all student responses, some general comments students made in the reflections were:

- "It was really helpful to be able to select my own topic, because we are all placed in a variety of K-12 music settings, so what might have been a problem or topic of interest for one person may not necessarily be something I need to work on in my setting."

- "I should have picked a smaller, more focused concept because of the short amount of time in the semester to do the study. At first, I thought the semester was a long period of time, but once we got started, time really flew by!"

- "There were too many required references to find in the amount of time we had and in the required length of the project. There wasn't enough space to include all the things I found. And it was difficult finding that many references related to my topic."

- "I wish there was more time to collect the data. I thought a month sounded like a lot of time, but it was during March and we had Spring Break. Because of the rotation of music classes, I only see my students once or twice a week, so it was really hard to reach all the students I wanted to!"

Student Work Samples

I chose one student work sample from each of the three grading categories (Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, Room for Improvement) to describe in more detail below. In addition, these student work samples can be found in Appendices C, D, and E.

Exceeds Expectations

The student work sample I chose to represent the Exceeds Expectations grading category can be found in Appendix C. This student's action research project contained all required components, was well written, organized, and formatted, was supported with relevant scholarly resources, and demonstrated a clear understanding of the purpose and process of action research. The student submitted all drafts and components of the project on time, asked thought-provoking questions during class sessions, and presented her project professionally and clearly to music education area faculty during finals week.

In her reflection assignment, this student responded in the *Reporting* prompt that the most important part of conducting the literature review for her topic was "that there was a lot of support for how success is so closely related to student motivation and self-concept…This is where I, as the teacher, need to adapt my teaching style and lesson delivery to meet the needs of all students—the average, the ones who need extra help, and those who need more of a challenge." She wrote that the most important part of the data collection process was that "the statistics supported my argument, which made my research that much stronger…this helps me to know how to adapt my lessons and assessments for my future students to give them a challenge that is within each student's Zone of Proximal Development."

In response to the *Repackaging* reflection prompt, the student wrote about how important it is for students to "receive appropriate instruction based on their skill and knowledge level, which may be different than that of their peers…it is important for students to feel encouraged

and motivated within their classes, both in and outside of the music classroom…" and that it is important "for teachers to vary their methods of instruction…Teaching multiple ways to solve a problem or approach a concept will allow students to freely identify and choose the method that works best for them."

Finally, in response to the *Reconstructing* prompt, the student wrote, "If I were to do this research project again, I would want to implement the variations in teaching earlier on…to offer assistance for students to receive extra or varied instruction…to make the data more comparable to the students' individual success."

Meets Expectations

The student work sample I chose to represent the Meets Expectations grading category can be found in Appendix D. All required components of the project were present and complete; however, there were some errors in writing, organization, and formatting. For example, this student left some of the place holders from the assignment outline template in the final version of his report which were unnecessary (i.e. "Introduction paragraph 1"). His topic, while interesting, was rather broad and difficult to examine in his student teaching setting, particularly in the time we had during the semester to complete the work. Some of the drafts of the various stages of his work were incomplete or late throughout the semester because he had struggled to identify a specific, effective topic. His literature review, while present, was not organized according to the subtopics of his research questions and was generally lacking in depth and analysis. His results section could benefit from the use of visual representations of his data (i.e. graphs, charts, etc.) to provide the reader with a concise snapshot of the information gathered. Though the assignment instructions called for the use of 12-15 resources, this student only listed and cited 5 in his document.

For the *Reporting* prompt in his reflection assignment, the student wrote, "My research was interesting in that there was very little information about my topic. I searched for a long time, and ended up narrowing down my topic even more and still couldn't find hardly anything pertaining to my topic."

In response to the *Repackaging* reflection prompt, the student wrote that he would like to communicate "the importance and benefits of having one music teacher teach across multiple grades as opposed to two or more." The student obtained a job post-graduation working in a similar environment, so he wrote about the connections he saw between his student teaching environment and his upcoming music teaching position.

Finally, in response to the *Reconstructing* prompt, the student wrote, "If I were to be able to go back and redo this assignment, I think I would pick a different topic early on that I could find plenty of information on. My topic made it so my literature review section of my report is very scarce, and hardly has any information in it because I couldn't find anything that pertained to my topic…I would also use my cooperating teacher more by talking with him about potential topics and using him as a guide on completing the research project."

Room for Improvement

The student work sample I chose to represent the Room for Improvement grading category can be found in Appendix E. While the topic the student selected is very timely and important in music education, all components of his project were not present or complete. For example, he did not include research questions. Since the research questions serve as the basis of inquiry for the action research project and guide the literature review, this is a crucial component of the project. There were some errors in writing, formatting, and organization, and he did not follow the assignment project template that was provided to students at the start of the semester.

The literature review was scant and did not include many references to support his work. Unfortunately, the student did not actually collect any data from his student teaching setting to analyze. In his report, he wrote that "due to a district policy restricting student research, the use of pseudo-data was required" and that the results reported in his project were "simply estimates." If the district were truly against the student teacher collecting information for the purposes of this assignment, the use of pseudo-data would be perfectly acceptable to me. However, after consulting with the student's cooperating teacher, I learned that he had not communicated the project to her and appeared to make no attempt to ask permission to collect data. In an email the cooperating teacher wrote to me, she said, "Unfortunately, ever since [the student] got a job, he has stopped having energy and pace for teaching." This was also evident to me because the student had not submitted some of the other assignment components leading up to the final project. During the project presentation to the music education area faculty in finals week, the student fabricated much of the project components and did not include any visual aids to accompany his work.

Unfortunately, the student did not submit the written reflection assignment, so I was unable to ascertain his thoughts about the project.

Interpretation of Results

I am generally satisfied with the results as they are better than what I anticipated in my first semester of introducing the new project. I was worried that there may have been some students who would not complete the assignment, either because the project was too much to handle while simultaneously student teaching full-time or because of the challenges associated with teaching and learning during the pandemic. However, all students submitted a final action research report, presented their work to music education area faculty, and all but one student

submitted final written reflections. I think students were willing to complete the project because it was an assignment that contributed to their overall course grade of a Pass or No Pass. I also am hopeful that students saw this assignment as authentic, useful practice in preparing them for careers as in-service music educators.

The results appear to be indicative of students being generally well-prepared for teaching post-graduation and able to synthesize, analyze, and apply the knowledge and skills taught during the music education program. By conducting the action research project, it is evident that students have learned how to develop long-range lesson and curriculum planning, deliver lesson content, assess student learning and document growth, and reflect upon the outcomes in order to improve future teaching and learning.

To help more students succeed in future semesters, I plan on giving students more guidance and suggestions for research topics as well as ensure students have acquired the approval and advice of their cooperating teachers prior to implementing their plan. I would also like to structure the spacing of class sessions so that students have more time for the data collection and analysis stage of the project, especially since this stage fell during the month of March this semester when many districts took a week off for Spring Break which disrupted the flow of classes on site. Also, I will reduce the number of resources students need to find since many students expressed being overwhelmed at the number of required sources compared to the required length of the project. I am hopeful these changes would lead to a better outcome for more students in future semesters.

Summary and Overall Reflection of Portfolio Process

In developing this portfolio, I have learned of the importance of thinking through the entire process of course planning, delivery, assessment, and reflection for the entire semester

prior to the start of the semester. While I consider myself to already be very organized and effective, one area that I learned I could improve upon is student assessment. Prior to this project, I would plan all student assignments, the course schedule, and general topics to be covered for each class period ahead of time. However, I have not spent much time pre-planning the evaluation tools I would use to assess student work. Constructing assessment instruments has been previously done throughout the semester, or worse, after the students already submitted their assignments. However, in designing this project, I accomplished more backwards planning and constructed my grading rubric before the semester began. It was helpful to share this with students when I first introduced the assignment so they could be aware of what was expected of them and how I would specifically be evaluating them. I referred to the grading rubric throughout the semester and it was helpful in assigning a grading category to each criterion I wanted to assess in the overall project.

In light of my experiences this semester, there are a few changes I wish to implement when teaching this course again. First, in the first stage of the project when I ask students to submit their topic idea, purpose statement, and research questions, I will require them to also submit some kind of "proof" that they conferred with their cooperating teachers about the project. Although I had asked students to discuss their project with their cooperating teachers, it was clear to me that some students never actually did this, so there were some problems with the topic choice and data collection that could have been avoided if the cooperating teachers approved and weighed in with their feedback early on. I will also require that student teachers speak with the building principal or administrator early on in the project to obtain permission to collect data from students for the purposes of this assignment.

In the literature review stage of the project for future semesters, I will require fewer resources for students to find given the time constraints of the semester and scope of the project. Since comments in student reflections indicated that students preferred the ability to select their own topic for the project, I will keep that for future semesters, but will offer more guidance and direction for students who need help narrowing or broadening their topic to achieve better results when searching for sources.

In the data collection stage of the project, I would like to restructure the timing of our class session meetings so that students have more time for this step. Though I gave students about a month during March for data collection this semester, working around different districts' Spring Break schedules and the varying rotation of music classes made it difficult for student teachers to access their students. I would also encourage students to focus on a single class or subset of their entire student population to make the data collection process more manageable. For example, students placed in an elementary music setting may wish to target only 3rd grade music classes rather than all K-5 students, or students in high school vocal music settings may target one specific ensemble class rather than all their ensembles.

Participating in the Peer Review of Teaching Program for MUED 403 Student Teaching Seminar during the Spring 2021 semester provided me with new insight and perspectives. I am eager to apply the knowledge and skills learned as I move forward in my career as a music teacher educator.

Appendix A: Course Syllabus

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Lincoln

GLENN KORFF
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

<div align="right">

MUED 403 (3 credits)
Student Teaching Seminar
Spring 2021 Syllabus

</div>

Course dates listed in schedule below.

* Note: Due to the impact of COVID-19, classes will meet online via Zoom. The schedule is subject to change and will be communicated with students if changes occur.

Instructor: Dr. Danni Gilbert
Office: 364 WMB
Office Hours: By appointment (please use MyPlan to schedule appointment)
Email: danni.gilbert@unl.edu

Course Description: Analysis of PK-12 music teaching with special attention to: teacher certification; selected legal aspects of education; current issues in education; and professional communication.

Pre-Requisites: Parallel with MUED 497D or 497T. Successful completion of Background Check. Must have successfully passed the Praxis I Core exam.

Required Materials:

Mertler, C. A. (2020). *Action research: Improving schools and empowering educators*
        (6th edition). Sage Publishing.

Recommended Materials:

American Psychological Association (2020). *Publication manual* (7th ed.).
        Washington, D. C.

Putman, S. M., & Rock, T. (2018). *Action research: Using strategic inquiry to improve
        teaching and learning*. Sage Publishing.

Grading Scale: This is a Pass/No Pass course.

ACE Learning Outcome: This course satisfies Learning Outcome 10 within UNL's Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) general education program:

Generate a creative or scholarly product that requires broad knowledge, appropriate technical proficiency, information collection, synthesis, interpretation, presentation, and reflection.

To accomplish the generation of the primary scholarly product, an action research report, students will participate in on-campus seminars and workshops. These meetings will include presentations and discussion sessions led by music education faculty members, area school district administrators, and UNL Career Services specialists. They will explore online and print resources for professional advancement in the field of music teaching. Students' final project for the course is an action research report. The report will be the primary assignment through which attainment of ACE Student Learning Outcome 10 is assessed.

Instructional activities will include:
- Participating in class activities and discussions,
- Presentations by the instructor,
- Field experience teaching and assistance,
- Readings and resource gathering,
- Reflective practice and writing reflective journals/blogs,
- Writing lesson plans in accordance with UNL GKSOM guidelines and maintaining a plan book that includes all lesson plans and resources,
- Developing a credentials file and electronic teaching portfolio,
- Designing, carrying out, and communicating an action research study.

Format: This seminar involves several full-day or half-day meetings on campus where students are released from student teaching (see calendar below for specific dates and times).

Communication: All documents, assignments, and other information will be placed on the MUED 403 Student Teaching Seminar Canvas site or delivered by email to your Canvas email account. Email will be the primary method of delivering information between classes. Please check your Canvas email for accuracy. Contents of emails will also be posted on the Canvas site. If any information, such as in relation to assignments or classes, is delivered by email and posted on Canvas, it will be assumed that you have received and read the information. Please check your email daily and respond (if necessary) promptly.

Schedule: Student teaching occurs over approximately 17 weeks throughout the course of the semester. Any exceptions need approval by Dr. Gilbert, Coordinator of Music Field Experiences. Students follow their cooperating teachers for the full school days and their school district's holiday schedule—not UNL's. Student teachers should fulfill all duties required of your cooperating teacher, including before school, evening, and weekend activities required of the cooperating teacher, and are required to fulfill the standard teacher arrival/departure times 30 minutes before and after students arrive/leave school. Other date ranges or schedule requirements depending on the school district and cooperating teacher's requests may be accommodated but must be approved by the Coordinator of Music Field Experiences. Student teachers are to provide their teaching schedule to their university supervisors as soon as

possible and update them as changes occur so timely observations can take place. Any problems or conflicts that could affect supervisor visits should be communicated promptly. Please avoid having supervisors arrive when student teachers are not teaching anything.

Course Goals & Objectives:
In completion of this course, students will:
6. demonstrate excellence as a professional educator through attendance, personal appearance, communication and conduct;
7. write lesson plans for the classroom teaching of elementary or secondary school students;
8. deliver classroom lessons that demonstrate developing instructional strategies, teacher behaviors, and student interaction techniques;
9. reflect on their classroom teaching and other school experiences as a means of self-directed growth and professional development;
10. summarize and present their educational orientation and competencies as a music teacher; and,
11. design and implement an action research study based on an area of inquiry within the assigned student teaching field placement setting.

Grading Procedures:
Attainment of objectives will be assessed through the following (listed respectively by number of objective):
1. Professionalism
2. Daily lesson plans (submitted weekly)
3. Classroom teaching evaluations by university supervisor
4. Weekly reflections
5. UNL Music Education Portfolio: Student Teacher Stage
6. Action Research Study

Each of the above will be graded on a Pass/No Pass basis. Students must receive a grade of Pass on all six components in order to earn a grade of Pass for the course. Additional information about each component is provided below.

Professionalism:
1. Records for class meetings and teaching appointments will indicate students' appreciation of consistent and punctual attendance.
2. Observations of in-class and out-of-class interactions with students and professors (e.g., email) will indicate students' development of professional conduct and communication skills.
3. Records of submitted materials will indicate students' proper completion of assignments.
4. A membership roster of UNL's Collegiate NAfME chapter will indicate students' involvement in a professional organization.

NAfME Membership: Students must join C-NAfME through the UNL chapter's fall membership drive. Membership is accomplished by submitting a completed application form (to be provided) and cash/check payment of the membership fee to the C-NAfME student chapter treasurer (checks made payable to "UNL Collegiate Music Educators"). The deadline for submitting these materials is **OCTOBER 1**.

Alternative Assignment: Students who are not members of C-NAfME must complete an alternative assignment to indicate his or her understanding of the importance of involvement in the organized music education profession. This assignment requires students to write monthly reviews of the NAfME's publications the *Music Educators Journal* and *Teaching Music*. The assignment specifications are available upon request. All article reviews are due by the last day of classes for the semester.

Daily Lesson Plans:
Students are to have a lesson plan for every class session taught during their student teaching experience. A lesson plan is expected no matter how brief (e.g., a warm- up activity) their teaching episode is. Even if only engaged in assisting the cooperating teacher or otherwise participating in the management of the class, a lesson plan is to be prepared. If, perhaps at the beginning of student teaching, cooperating teachers ask UNL students only to observe, they should fill out a lesson plan form for what they observe the teacher do (this obviously involves some inference and speculation, which is fine). Students are encouraged to use the UNL Music Education Lesson Plan Form (provided on Canvas), but they are permitted to use another established format if it makes sense to do so (e.g., perhaps the school in which the student is placed has a format expected of all teachers). In sum, students are to submit lesson plans for each day they teach at their student teaching placement school site. At the conclusion of each week, students will compile their lesson plans into a single file, the name of which indicates the student's name and the week number, e.g., "J. Doe Lesson Plans Week 1." Submit this file through the Assignments section of the course Canvas site 11:59p on Sunday each week.

Because students are working in a variety of school settings, there may be some variability in lesson plans among students. To help clarify:

- If, during a single day you are on site, you work with different classes and teach different lessons, then you will need separate lesson plans for that day, no matter how brief the teaching was.
- If, during a single day, you work with a single class or classes that are exactly the same (i.e. back-to-back 5th grade clarinet lessons), then you will only need one lesson plan for that day. However, it may be helpful to distinguish between the class periods in your plans. For instance, maybe one class has students with different needs, classroom management concerns to be considered, etc.
- If you are not asked to teach during a day you are there, then you should prepare a lesson plan for what you observe your cooperating teacher teach.

In sum, students are to submit a lesson plan for each day they attend their school site; therefore, you should submit a single file that contains a **minimum of five** lesson plans, at least one for each day you are on site. In the event that you teach the exact same class and lesson on multiple days (i.e. 5th grade clarinet lessons multiple days during the week), then the subsequent lesson should be updated to reflect the new date and any new strategies that you will try as a result of experiencing how the lesson went previously and reflecting on how to improve. Lesson plans that are turned in past the deadline may result in a grade of No Pass for this component. Supervisors may ask students to resubmit work that is late or does not meet expectations. Failure to receive a grade of Complete for more than two weeks of lesson plans will result in a grade of No Pass for this grading component and subsequently, a grade of No Pass for the course.

Classroom Teaching Evaluations by University Supervisor:
A university supervisor will observe students at least five times over the course of the student teaching experience. For each observation:

- Responsibilities of the student: (1) Communicate with university supervisor to schedule a date and time for the observation that will work well for the student, the university supervisor, and the schedule of the cooperating teacher (it is NOT the responsibility of the cooperating teacher to communicate with the university supervisor to schedule a date and time for the observation); and (2) Submit on Canvas a copy of the lesson plan and teaching materials to be used *prior to the university supervisor's arrival for the observation.*

- Responsibilities of the university supervisor: (1) Communicate with the student to schedule a date and time for the observation that will work well for the student, the university supervisor, and the schedule of the cooperating teacher; and (2) Provide written feedback on the student's teaching in the observation by submitting to Canvas a completed Music Lesson Observation Report *within 48 hours of the completed observation*; and (3) Provide a copy of the completed Music Lesson Observation Report to the cooperating teacher by sending it via email as an attached PDF.

The Music Lesson Observation Report includes a "Final Outcome" in which the university supervisor indicates whether the lesson was acceptable. If the lesson is deemed as not acceptable, an additional observation will be carried out. Five acceptable lesson observations are required.

You will be provided a midterm and final evaluation by your cooperating teacher and university supervisor. By the final evaluation, you should be meeting or exceeding the INTASC standards for student teachers and new teachers. The complete evaluation is considered on a case-by-case basis, but in general, a final evaluation should show very few ones (1's) or twos (2's), if

any. By the final evaluation, most items in the evaluations should be fours (4s) while fives (5s) should be seen as exceptional.

Weekly Reflections: Students will reflect upon their experiences and write 15 weekly reflections over the course of the semester. For each week, students will be asked to write about their experiences, lessons learned, observations, and plans for improving their teaching, related to provided topics. Each reflection should be approximately 500 words, or 1-2 pages in length, typed, and uploaded to Canvas as Word or PDF documents. Reflections are due by 11:59p on Sunday each week and should be named to indicate the student's name and week number, e.g., "J. Doe Journal Week 1." Submit this file through the Assignments section of the course Canvas site by the date and time indicated. Late and missing reflections may result in a grade of No Pass for this component. Supervisors may ask students to resubmit work that is late or does not meet expectations. Failure to receive a grade of Complete for more than two weeks of reflections will result in a grade of No Pass for this grading component and subsequently, a grade of No Pass for the course.

UNL Music Education Portfolio: Student Teaching Stage:
Students will add to the online portfolio via Canvas that they began at the sophomore level of the UNL Music Education curriculum and have added to each semester in which they did a practicum. They will add new introductions and artifacts for each of the five competencies (the same five used in previous semesters):

1. Subject Matter
2. Planning and Commitment
3. Student Learning
4. Reflective Practice
5. Community Involvement

For each of these, student teachers will upload at least two artifacts that serve as evidence of their competency. They will also add to each competency a narrative that introduces the artifacts. At the end of the semester, student teachers will individually present and discuss this new content with members of the music education faculty. This will take place during brief interview meetings with the faculty during Finals Week. During the last week of classes, student teachers will be directed to sign up for specific times for these interview and portfolio review meetings.

Components of the portfolio include:
- An overview of the portfolio
- Professional biography
- Teaching Philosophy Statement
  - In preparation for a job search, students will complete a minimum 1-2 page document that details their approach and vision of teaching. Students will describe their philosophy of music education and the

      strategies they use that flow from that philosophy. The statement will also include their view of what makes for a "best" teacher, and how they believe students best learn in their music classes. This document must be submitted through the Assignments section of Canvas and incorporated as an artifact in the portfolio.

- Sample lesson plans used in student teaching
- Observational notes and documentation covering the whole of the student teaching internship
- Reflective narrative on your teaching performance
- Professional development plan identifying goals for your first few years of your teaching career
  - Create a 3-4 page written reflection of your cumulative learning from both your degree and throughout the student teaching internship experience. This should include an outline of professional development goals you will continue to develop at the beginning of your professional career as a teacher as well as strategies for reaching them.
- Cover letter
  - As most students will be applying for teaching positions this semester, they will create a cover letter that would accompany a resume and other application materials. This must be submitted through the Assignments section of Canvas.
- Resume
  - Resumes are invaluable abstracts of qualifications for a teaching position. Students will prepare a resume and be provided feedback. This assignment must be submitted through the Assignments section of Canvas and will be based in part on the content of the Professional Development Day (see calendar).
- Action Research Study Report

Action Research Study:

Students will design and implement an action research study in their student teaching placement site in which they create research questions, conduct a literature review, collect and analyze data, construct recommendations, present and share their findings, and reflect upon the process and outcome. Students will prepare a written report as well as a "poster" presentation to communicate their findings. The written report should be prepared using APA 7th edition guidelines, including the use of double-spacing, 12-point Times New Roman font, and one-inch margins. The paper should be 6-8 pages total in length (title page, abstract page, references, and 4-6 page body of paper). The report should include the following components:

1. Title Page
2. Abstract Page
3. Introduction
   a. Background

      b. Description of site (demographics, school location, staff, etc.)
      c. Significance of study
      d. Purpose Statement
4. Research Questions (3-5)
5. Review of Related Literature
6. Methodology
      a. Participants/subjects
      b. Data collection procedures
      c. Data analysis procedures
7. Results (include tables or graphs when appropriate)
8. Conclusions
      a. Recommendations
      b. Implications
      c. Action Plan
9. References (12-15)

Assignments: Due dates for all course assignments are specified in this syllabus. Student teachers are responsible for monitoring their lesson plans and weekly reflections and not letting themselves get behind. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. Assignments submitted within 48 hours of the deadline will be accepted as late. Assignments will not be accepted after 48 hours. Late and missing assignments will affect the Professionalism grade. No incompletes will be given except as provided for in the UNL catalog. Unless otherwise noted by the instructor, all written assignments are to be word-processed and submitted through the Assignments section of the course Canvas site; hard copies or emailed copies of assignments will not be accepted. For problems with the electronic submission of assignments through Canvas, first contact the UNL Help Desk at 472-3970 (or if outside of Lincoln, toll free at 866-472-3970) or via email at helpdesk@unl.edu. A link to the help desk is available through the course Canvas site.

Attendance: Student teachers are to notify BOTH their university supervisor AND student teaching cooperating teacher _prior to any absence or late arrival_, or as soon as foreseen if known earlier.

> ***For unforeseen absences (and late arrivals)***, such as sudden illness or car troubles, student teachers must inform their university supervisor by _telephone call_, and inform their cooperating teacher by the means specified by him or her. These calls _must_ be made _at least 30 minutes prior_ to the regular expected arrival time at the student teaching school site.

> ***For planned absences (and late arrivals)***, that is, those known about two or more days in advance, student teachers may notify their university supervisor by email, but email notification is sufficient only if their university supervisor replies confirming receipt of the email notification. If email confirmation has not been received by the

morning of the absence (or late arrival), student teachers must place a phone call (as with unforeseen absences/late arrivals) to be certain advanced notice has been provided.

It is vital that someone at the school be spoken to live (that is in person or by phone, a voicemail or email is not sufficient) to ensure their cooperating teacher or office staff can properly plan adequate supervision or replacement in your classrooms. If you are to observed by your supervisor on a day you wake up ill or meet another emergency, you must call by phone your supervisor (i.e., in this incidence emailing your supervisor will not be sufficient).

Attendance at student teaching seminar: Student teachers are expected to attend *all* on-campus meetings of the student teaching seminar. The seminar meetings take priority over any and all other school activities or potential professional scheduling conflicts. For example, if there is an on-campus seminar meeting taking place at the same time as a school event (even one that a cooperating teacher wants the student teacher to be at), the student teacher must be at the seminar meeting. Also, student teachers must not schedule interviews for teaching positions on days/times that conflict with an on-campus seminar meeting. Although throughout the vast majority of the semester, student teachers are expected to assume the exact schedule and responsibilities of the cooperating teachers to whom they are assigned, they are UNL students first and foremost. Also, because MUED 403 Student Teaching Seminar is students' ACE 10 course, and this course does not keep the meeting schedule of a typical 3 credit hour university course, it is imperative that the students participate in all of the limited number of seminar class meetings that will take place. This attendance policy is by necessity *strict and inflexible*.

Student teachers are allowed up to 3 excusable absences during field experiences per semester. This allotment **excludes** student teaching seminar and is applicable only to time spent at the placement site. These absences can be used for sick days, mental health days, personal days (i.e. attending a wedding, going on vacation, or scheduling an interview), other professional development days (i.e. attending a conference that your cooperating teacher does not simultaneously attend, or performing with a UNL-sponsored group), or substituting for your cooperating teacher beyond the allowed number of days (see Substituting policy below). Attending required seminar class meetings or other events as scheduled below does not count against your 3 excusable absences. **Any absence beyond 3 will count as an unexcused absence and may result in a grade of No Pass for student teaching.**

NOTE: If you are feeling unwell, are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, or test positive for COVID-19, do not attend your school placement site. Provide notice as specified above. Please seek the advice of a doctor to determine when it is possible to resume student teaching. If you must be absent more than your 3-day allowance, please let Dr. Gilbert know so that alternate plans may be arranged if possible.

Any absence, at the student teaching placement or student teaching seminar, without prior notification is an unexcused absence *and is a serious offense*. After a first unexcused absence, students must schedule a meeting with the course instructor to discuss compensatory actions and measures to prevent a future absence. The unexcused absence will count towards one of the 3 allotted absences, if any remain. After a second unexcused absence, students will receive a grade of No Pass for the Professionalism component and, as a result, a grade of No Pass for the course. Excessive late arrivals may also result in a grade of No Pass.

In order to be excused for an absence, acceptable documentation may be required. Examples of acceptable documentation include a signed note from a nurse or doctor (in case of illness), a coach or activity sponsor (in case of university-sponsored activity), or other appropriate person in case of family crisis.

In the event it is not possible to attend student teaching due to reasons beyond the student's control (i.e. school district closure, cooperating teacher illness, etc.), the missed day will not count against the student. However, it is the student's responsibility to notify the supervisor and Dr. Gilbert about the missed day as specified above, prior to the start of class, to ensure accurate record-keeping of attendance. Lack of proper communication about the absence will count as an unexcused absence.

Employment Conflicts:
Student teachers are expected to shadow their cooperating teachers during all aspects of their job, including during the school day, any before or after school activities, faculty or staff meetings, or weekend responsibilities (i.e. marching band competition). Student teachers may not leave their placement or miss any student teaching responsibility for any other employment opportunity. All outside work must be scheduled beyond the scope of the cooperating teacher's responsibilities. Student teachers should not be paid by their student teaching placement site for fulfilling any responsibilities that would otherwise be expected of their cooperating teachers. In addition, student teachers should not receive payment for teaching private lessons to students that attend the student placement site. Please see Dr. Gilbert for any questions regarding employment conflicts.

COVID-19:
Students must follow the protocol established by UNL as well as the school district and building in which you are student teaching. You are required to follow all district/school policies and procedures. If the school requires you to wear a face covering at all times, you are required to do so. Sites may ask you to leave or not let you in the building if you do not follow their procedures. If you are asked to leave for noncompliance, the missed time will count against your allowed absences.

If you need to self-quarantine during student teaching, please communicate with Dr. Gilbert, your cooperating teacher, and your UNL supervisor. Talk with your cooperating teacher about

how you can stay involved during quarantine if you are able. If you are sick, please stay home! Once you enter the school buildings, you have young children, your colleagues, and yourselves to consider. If you need more absences due to illness, quarantine, etc., please speak with Dr. Gilbert. If you do get sick and miss extended periods of time, you might have to continue your student teaching during a subsequent semester. We will continue to work with you to ensure you graduate and are certified the best we can.

If the school or district moves from in-person instruction to remote or vice versa, please communicate with Dr. Gilbert.

Depending on the school district and its procedures, supervision might be completely remote, partially remote, or all in-person. Your supervisor will communicate supervision expectations with you.

Praxis Subject Assessment (Praxis II):
Music: Content & Instruction (#5114)

** DO NOT REGISTER FOR PRAXIS I or CORE**

- Must take the exam and have scores sent to both UNL (CEHS) and the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE).
- Must pass the specific exam to be endorsed by Nebraska State Department of Education.
- Go to www.ets.org/praxis for information and to register (please make sure you send your results to UNL and NDE).
- Results must be **received** no later than November 30 for December graduation and April 19 for May graduation. **Please plan to take the exam** by November 1 (fall) or March 22 (spring) to ensure results are received in time.
- To locate your test and the required score, go to www.ets.org/praxis/ne/requirements and click on "Teaching Endorsements."
- Lincoln testing center # 3804:
    5715 South 34th St., Suite 300
    Lincoln, NE 68516
    402-261-4778

Criminal History: If something changes with your criminal history at any time, you must contact Dr. Gilbert immediately (excludes minor traffic violations). A background check is required prior to the start of student teaching and must be completed within 90 days of the start of student teaching.

PK-12 Student Supervision: Cooperating teachers are responsible for their students unless their student teacher is being paid in a substitute capacity by the school. Student teachers should not be assigned sole responsibility or supervisory roles for taking students from the school building

alone (e.g., escorting students on a bus for a field trip without their cooperating teacher, driving students between school buildings, etc.). It is acceptable practice that when a student teacher has shown evidence of their teaching effectiveness that the cooperating teacher may exit the room to be somewhere else inside the school. In such cases the school office should be informed as to when this will occur and the student teacher should be informed of emergency procedures and where the cooperating teacher will be. Typically, however, student teachers should not be left unsupervised for any extended period of time. They are neither paid employees of the school district nor licensed teachers, and therefore, liability issues exist.

Substituting: See the Student Teacher Substitute Policy at the bottom of the syllabus below the schedule.

Extra-Curricular Student Contact and Professionalism: Due to the typical age of student teachers and the generally short amount of time they have been out of high schools (approximately 4 years in many cases), along with possible family relationships or relatives within their schools, student teachers may know their students in more personal ways than their cooperating teachers. Student teachers must maintain professionalism at all times and recognize that their teacher role extends beyond the building. Student teachers need to recognize the teacher code of ethics for their state and maintain appropriate student-teacher distance from students they may have known prior to student teaching. Social media and other websites maintained as college students need to be maintained professionally, if at all. Being a college student will not suffice as an excuse for unprofessional behavior, and mistakes can affect their teaching effectiveness, ability to become hired as a professional teacher, or licensing. Illegal use of alcohol (such as DUI or underage use), illicit drug use, and other misdemeanors or felonies can also jeopardize your standing in student teaching and/or your ability to be hired as a teacher or to acquire teacher licensure.

Videotaping: UNL does not have any formal contract with the various school districts for videotaping or other visual media recording. Each school building and district will have its own policy on photographing and videotaping students. Occasionally, school districts to which the student teacher may apply for employment may request a teaching video or student teachers may wish for videos for archival/self- assessment reasons. Student teachers must at the least seek approval from the building principal for any such recording and provide a letter home to parents as to when the videotaping will take place and to what ends the video will be used. *Lincoln Public Schools has a form required to be signed by parents of all students before any videotaping can be conducted by student teachers.* Any such materials may only be used for private purposes and not be made publicly available (e.g., on Facebook or YouTube). Student teachers should attempt in every way to keep students and their names anonymous (e.g., not include footage with student names, film from the periphery of the room so only backs of heads are observed, etc.).

Midterm Evaluations: Communication about electronic midterm evaluations will take place at the middle of the semester (October for fall semesters; March for spring semesters). Two visits

by university supervisors should take place prior to completing these evaluations. Evaluations must be submitted by cooperating teachers also at this time. Supervisors must complete their midterms by the end of October/March. Supervisors will discuss evaluations with student teachers and provide PDF copies to both student teachers and cooperating teachers. Instructions on how to do this will be provided.

Final Evaluations: Communication about electronic final evaluations will take place at the end of November/April. Because early grades must be submitted for graduation purposes, any indications of potential failure of student teaching need to be communicated to the Coordinator of Music Field Experiences by the first of November/April. At least three visits by university supervisors should take place prior to this date. This allows time for intervention to help the student teacher successfully pass student teaching. Final evaluations must be submitted by cooperating teachers by the end of November/April and supervisors by the first of December/May. Supervisors should discuss final evaluations with student teachers and provide PDF copies to both student teachers and cooperating teachers. Student teachers are responsible for downloading and maintaining their credential files and final evaluations.

Placement Guidelines: All student teachers will have a student teacher placement within a 90-mile radius of the UNL City Campus. Although efforts will be made to place students in their location of choice, no placement is guaranteed and is subject to the discretion of the district's HR representative, building principal, cooperating teacher, and the GKSOM Coordinator of Music Field Experiences (COMFE). All placements outside of Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) must be confirmed by the time of the LPS student teacher placement meeting; otherwise, an LPS placement will be requested for the student.

Students must be formally observed a minimum of five times during the semester by a designated UNL supervisor. The supervisor will also be responsible for completing a midterm and final evaluation of the student teacher. *Students are not to contact potential cooperating teachers directly* to set up their own placement since each district must follow its specific placement process. The student may only contact the cooperating teacher directly once notified by the COMFE that the placement has been confirmed and approved. Students may not student teach at the high school from which they graduated. Cooperating teachers must have completed at least three years of teaching experience. State rule also requires that student teachers are placed in a building that is approved or accredited. Student teachers must complete a OneSource criminal background check within 90 days prior to the start of student teaching. Students will be responsible for attending MUED 403, Student Teaching Seminar, which meets approximately once a month during the semester.

Concerns or Problems: Any concerns about the student teaching experience, conflicts, or other items should be expressed as they arise to Dr. Danni Gilbert, Coordinator of Music Field Experiences at danni.gilbert@unl.edu or (402) 472-2986.

Importance of Grades in MUED Courses:

Admission into the Music Teacher Education Program requires a grade of C or better in MUED 201 and MUED 244, and a grade of Pass in the MUED 297 practicum. Failure to attain these minimum grades will prevent music education majors from enrolling in 300-level MUED courses.

Placement in student teaching requires a grade of C+ or better AND a minimum GPA of 2.5 in all 300- and 400-level MUED courses: MUED 343, MUED 344, MUED 345, MUED 346, MUED 374, and MUED 470.

Student teaching also requires a grade of Pass in all 300- and 400-level practica: MUED 397a, MUED 397b/d, and MUED 497d/t. Note that a C+ equal a 2.33 GPA. Thus, earning a C+ in all of these courses would NOT produce the minimum 2.5 GPA required.

ADA Statement: The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options privately. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). If you are eligible for services and register with their office, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so they can be implemented in a timely manner. SSD contact information: 232 Canfield Admin. Bldg.; 402-472-3787.

Mental Health & Wellbeing Resources: UNL offers a variety of options to students to aid them in dealing with stress and adversity. Counseling and Psychological & Services (CAPS) is a multidisciplinary team of psychologists and counselors that works collaboratively with Nebraska students to help them explore their feelings and thoughts and learn helpful ways to improve their mental, psychological and emotional well-being when issues arise. CAPS can be reached by calling 402-472-7450. Big Red Resilience & Well-Being provides one-on-one well-being coaching to any student who wants to enhance their well-being. Trained well-being coaches help students create and be grateful for positive experiences, practice resilience and self-compassion, and find support as they need it. BRRWB can be reached by calling 402-472-8770.

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. Any instances will result in an automatic grade of F in the course and possible disciplinary action under Section 4.2 of the UNL Student Code of Conduct (https://studentconduct.unl.edu/student-code-conduct). Examples of academic dishonesty include copying (or attempting to copy) the work of another student or unauthorized source, fabricating or falsifying work done in an assignment, using unauthorized materials or study aids for a test or assignment, presenting someone else's work as one's own (without properly citing the source), and fabricating an excuse such as illness, accident, or personal crisis in order to avoid requirements of the course.

Tentative Course Calendar *

Lesson plans and reflections are due weekly by Sunday at 11:59p. See Canvas for specific due dates.

Class #	Date & Time	Topic or Event	Assignment(s) Due
--	ASAP	Onboarding** @ LPSDO (5905 O St.)—LPS student teachers only	Register for Praxis Subject Assessment (Praxis II) and send results to UNL & NDE: www.ets.org/praxis
1	Monday, January 25 *Time: 1:00p-4:00p* *Location: Zoom* *UNL Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers invited to attend 1:00p-2:00p*	Student Teacher Seminar: 1. Supervision, schedule, expectations (1:00p-2:00p) 2. Introduction to action research; overview of the action research process 3. Work on title, purpose, research questions 4. Action Research Study Report Outline	1. Professional Biography 2. Professional Development Plan 3. Read chapters 1-2 from Mertler text
--	*Friday, January 29*	*Final day to apply for a degree.*	*Application for degree deadline for graduates ($25 fee due with application):* https://registrar.unl.edu/student/commencement/application/
--	Monday, February 8 *Time: TBA* *Location: Remote*	**REQUIRED**: Professional Development Day—All UNL Student Teachers	1. Resume 2. Cover Letter

2	Monday, February 15 Time: 1:00p—4:00p Location: Zoom Special Guest: Dr. Anita Breckbill, UNL Music Library	Student Teacher Seminar: 1. Applying for teaching certification and open job positions 2. Classroom & time management 3. Conducting a Literature Review 4. Locating and Citing Scholarly references	1. Title Page 2. Abstract Page 3. Purpose Statement & Research Questions (3-5) 4. Read chapters 3-4 from Mertler text
3	Monday, March 1 Time: 1:00p—4:00p Location: Zoom Special Guest: David French, VBCPS Administrator @ 1:00p-1:30p	Student Teacher Seminar: 1. The job hunt & applications 2. Interviewing 3. Ethical & legal considerations 4. Research Ethics 5. Quantitative & Qualitative Data Collection & Analysis	1. Introduction (background, description of site, significance of study) 2. Review of Related Literature 3. References (12-15) 4. Read chapters 5-6 from Mertler text
--	*March 22*		*Deadline to <u>take</u> (not register for) the Praxis Subject Assessment (Praxis II)*
4	Monday, March 29 Time: 1:00p—4:00p	Student Teacher Seminar: 1. Working with administrators, parents, and colleagues	1. Methodology (participants/subjects; data collection procedures; data analysis procedures)

	Location: Zoom *Special Guest: UNL Writing Center*	2. Ongoing professional development 3. Teacher evaluation 4. Conclusions, recommendations, implications, action plan	2. Results (include tables or graphs when appropriate) 3. Read chapter 7 from Mertler text
5	Monday, April 12 *Time: 1:00p— 4:00p* *Location: Zoom* *Special Guests: Dominic Loutsch, Austin Oltman, Katelyn Hinderer, Asael Arevalo Gonzalez, Casey Allen*	Student Teacher Seminar: 1. The first years of teaching (adjusting to new community, finding a mentor) 2. Budgeting and finance (paying back loans, benefits, retirement) 3. Sharing findings (action research report, "poster" presentation) 4. Reflecting upon research	1. Teaching Philosophy Statement 2. Conclusions (recommendations; implications; action plan) 3. Read chapters 8-9 from Mertler text
--	Friday, April 30	Final official day of student teaching	1. Action Research Study: Written report 2. UNL Music Education Portfolio: Student Teaching Stage
--	UNL Finals Week *May 3—May 7*	Portfolio presentations, action research "poster" presentation, and interviews with MUED faculty	Sign up for specific interview time prior to date, TBA.

	TBA: Arranged between 12:00p— 4:00p		
--	*Saturday, May 8*	*Graduation!!!*	*Celebrate your accomplishments!!*

* Calendar is subject to change.

** Onboarding: LPS student teachers need to visit the district office between 8:30a—3:00p (M-F) in order to: (1) get a photo ID for LPS; (2) be provided credentials for LPS email and the private Wi-Fi network (via an LPS username), and; (3) be provided limited access to the Synergy Grade Book. The entire process should take about 30 minutes. See:
https://home.lps.org/cs/2016/12/12/student-teacher-access/

Student Teacher Substitute Policy

It is the intent of this policy to provide student teachers with an optional opportunity to be employed, on a limited basis, during the semester of their student teacher placement as a paid substitute teacher. Secondary benefits include providing continuity for students in the classroom when the certificated teacher is absent on a limited basis as well as helping school districts with substitute teacher shortage challenges due to COVID-19.

Student teachers are legally protected by the cooperative agreement between the University and the school district (Nebraska Revised Statue 79-876) and the cooperating teacher does not have to physically present in the classroom at all times. UNL believes it is desirable for the teacher candidate to have opportunities to practice independent instruction and management of the classroom. If it is agreeable to all parties concerned, a teacher candidate may serve as the paid, designated substitute teacher during the Clinical Practice (Student Teaching) semester with the following conditions:

- Student teachers are eligible to be the substitute teacher after the completion of four (4) full student contact weeks of each Clinical Practice experience (student teaching)
- The student teacher must have met all requirements of said district regarding local substitute teacher certification
- The student teacher wants to substitute and agrees to the substitute request
- There are no concerns from UNL regarding the student teacher's ability and knowledge to serve as a substitute
- Student teachers may only Substitute in the classroom to which they are assigned and may not substitute in another teacher's classroom. Any requested exception requires prior approval from the UNL Coordinator of Music Field Experiences.

  Student teachers may substitute up to a total of 20 days during the semester. A student teacher who changes placements during the semester must complete three (3) full weeks in the new placement before being eligible to substitute. Any requested exception to the maximum days available to substitute requires prior approval from the UNL Coordinator of Music Field Experiences.

  Paid substitute teaching days will count as student teaching days and will not count toward the allowable three (3) excused absences.

  Because a student teacher is not fully licensed, it is the expectation of UNL that the student teacher be provided with support from a licensed professional within the building during a substitute teaching assignment. UNL reserves the right to deny eligibility and/or terminate a substitute teaching assignment should the student teacher's performance fall below acceptable standards and expectations. The Coordinator of Music Field Experiences will make the final determination regarding eligibility in these situations.

Appendix B: Action Research Project Evaluation Rubric

Action Research Project Rubric

MUED 403 Student Teaching Seminar: Student Name

Include: Title page, abstract page, body of paper (introduction, purpose statement, research questions, literature review, methodology, results, conclusions, action plan), references (12-15).

Formatting: APA 7th edition; 6-8 pages total (title page, abstract page, references, and 4-6 page body of paper); double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, one inch margins

Criteria	Room for Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Defining the Purpose and Research Questions (Determining the Information Needed)	Topic of interest is unclear. Research questions are not clearly identified. Introduction is disorganized with one or more sections missing.	Research questions are fairly clear, concise, and relevant. Topic of interest is identified. Introduction is present.	Topic of interest is clearly identified. Introduction clearly establishes purpose. Research questions are clear, concise, and relevant. Topic is neither too broad nor too narrow in scope.
Literature Review (Information Use)	Literature review is unclear or unfocused, demonstrating a weak understanding of the process. There is a lack of the required support from scholarly references. There is a lack of connection to the research questions posed.	Literature review provides an acceptable explanation of the process and demonstrates the intended focus. Writing is supported with references, though there may be errors with the citations or there may be insufficient scholarly references cited. Organization of the literature	Literature review is clearly written and demonstrates an organized and systematic process based on a well-defined topic. Writing is supported with use of 12-15 in-text citations from relevant, scholarly references. Literature review is organized based on research questions.

		review could more clearly relate to the research questions.	
Methodology & Results (Collecting & Analyzing Data)	Methodology section is missing some required components. Material is not well organized or communicated. Data is not displayed accurately in graphs or tables. It is unclear how information was collected or analyzed, or how the data relates to the topic of interest.	Methodology section is present and complete, but could benefit from additional organization. Results could be more clearly communicated through use of graphs or tables. Data is displayed but could be better organized.	Methodology section clearly describes the subjects, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. Results are clearly communicated with proper use of graphs or tables to organize data.
Conclusions & Action Plan, Recommendations, Implications (Disciplinary Practice & Enduring Understandings)	Information presented in this section is inadequate or incomplete. Recommendations may not be linked to data or literature. It is unclear that there is a plan for improving classroom settings based on the work presented in this project.	Demonstrates some progress in presenting the results of action research. Recommendations may not have a clear connection to data or may lack support from literature. Next steps may need further identification or explanation to be successfully carried out in classroom setting.	Demonstrates outstanding progress in presenting the results of action research. Based on resulting data, with support from the literature, logical next steps are identified that can be carried out practically.
Action Research Report & Poster Presentation (Presenting & Sharing Findings)	Project does not clearly or professionally communicate how information was collected and synthesized to support research in classroom settings. It is unclear how data obtained can help to improve or validate teaching and learning practices.	Project communicates how the use of information and data collection and analysis can support effective teaching and learning in classroom settings. Project could use additional support or organization to deepen connections and advocate more clearly to potential stakeholders.	Project clearly and professionally communicates how information was collected and synthesized to support research in classroom settings. Data collected and analyzed contributes to improving or validating teaching and learning practices and can be advocated clearly to potential stakeholders.

Action Research Report Project Components:
- Title Page
- Abstract
- Introduction
  - Problem statement, significance, background, purpose, description of site (demographics, school location, staff, etc.)
- Research Questions (3-5)
- Review of Related Literature
- Methodology
  - Participants/subjects
  - Data collection procedures
  - Data analysis procedures
- Results
- Conclusions & Recommendations; Implications; Action Plan
- References (12-15)

Format/Layout:
- APA 7th edition
- 6-8 pages total
- Title page, abstract page, references, + 4-6 page report/content
- Double-spaced, 12-pt. font, 1 in. margins, Times New Roman

Presentation of Project (Poster Presentation):
1. Background information: What is going on?
2. Purpose of study: Why and who cares?
3. Methodology employed: How?
4. Results: What happened?
5. Conclusion: What do the results mean?

6.   Action plan: What should we do?

7.   Q&A

Appendix C: Student Work Sample: Exceeds Expectations

Action Research for Curricular Theory Assessments of High School Music Students

[Student Name removed for anonymity]

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

MUED 403: Student Teaching Seminar

Dr. Danni Gilbert

4/30/21

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether high school students are capable of submitting fewer theory assessments to obtain an average score of an A and if so, whether this was a result of retaining the course content. I collected data from each class of students throughout the term and compared the scores from previous terms during this academic year to see if scores have improved due to retention of the material. Students had one week to take the exam as many times as possible to achieve a score they deem desirable. Students received the same lesson throughout the week, either in Zoom or in person. After informing students that they were only limited to two retakes of the exam, scores for the assessments averaged higher much earlier within the testing window. Results indicated that students took more time to complete the first assessment, which often resulted in the average score of an A. There were also more students that would ask questions for clarification after class if they didn't know an answer. Based on the results of the study, students' raw scores for the cumulative final were higher for term three than they have been in each term prior for the 2020-21 academic year. Possible implications of my research could include more student focus both in the classroom and remotely to achieve a higher score in one or two takes. Suggestions include setting aside more time for assessments during class, so students are able to focus on answer questions correctly instead of finishing quickly to move on to the next activity.

Keywords: Theory assessments, raw scores, retention, remote learning, in-person instruction

Action Research for Curricular Theory Assessments of High School Music Students

Due to the on-going COVID-19 safety procedures, high school music students are currently faced with the task of hybrid learning, where they attend school in person for two-three days and then remotely for the rest of the week. A majority of the instruction takes place within the classroom, making it difficult for the students attending via Zoom to participate or focus. This is because a lot of the work done in music classes requires in-time participation through large or small groups. Students are dependent on listening to one another and following along in real time. Students are not formally assessed on their knowledge of the music, but they have assessments on the theory concepts behind it.

At this high school, in-person and online music students receive the same daily theory lessons. Some students are engaged regardless of the environment from which they have to learn from, while others are disengaged altogether. The in-person students have the opportunity to ask questions for clarification on the daily theory lessons, but the distance learners are often not paying attention. Students who are attending class via Zoom are unable to see the white board during theory lessons, which takes away the visual aid of learning musical concepts for those students. The information that is written on the white board includes class exercises, example problems, and foundational information that the current and future lessons will be based on. If a student isn't able to see this information and is not paying attention, the likelihood of them achieving a passing grade on the assessment is low, especially if this is new and progressing content. The theory assessments take place every Friday at the start of class and students are required to take this assessment regardless of whether they are in person or on Zoom. Because there are class activities that take place shortly after the assessment, there are students that rush through the exam without regard for the grade they get as a result. Students know that they can

take the assessment as many times as needed to get their desired grade until the online assessment form closes on Thursday at 11:59 pm. With students aware that they have an unlimited number of chances to take the assessment and the assessment never changing from each time they take it, students are less likely to be comprehending the material, which they will need to apply and know for the cumulative theory exam at the end of the term. The problem results in lower test scores, which demonstrates lack of understanding or comprehension. This is important because in order to accurately measure knowledge retention and student learning, there needs to be a way to motivate students to take the time they need to express what they.

At this school, there were 63 students in Mixed Concert Choir (MCC), with 45 participating in the prep show choir. Varsity Concert Choir (VCC) had 58 students, with 53 of them in the varsity show choir. MCC and VCC were comprised of 10th-12th grade students. Freshmen Concert Choir (FCC) had 39 students, which was for only 9th graders. There were two vocal teachers and two additional student teachers teaching theory lessons during the 2021 spring semester. In-person and remote attendance was determined by the school. 'A students' had last names starting with A-K and 'B student's had last names starting with L-Z. 'A Student's attended in person on Mondays, Tuesdays, and some Wednesdays. 'B Student's attended some Wednesdays and every Thursday and Friday. 'C Students' were in person every day and 'Z Students' were on Zoom every day. This was determined by parents and the school to fit the needs and safety of the students. The following provides a breakdown of the attendance classification for each ensemble:
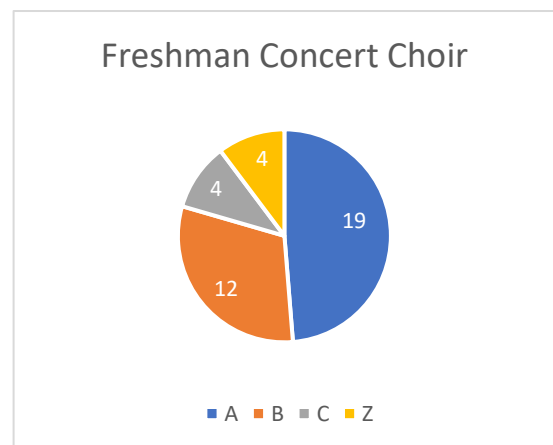
1. Mixed Concert Choir (MCC)- 63 total

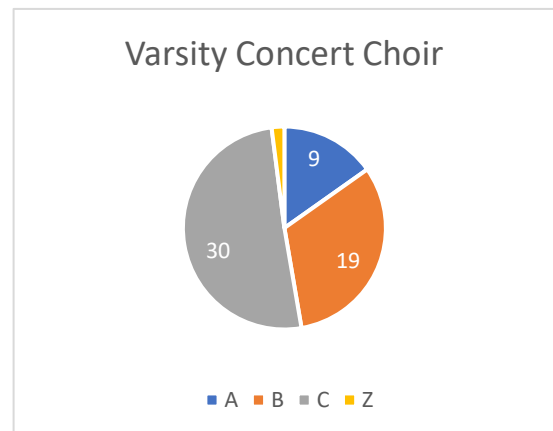- *A Students: 25*

- *B Students: 23*

- *C Students: 9*

- *Z Students: 6*
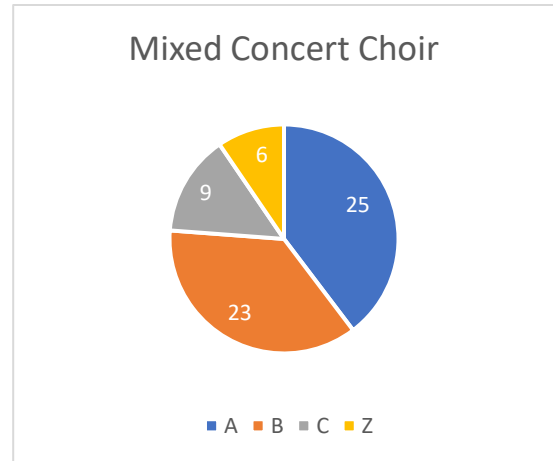
2. Freshman Concert Choir (FCC)- 39 total

- *A Students: 19*

- *B Students: 12*

- *C Students: 4*

- *Z Students: 4*

3. Varsity Concert Choir (VCC)- 58 total

- *A Students: 9*

- *B Students: 19*

- *C Students: 30*

- *Z Students: 0*

Mixed Concert Choir

Freshman Concert Choir

Varsity Concert Choir

This would mean that 'A Students' received in-person instruction for the theory lessons and took Friday's assessments online, while the 'B Students' got all of their instruction remotely and then took their assessment in-person each Friday. 'Z Students' had all assessments and instruction done remotely. There was no prior review for assessments. The purpose of this study was to determine whether high school students are

capable of submitting fewer theory assessments to obtain an average score of an A and, if so, whether this was a result of retaining the course content.

The following research questions were addressed:

1. Does in-person attendance affect music students' learning of music theory?

2. Does the variation of student abilities and the teaching style affect the students' scores?

3. Does the limited number of retakes improve the scores of the students based on a comparison of results from previous test scores?

Literature Review

When considering theory assessments of high school music students, some of the most prevalent existing literature focuses on the motivation and learning within the music classroom, the importance of varying ones teaching style to meet the abilities of all students, and student assessment within the music classroom. Combined with previously doing theory assignments and assessments through a rotating hybrid learning environment, the following literature was selected in consideration of the current online learning environment due to COVID-19 and the transition to full-time in-person classes. The prevalence of these resources provide insight to a baseline of factors that are considered when dealing with student motivation, assessment, and the range of abilities of the students.

Motivation and Learning Environment in Music Education

When it comes to motivation of students in the music classroom, students must possess a strong sense of musical self-concept, as it is a crucial component in determining if they will have the motivation to persevere through challenges in music (Cogdill, 2015). This means that students who believe that they are able to meet the musical expectations of their teachers and

execute repertoire with minimal errors will possess a higher level of motivation to continue

working hard within the classroom and performance environment. According to the activity

theory, learning is a result of interacting with an activity and within a particular environment. It

states that "activity is engaged in by a learner who is motivated to find the solution to a problem

by using the tools supplied by the teacher and in collaboration with others" (Keast, D. A., 2009).

Therefore, student motivation is able to increase when students are actively involved in their

learning and, in turn, will achieve higher goals as a result (West, 2013). When it comes to

curricular instruction, such as music theory, students who are engaged and involved in the

lessons and activities will retain more of the information and will become more motivated

because of this growth in their knowledge base of the content being presented.

It is the teacher's job to engage students in such a way that will facilitate personal growth

through self-assessment, peer-assisted problem solving, and facilitated discussions of the subject

matter. By interacting with their environment and being a part of an encouraging learning

atmosphere, students will develop a more positive attitude in relation to school, the curriculum,

and the music classroom as a whole (Green & Hale, 2011). Teachers can also engage students

through private, small-group lessons to provide students with more individualized instruction,

whether it be for students who need some extra help or for students who need more of a

challenge. This individualized approach has proven to be more effective than whole-class

meetings when it comes to providing feedback and tracking student progress (Hash, P. M.,

2021).

Music students on average have a significantly higher tendency to lean toward

internalized attributions like ability and effort, as opposed to external attributions, such as luck or

the difficulty of a task, for their successes and failures (Schmidt, 2005). This has shown to be

consistent across grade level, school environment, and musical populations. According to this, music students are more intrinsically motivated by the satisfactions of hard work and practice as opposed to extrinsic motivators, such as a grade. The satisfaction that music students get when achieving a higher grade is more related to that of giving an emotionally driven and error-free performance, with more emphasis placed on the process rather than the outcome because musical abilities are built upon various musicianship concepts and knowledge.

Range of Student Abilities with Variations in Instruction

It is no secret that students learn differently and range in ability levels. This doesn't change when it comes to the music classroom. A variety of instructional methods must be utilized to describe and convey different aspects of musical concepts. Some teachers may have a mono-modal approach, which is where the instructor teaches content only from their perspective based on their preferences, learning styles, abilities, and even personality. This one-size-fits-all approach is not as effective in the music classroom. Instead, a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) demands that teachers must expand beyond their traditional teaching styles to meet the needs of all students who have different learning types and abilities (Quaglia, 2015). Creating a classroom that caters to all learners is a way that will keep instruction fresh, and the students will be presented with a number of different perspectives on a single topic.

When it comes to music theory, utilizing a flipped-classroom approach has been proven to allow students to get a basic understanding of the concepts outside of the classroom and then they can get clarification and instruction to provide a deeper understanding when they return to class (Duker, Gawboy, Hughes, & Schaffer, 2015). An inverted approach would save class-time and would create an opportunity for students to ask specific questions that other students might also have, which also provides them with an opportunity to interact with others and their

environment. A system that focuses on obtaining basic skills by utilizing a design-down method creates a flexible environment in which students can develop necessary problem-solving capabilities that different kinds of learners will benefit from (Cope, 1996). When the teachers are able to align their curriculum with the specific learning goals that they have for their students in their classes, the teachers become more effective and the implementation of objectives and strategies help all students to reach personal goals and meet classroom expectations (Green, S. K. & Hale, C. L., 2009).

Assessment and Student Learning of Music Theory

Assessments in the music classroom are designed to help students develop a broader knowledge of concepts and musicianship. The teachers that ask students in their classrooms effective questions will help students to develop a higher achievement level than the teachers who do not engage their students in classroom discussions throughout the instruction (Dirkse, 2014). Assessing students is a process that should be ongoing and intertwined with instruction to promote personal and overall growth of student knowledge and skill set. If assessment took place only at the end of the term, then there would be no way to gauge growth or understanding (Green, S. K. & Hale, C. L., 2009).

Music theory concepts build on each other, which is why establishing a strong foundation at the beginning is an integral part of musical success. Therefore, student assessments must include some form of record that indicates what is being taught and how the student is interpreting that throughout the learning process (Asmus, 1999). Learning the names of lines and spaces on a staff is important when it comes to writing and building chord structures. Knowing scale degrees and key signatures becomes important when finding relationships between Roman numerals and similar analyses. Because learning is a continuous process, assessment also has to

be ongoing. It provides the instructor with an opportunity to help students learn from their own experiences through formal and informal evaluations. According to Wolf & Kopiez, musical performances are comprised of separate skills that are reliant on one another, like sight-reading, performing rehearsed music, playing from memory, playing and learning by rote or ear, and improvising. These musical processes rely on the matching of sounds, to the sound production and playing, to notating what is being played or heard (Wolf. A, & Kopiez, R., 2014). Again, we have skills that are reliant on one another and continue to build and progress as students develop their musicianship capabilities.

Teachers can help students make connections to concepts and provide various ways of interpreting the curricular content (Cope, 1996). Making these connections to tasks in the music classroom will also demonstrate to students how music is related to things that happen within our daily lives. Similar to a job interview, a solo performance requires a student to prepare their presentation ahead of time, know how to present themselves in a particular environment, receive and apply criticism, and demonstrate a level of confidence and comprehension necessary to have a successful presentation of their hard work.

Methodology

Participants

The participants in this study were the high school vocal students attending a large high school in the American Midwest. Students identified as freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors; they were enrolled in at least one music course offered at said high school. The collected data classified the students into 3 categories: Freshmen Concert Choir, Mixed Concert Choir, and Varsity Concert Choir.

Data Collection

Data was collected via informal observation of participation and student responses. Quantitative data was collected through formal assessments that were administered to students weekly based on the content that was presented throughout the week. I used a Google form that I created, and students took the assessment on their Chromebooks. The timeline for this assessment and collection of data was for Term 3 and 4, which ran from January 4th, 2021 to May 20th, 2021. The people who assisted in the collection of data were the choral, band, and orchestra instructors who facilitated the weekly assessments and retakes of said assessments.

Data Analysis

Upon collecting the data, I combined and organized the weekly scores into a database. The data was organized so I could locate data quickly and efficiently throughout my analysis based on ensemble. The data was broken down to show averages across the grade classifications of the students. I color coded the data based on the ensemble in which students were participating in (varsity vs. prep vs. freshmen). The data grouped together in this way supported my purpose statement and helped me to answer the research questions that I specified at the initial part of this study. The data I am using was derived from the mean of assessment scores.

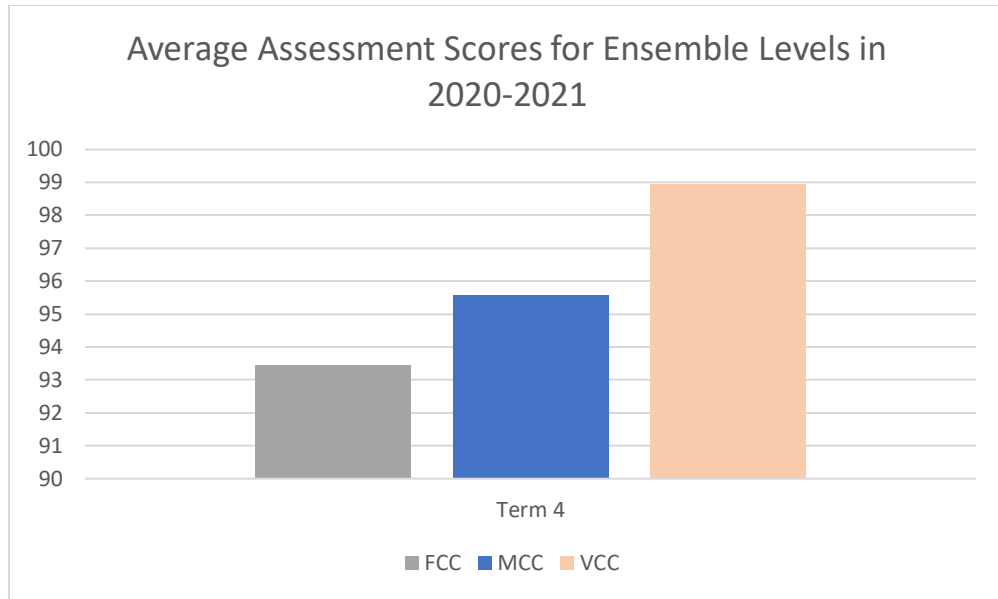## Results

Research Question 1

In order to determine how attendance affected music students' learning of music theory, I administered weekly theory assessments during a rotation of remote and in-person learning schedules in Term 4 and compared those results to that of fully in-person instruction and its

testing results from Term 1, 2, and 3. In comparing these two data groupings, results indicated that students on average achieved higher overall scores during in-person instruction and assessments within Term 4 than in previous terms.
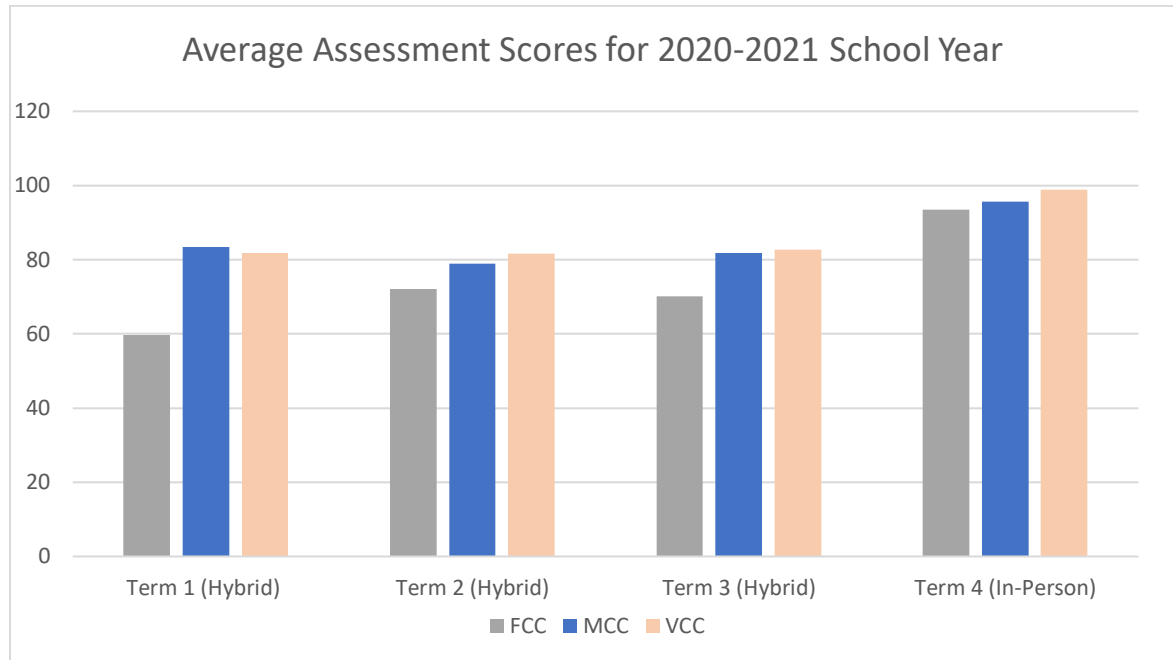

Research Question 2

In order to determine whether the variation of student abilities and the teaching style affects the students' scores, the data is categorized based on student placement in ensembles. Students who have higher test scores and audition ratings from the academic year prior indicate where students will be placed in the following year. Comparing the data collected in Term 4 from scores within varsity ensembles and prep ensembles isolates students with higher musicianship knowledge and comprehension from those who are at a more introductory level. Results indicated that during Term 4, students in VCC had, on average, higher scores than students in MCC or FCC. Students in MCC also averaged higher scores than that of students in FCC.

Average Assessment Scores for Ensemble Levels in 2020-2021

Term 4

■ FCC ■ MCC ■ VCC

Research Question 3

In order to determine whether the limited number of retakes improves the scores of the students based on a comparison of results from previous test scores, I examined the results of students' final test scores when they have an unlimited amount of retake opportunities during Term 3 to when assessments had a limited number of retakes in Term 4. The results indicated that student scores averaged higher during Term 4 with a limit of 2 retakes than the average of student scores during Term 3 when they had an unlimited number of chances to retake the assessments.

Average Test Scores for the 2020-2021 School Year
Comparing Unlimited and Limited Number of Retakes
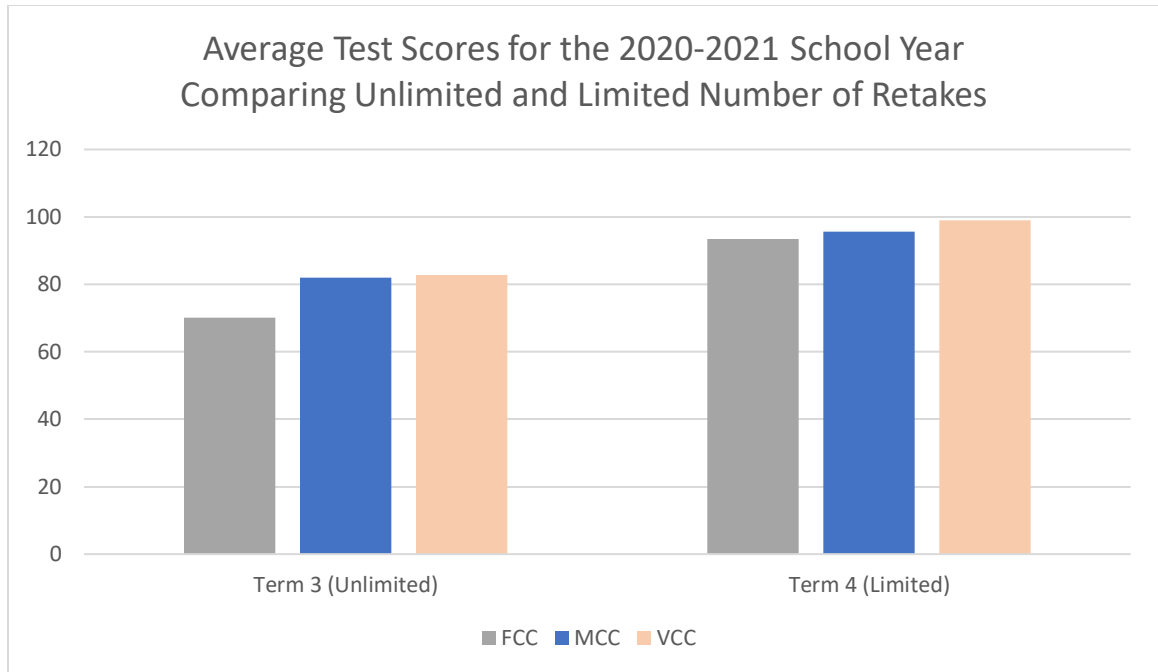
Action Plan

Based on the information from the related literature and the data that was collected and

analyzed, I plan to continue implementing the limit of two retake opportunities for weekly

assessments. I also moved the assessments to a paper-pencil exam instead of a multiple-choice

exam, which allowed for students to explain their reasoning better than the previously online

assessments. It is also easier to create variations of the exam so when students retake the test they

are assessed on similar exercises and problems to more accurately measure knowledge and

understanding of the concepts that are being presented. To gauge how the students felt about the

limited number of retakes, I issued a survey for them to share their thoughts. Out of 75 responses

with 17.1% in FCC, 40.2% in MCC, and 42.7% in VCC, the data presented on the charts below

was collected as a survey of what the students thought about the change in the assessment retake

limit during Term 4.

Did the limited number of retakes encourage you to ask more questions?
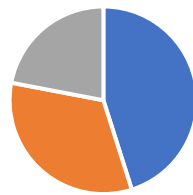
Yes ■ No ■ Maybe

How do you feel the limited number of retakes impacted your assessment?

■ Tried harder ■ Worried more
■ Asked for help sooner ■ Still gave best effort like before
■ Studied more/know material sooner ■ Regarded test as more important

In response to this data and the study as a whole, I would suggest setting aside more time for assessments instead of only utilizing the first 15 minutes of class and moving on to other activities. While it might cause a loss in time rehearsal or instruction, it would allow students to have more time to focus on doing well on the material instead of rushing through it to move on to other activities. This was what the "worried more" data is referring to, where students felt rushed, and they couldn't do their best under the time constraint. Giving students more time on assessments would also cater to students of differing ability levels within each ensemble.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine whether high school students are capable of submitting fewer theory assessments to obtain an average score of an A and if so, whether this was a result of retaining the course content. In the study, students were given weekly theory and music concept assessments with only three possible attempts to get the average score of an A: one initial test at the end of the week and two possible retake attempts. The results from this study indicated that students achieved overall higher scores on the initial assessment. Student participation in class activities and discussions also improved. Therefore, we can conclude that students were paying more attention in class and retaining the information in order to score higher on the initial assessment. The importance of this project is to focus on the effectiveness of formal assessments in the music classroom. It can be difficult for music educators to teach to teach to the learning and retention of content as opposed to teaching to the test. This approach focuses the student learning process, which can be applied across all classroom environments.

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Appendix D: Student Work Sample: Meets Expectations

1

Action Research for School Districts with the Same Music Teacher(s) Across

Multiple Grades

[Student Name removed for anonymity]

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

MUED 403: Student Teaching Seminar

Dr. Danni Gilbert

February 14th, 2021

2

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the retention and attrition rates of students in a music program from middle school to high school, and the factors that cause the retention or attrition. Results observed are as follows: higher attrition rates than retention rates, better rehearsal management in both the younger and older classes/choirs, students are more outgoing and willing to be more vulnerable as they get older, younger students can start looking ahead and get excited for what is to come in the high school, etc. Results indicated that having the same vocal music teacher instruct students at the middle and high schools in the same district creates better results and higher retention rates than attrition rates. Based on the results of the study, having the same music teacher instruct students across multiple grades (i.e. 6-12, at both the middle and high school), that teacher reaches an extraordinary amount of more students each year, and can form personal teacher-to-student relationships much earlier than normal high school music teachers can, making the retention rates a lot higher on average. This doesn't have to only be successful in smaller districts either. In bigger districts, the high school music teacher could, and should, reach out to the feeder middle and elementary schools and work out a plan to come work with the students at those schools and expose them early to the style of instruction, as well as the curriculum and opportunities at the higher level. This research should be an eye opener for music teachers everywhere and give an idea of how to recruit and retain your district's students in your classroom.

Keywords: Retention and attrition rates in music education, districts with one music teacher across multiple grades, middle and high school music programs, action research *Action Research for School Districts with the Same Music Teacher(s) Across Multiple Grades*

Introduction paragraph 1: In many school districts, music teachers are placed in either an elementary, middle, or high school. This is due to the size of the district and the need to have multiple teachers in order to instruct the large number of students the district may have. In smaller school districts there can be a lot less students, so the need for multiple teachers is not there. This creates a very interesting situation, in that the high school music teacher is often the middle school music teacher as well, and in some cases the same teacher can instruct music classes K-12. I believe, through my own experience in a larger district where I had a number of different music teachers throughout my schooling, and through my student teaching experience so far in a much smaller district where the same music teacher instructs the middle and high school classes, the latter is a much better environment and creates a much higher retention rate than attrition rate.

Introduction paragraph 2: I have noticed over the last couple of months student teaching at Norris Middle and High school that having the same music teacher in both settings creates a much more beneficial environment. I feel this way from observing how the students react in and out of rehearsal, the relationships between students and directors, the skills/techniques/abilities retained from middle school to high school, and seeing how the numbers don't really go down from the transition to high school from the middle school.

Introduction paragraph 3: I am currently placed at Norris District 160 for my student teaching placement, and I am shadowing Wes Hansmeyer in 6-12 vocal music and one 6th grade band class. There are two vocal (choral) directors, and one band director in the high school, and they also act as the teachers for their respective fields in the middle school, with both vocal

directors assisting with different bands in the middle school. Wes gets the 6th graders in choir class, and works really hard at recruiting and getting the students excited for their time in high school. He includes the middle school students in some of the high school productions (musical, concerts, etc.), and praises the high school groups a lot to the middle school choirs so as to get them interested in their turn in the high school. He has said multiple times to me that "If you get them interested at that age, you've got them until they graduate." He has been able to grow the Norris Music Program from 20 students in the high school program to over 200 in just over 15 years, and that's only the high school. The middle school choirs are getting increasingly bigger each year, and I believe a huge reason for that is Wes being the teacher in both middle and high school.

The purpose of this study was to determine the attrition and retention rates of a school district that has the same music teacher in both the middle school and high school music program, and the factors that cause the attrition and retention.

The following research questions were addressed:

1. *What are the attrition and retention rates of students in a music program with the same music teacher in the middle and high school?*

2. *Are there variances in the attrition and retention rates across genders?*

3. *What factors cause the attrition and retention rates in students?*

Literature Review

When considering school districts with the same music teacher in the middle and high school level, and the retention and attrition rates in a setting like this, the only existing literature I found focuses on retention and attrition rates of music educators, both in general (Hartley, L., & Porter, A. 2009), and in their first few years (Barnes, G. 2010) (Welch, G., Purves, R., Hargreaves, D., & Marshall, N. 2011); how to recruit and retain diverse students in a predominantly white institution (Hunn, V. 2014); how to build an inclusive music program in the 21st century (Shuler,

S. 2011). In these sources however, it didn't focus or, in most cases, even touch on attrition and

retention rates in students let alone those with the same music teacher. This only emphasizes

the importance of researching a topic like this, as it would help music educators all around the

globe on getting students enrolled and keeping them involved throughout their schooling, and I

think it would inspire a lot more collaboration in districts where there has to be multiple music

teachers across multiple levels so that students are getting an equally amazing experience.

Thankfully I was placed at a student teaching site where I got to witness first-hand how beneficial

it is to have one main music teacher, and how important it is for retention rates.

Methodology

Participants

Participants in this study are: current high school choir students enrolled in one or more choir at Norris who have been in choir more than two years, former choir students in high school who were enrolled in one or more choir (either middle or high school, or both) for longer than one year who are no longer enrolled in choir, and middle school students who are currently enrolled in choir (find out their plans for continuing/not continuing choir in high school).

Data Collection

Students involved were current music students (enrolled in high school choir, enrolled in middle school choir) and former music students (enrolled in middle or high school choir at one point in time but are no longer enrolled). My interview consisted of questions pertaining to their choice to either continue with music or to quit music, and the factors that helped them to make that decision. My goal was to compare the factors of all the students who stayed in and see if there are any similarities, as well as to see if having Mr. Hansmeyer as the choir teacher from 6th grade until high school graduation has anything to do with it. I also wanted to find out the reasons for students quitting and to see if having the same teacher the whole time had anything to do with that.

Data Analysis

After I interviewed all of the students I planned to, I looked at the answers given by those that stayed in it, and out of the 18 I interviewed, all of them said they planned to stay in it until they graduate, 13 said a big reason they stayed in it was because of Mr. Hansmeyer, and only 6 of them said one or more of their friends quit choir at some point. This data showed me

that Mr. Hansmeyer is indeed a big factor in why students are involved in choir at Norris, and it has to do with the relationships he can form with those students at such a young age. I believe this is directly correlated to the success Norris has seen over the last 15 years in regards to the music program, and it is a huge reason why the retention rate is so high.

I also looked at the answers given by those students who quit choir at one point, and out of the 12 students I interviewed, 7 of them said they quit so they could focus on other activities (not because they didn't like it), 3 of them quit this past year because of reasons pertaining to
COVID-19, and only 2 students said they quit because they didn't like it and it wasn't for them, and those two students were brothers. I will say, if I had interviewed even more students, I am certain I would get a wider range of answers, but for those that I interviewed, I feel this data/these numbers are a great representation on why it is so beneficial to have one music teacher instruct classes across multiple grades, and stay with the students until graduation.

Results

Research Question 1

Because there was no information directly on this specific research question, I couldn't find exact results, but I did find data at my own setting. Through interviewing students both in the music program and no longer in the music program (used to be, quit for various reasons), as well as speaking with Mr. Hansmeyer about his records, Norris has on average about 70% retention rate. Some years are more than others, and that creates a large senior class that will also help in recruiting the younger classes. When Mr. Hansmeyer was hired at Norris, he was filling two positions (Middle and High School teacher) because the district was so small (all on one campus). His first year he had 20 students in his whole high school choir. Throughout the last 17 years he has grown the program to nearly 200 students in the high school alone, with even more in the middle school choirs. Through talking with him and witnessing the experience the students get, him being there in every middle school class really helps him grow the high school program, which will in turn grow the middle school program as more siblings are interested in their older siblings activities.

Research Question 2

I have found that females have a much higher retention rate and therefore also a much lower attrition rate than males. This is evident in that at Norris they have an all-female show choir due to the higher numbers of females in the program. A few years ago, Mr. Hansmeyer noticed he was having to turn away so many students auditioning for show choirs because they only had two, and he noticed that there were so many more females getting cut than males because so many more females in general auditioned. Instead of turning so many away, he realized he could make a new all-female choir with the numbers he was cutting each year. The need for an all-female group makes me wonder if females have a higher intrinsic value of music than males do, and if so why?

Research Question 3

      Through interviewing students in the high school, I learned some factors that cause the students to quit (attrition) the music program. A big majority of the students said they were becoming more involved in other activities like sports, speech, taking college credit courses, student council, and cheer & dance team (most popular activities besides music). They said as they started joining other activities, they were forced to make a decision because they were getting too busy, couldn't afford to be involved in so many things, had more interest in other activities, etc. Only a couple of the students who quit said they didn't enjoy music in middle school and/or early high school. The majority of the students said they enjoyed it and would still be involved if they weren't involved in other activities that conflicted. I added a question to students who quit due to conflicts and who were a Junior or younger, and that question was "Do you see yourself joining choir again before you graduate if your time/commitments allow it?" And 4 out of those 7 students (Junior or younger who quit to focus on other activities like college credit courses, sports, speech/debate, student council, etc.) said that they miss choir and would join again if they had the time for it.

      Along with factors for attrition, I observed and learned some factors for retention in a music program. At Norris, the district is quite a bit smaller than most schools in Lincoln, and for the majority of students, them and their families go to Norris from Kindergarten until graduation. Because of this and the size of each graduation class, the students begin to form relationships with each other at a very young age, and they continue to have the same classes until graduation. As they get older, they begin to separate into their own interests and such, but they still take the main courses together. This causes friend groups to take the same classes due to having the same interests. Often times if a few boys in a friend group enjoy choir quite a bit, and their friends don't mind it but want to take classes together, they will take choir in middle school and begin to enjoy it even more until they decide they want to audition in high school. It also allows the students to form relationships with the choir teachers at a much earlier age (6th grade and sometimes earlier) and will keep the students interested in being involved in the music program.   The middle school choir is also constantly being exposed to the super cool things the high school groups get to do. Since they are on the same campus, there are numerous performance opportunities for the high schoolers to perform for the middle schoolers, and that gets the students really excited for what they get to do when they get to high school.

Action Plan

      Based on the information learned and data collected, as well as after accepting a position at a small district in western Nebraska where I will have almost all the same responsibilities as my cooperating teacher does now, I have started formulating my own plan of action moving forward. I will be as involved with the middle school choirs as I can (especially the males – they have a lower retention rate than females), and even work with the younger students to get them excited for what's to come. I plan to have joint performances with the middle and high school choirs, as well as have the middle schoolers, learn some of the same songs (much easier), and come rehearse with the older kids. This research project slowly turned into something I was really passionate about looking into, and I can't wait to further discover

how to keep students in my classroom. To any music teachers struggling to recruit/retain students in your program, I recommend starting everything earlier. Get to know them early, find out what they like and what intrigues them, and find ways to keep them in your classroom.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify the retention and attrition rates of students in a music program from middle school to high school, and the factors that cause the retention or attrition, and to identify if the factors have anything to do with having the same vocal music teacher instruct at both the middle and high school levels. The retention rates at my own setting sit around 70% on average every year, and for those students that have been involved from 6th grade until graduation (current senior class), a bit majority of them said they joined choir in middle school as an elective, or because their sibling was, or because their parents enrolled them in it, and they stayed in it for the relationships they formed with their friends and Mr.
Hansmeyer. This research project, I realized, became more and more important as the year went on, because the longer I searched for literature already out there about my topic, the more I realized this topic hasn't been researched yet, and that strongly emphasizes the importance of diving into this. I also accepted a teaching position at a school a lot like Norris, and will be responsible for almost the same things that Mr. Hansmeyer is responsible for at Norris, so researching attrition and retention rates and the factors that cause them will help immensely in my first few years and on at my new school.

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Appendix E: Student Work Sample: Room for Improvement

Embracing Gender Identity in a Gender Neutral Classroom: Student Teaching Action Research Report

[Student Name removed for anonymity]

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

MUED 403: Student Teacher Seminar

Dr. Danni Gilbert

04-30-21

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the correlation between the use of gendered pronouns and effective instruction in the vocal music classroom. The study was inspired by two students, one who identifies as non-binary and one who is a trans male. I wrestled with the best approach to value and respect their identities while not hindering the educational experiences of my other students. Out of my wrestling, this study was born. In this study my cooperating teacher, Rachel Kornfeld, will serve as the control group, continuing to use traditional pronouns in order to address the class. I will serve as the experimental group, using only gender neutral methods to address students when speaking to the class as a whole. In order to address a measure of "effectiveness", I will conduct a survey of all students at the end of the semester. The survey will ask students to identify their gender identity, the level of clarity they found in the instructions of both the control and experimental group, and and whether or not they felt their identity was both seen and respected.

Embracing Gender in a Gender Neutral Classroom:

Student Teaching Action Research Report

The 2010s were a revolutionary time for the LGBTQ+ community. The US's legalization of gay marriage not only awarded this fundamental right to members of the community, but it also began to push issues facing the community more into the mainstream. Caitlyn Jenner's public announcement of her gender identity was nothing new, but it was one of the first occurrences in the public eye. While these moments made a tremendous impact, the LGBTQ+ is still incredibly

discriminated against and underserved. This study seeks to better the educational experiences of students considered outside the "normal" gender binary.

This study was inspired by students I worked with during my student teaching experience. As I was made aware of these student's gender identities I realized how exclusionary my, and many teacher's, instruction had become. Perhaps these students have grown numb to such occurrences, but all humans deserve better than this, and this duty is only made more important by the fact that they are my students.

The purpose of this study was to see if gender neutral instruction could result in clear, effective instruction. An added element of variability is the demographic of the community the study took place in. Waverly, NE is a primarily rural community that leans politically and socially conservative. Traditionally these groups are not as supportive of the LGBTQ+ community. The studied classes contain students from grades 6-12.

The study seeks to determine whether the use of gender neutral instruction can result in clear, effective instruction that is affirming to students of all gender identities. The study also seeks to observe this approach's effectiveness in smaller, conservative communities.

Literature Review

The reviewed literature delves into a wide number of issues concerning sexuality and gender in education. Yet nearly all of this research was consistent in one tenet: teachers have a tremendous say in affirming or belittling students. More specifically, they have a tremendous impact on the acceptance or rejection of students' sexual/gender identity.

In our society it is very difficult to separate gender from choral studies. Whether it be gender choirs (Men's or Women's Choruses) or the assigned relation between vocal parts and sex, it is

easy to see the difficulties some choral thinkers have discovered with the rising acceptance of transgenderism and genders outside the more typical gender binary, and the increasing openness of individuals within these categories (both of these movements being welcomed by the author). The reviewed literature calls for reflection and change at all levels of education. Joshua Palkki is among the experts who call for individual reflections by teachers on this matter (Palkki 22). Multiple experts called not only for individual, but systematic reflection to better the educational experiences of LGBTQ+ students in K-12 environments (Mangin) (Carter). Finally, a study done by Canadian education experts surveys the training preservice teachers are receiving on educating LGBTQ+ students (Tompkins et. al).

MacNamara, Glann, and Durlak's sociological study demonstrated student's willingness to not only consider the gender of others, but their own (Durlak et. al). This, of course, is contingent on students being guided with questions and new points of view.

Methodology

Over the course of this semester I have been team teaching multiple choral classes along with my cooperating teacher. During this time I have been very conscious to use gender-neutral instruction. For example, instead of splitting the class into "boys and girls" I split the class into "part 1 and 2". Or, instead of "boys and girls" I would be sure to classify by voice part. My cooperating teacher continued to use traditional pronouns to address students. In order to measure the impact that this instruction had on students the classes were given a survey. Students were asked 6 questions with an optional 7th question. Students were asked what they considered to be their gender identity, their race/ethnicity, political affiliation, whether or not their gender identity is valued, and how clear they found my instruction, and my cooperating

teacher's instruction. The last question allowed students to share any related concerns, or ways that they would like to see their gender identity valued.

Results

Disclaimer: Due to a district policy restricting student research, the use of pseudo-data was required. These results are simply estimates.

In total, 222 students were surveyed. 51% of students identified as male, 43% of students identified as female, 2% of students identified as non-binary, 1% of students identified as transgender, and 3% of students preferred not to say. 97% of students were White, 2% were Hispanic, 1% were Asian, and <1% were Black. Politically, 54% of students identified as Republicans, 30% of students identified as Democrats, 3% of students identified as Independent, 8% had no affiliation, and 5% preferred not to say. Of the 222 students surveyed 65% of students responded that their gender identity was always valued, 29% responded that their gender identity was valued most of the time, 5% responded rarely, and 1% responded never. When it came to instruction, 45% of students found my cooperating teacher's instruction clear all the time, 50% responded mostly clear, 4% responded rarely clear, and 1% responded never clear. For my instruction 43% of students found my instruction to always be clear, 54% found it to be clear most of the time, and 3% found it to be rarely clear.

Conclusions

While 222 students is a limited sample size, this study begins to sow the soil for what could be a crucial point: that students can be both valued and effectively educated in a non-gendered classroom. However, the data clearly demonstrates room for improvement, especially when it

comes to students feeling that their gender identity is valued. In an ideal world 100% of students

would feel this, but we would certainly like to see this number climb towards 80%.

Some student suggestions on the optional question requested that show choir uniforms not be

gendered. For instance, if a student identifies as non-binary and then is forced to wear a dress or

a suit in order to be a part of show choir, they are, in essence, being forced to choose a gender.

This is yet another example of how deeply ingrained the gender binary is in our society.

In order for this study to be expanded, I believe it needs to be implemented in a more racially

diverse setting and in a setting with a higher population of LGBTQ+ individuals. These varied

demographics will allow the study to be exposed to a different community with different

backgrounds and standards.

There is no solution that will "solve" the complex issue of educating students in a manner that

makes all students feel valued and engaged simultaneously. However, it is the job of the educator

to educate themselves and to equip themselves with the necessary tools to reach students and

classes with a number of different needs. As our eyes are opened to an incredibly diverse world

this study simply provides educators with one more tool.

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