

EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES FOR MOTIVATING MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND STUDENTS TO
PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT
DANIELLE WHITESIDE
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The purpose of this study was to identify the motivational techniques that are most effective in encouraging middle school band students to practice. A questionnaire was sent to middle school band directors in seven regions, as designated by Texas Music Educators Association.

Out of 86 respondents, 81% ($n = 68$) reported using motivational techniques to encourage practicing, most frequently utilizing assessment, tangible rewards, competition, and encouragement as incentives. Student practicing guidelines were provided by 94% ($n = 82$) of the respondents, predominantly suggesting the implementation of a routine, having goals/plan, the use of practice logs, and decreasing tempo. Respondents indicated that parents could encourage their children to practice by providing them direction, listening to them play, and showing interest. Findings from this study provide middle school band directors greater insight into strategies to facilitate student practice.

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CHAPTER I

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Benefits of Practicing a Musical Instrument

From the moment a musician begins to play an instrument, practicing is a behavior that needs to become habitual in order to become a skillful performer. A number of studies have shown that there is a direct relationship between practice and advancement in instrumental skills (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Romer, 1993; Hallam, 1998; Hayes, 1981; Jørgensen, 2002; O'Neill, 1997; Salidino, 2001; Sloboda, Davidson, Howe, & Moore, 1996; Sloboda & Howe, 1991; Smeltz, 2012; Sosniak, 1985; Wagner, 1975; Williamon & Valentine, 2000; Zurcher, 1975). While band directors who teach beginning students enthusiastically embrace the notion that practice is critical, they are faced with the challenges of motivating students and ensuring the practice yields positive results.

Research indicates that students at various levels of expertise are aware of the importance of practice in the development of playing skills and musicianship. Randles (2011) surveyed over 1200 students, grades four through twelve, to determine their definition of a "good musician." The most frequent answer among each age group was "practicing and performing on an instrument" (Randles, 2011, p. 4). The results of a study in which 257 instrumentalists, ages eight to eighteen, recorded their daily practice

time, revealed that there is a strong relationship between the amount of formal practice and a student's achievement and advancement on an instrument (Sloboda et al, 1996).

Williamon and Valentine (2000) studied the practice habits of 22 pianists, who were divided into groups based on their skill level. The students taped their practice sessions and performed a recital that was evaluated by three teachers. The results showed that the students, across all skill levels, who practiced longer (whether formally or informally), tended to perform a more successful recital program and demonstrated greater progress in their playing ability than those who practiced less.

Jørgensen (2002) conducted a study of conservatory students involved in instrumental, vocal, and church music programs. The students' skill levels were measured by the conservatory music faculty during the two-year and four-year juries. The students subsequently completed a questionnaire regarding their practice habits. Ultimately, the study showed that there was a significant correlation between the amount of time spent practicing and a student's jury score.

Professional musicians corroborate the value of practice in order to succeed as a performer. Pagano (2012), an accomplished trombonist, wrote, "You can't just practice when you feel like it. Sometimes you have to sit your butt in the chair when you are tired, or want to do something more 'fun'" (p. 34).

Strategies for Practicing a Musical Instrument

Research has shown that students have diverse practice habits and thus need individualized attention regarding methods and motivation (Anderman & Maehr, 2009; Bernard, 2009; Burwell & Shipton, 2011; Klinedinst, 1991; Kostka, 2004; Leon-Guerrero, 2008; Pitts & Davidson, 2000). Pitts and Davidson (2000) videotaped three young instrumentalists who had relatively consistent practice techniques to provide specific examples of how students differ in their approaches to practicing. An evaluation of the students' practice sessions revealed that they had unique requirements regarding parental involvement and motivational techniques. Leon-Guerrero's (2008) study of 16 instrumentalists corroborated the diversity of self-regulation strategies utilized by students while practicing.

An additional factor affecting practice techniques is the instructor's ability to communicate with the student (Christensen, 2010; Kostka, 2002). Kostka (2002) found that of 141 undergraduate students surveyed, 41% never discussed practice strategies with their instructors, and the other 59%, whose teachers had provided them with practice techniques, had views regarding practicing that did not align with their instructors' guidelines. Christiansen (2010) found similar results in her study of two eighth grade students whose directors provided them with proper practice techniques, yet were unable to implement them in the practice room. Barry (1991) found that

students tend to learn more about practice techniques from their private instructors than in an ensemble, due to the individualized attention.

The importance of appropriate practice techniques has also been the focus of a number of studies (Austin & Berg 2006; Byo, 2004a; Byo, 2004b; Hammel, 2003; Kaplan, 2004; Miksza, 2007; Pearce, 2004; Peterson, 2004). Byo (2004a, 2004b) posited that suitable practice techniques are of utmost importance, and that motivational strategies have no value unless coupled with proper practice. Peterson (2001) provided three suggestions regarding efficient practicing habits: getting the parents involved, creating a practice plan, and meeting National Standards.

Oare (2012) found that teaching students proper practice techniques is important, especially at the middle school level. Five middle school band students were videotaped while practicing and their thought processes were analyzed. The data indicated:

student choices about what and how to practice seem more focused when motivations are goal oriented instead of time oriented,...practice goals tend to be vague, which leads to difficulty in defining criteria for success and strategies for improvement,...[and] though students have knowledge of various practice strategies, their understanding of the appropriate use of the strategies is lacking.

(Oare, 2012, p. 63)

While practice CDs were not found to have a significant effect on a student's motivation to practice, they did aid in creating more structure in practice (Braun, 2007).

In a study of 55 college students practicing a new piece of music while being videotaped, Mizska (2010) found additional strategies that students can use in the practice room to improve achievement. The common techniques used by the college musicians included:

- (1) repeating relatively larger chunks of music as compared to smaller chunks;
- (2) slowing difficult passages; (3) playing through musical chunks, isolating problem areas, and recontextualizing the problem area into the whole; (4) gradually building the complexity of musical phrases by adding consecutive larger segments; and (5) using a metronome. (Mizska, 2010, p. 64)

A study conducted by Zhukov (2009) concentrated on practice strategies utilized by studio teachers. She discovered that both formal and informal practice were valuable and that it was vital for teachers to explain and model structured practice. Her findings included a set of effective practice strategies, which incorporated "chunking, modeling, mental rehearsal, and hand rehearsal" (Zhukov, 2009, p. 3).

Duke and Byo (2011) endorsed a "radical approach," in which they addressed both the amount of practice time, as well as the development of comprehensive musicianship. This approach focused both on playing music properly and enabling students to develop expressive skills from their earliest experiences. To that end, they

maintained that band directors should teach beginning students to assess their musical expressiveness. Further, they asserted that the successful implementation of the “radical approach” was contingent on a director’s approach to practice guidelines and both internal and external motivation.

Methods of Motivating Students to Practice

Motivating students to practice is an integral part of a student’s musical growth (Stamer, 2009). Schatt (2011) described motivation as “the key to a successful musical experience” (p. 7). Thus, researchers have sought to define the motivational process and determine which methods are most effective. Klonowski (2009) found that motivation comes from five different domains: parents and family, peers, directors, environment, and the students themselves (see Figure 1). Further, he discovered a direct connection between the five motivators and the likelihood that a student will remain in band and achieve success.

Researchers categorize motivation as being either intrinsic or extrinsic (Asmus, 1986; Diaz, 2010; McPherson, 2000; Schmidt, 2005; Schatt, 2011) Intrinsic motivation is defined by Ryan and Deci (2000) as “doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable” (p. 55). Conversely, extrinsic motivation “refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55).

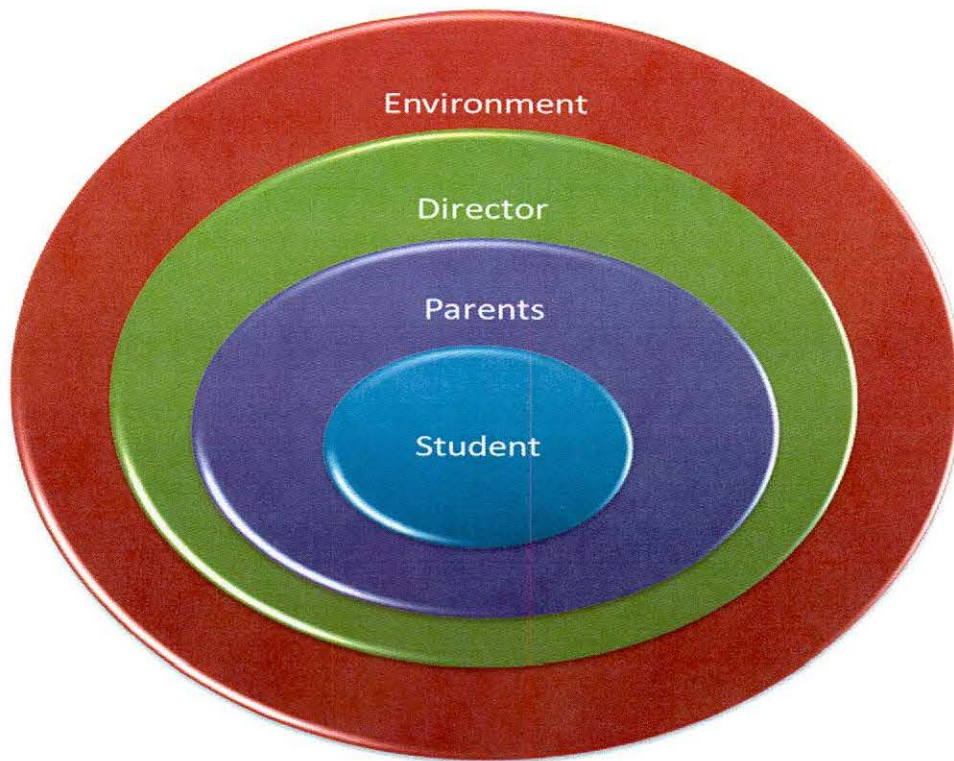


Figure 1. Motivational domains, the different domains that effect students' motivation

Intrinsic Motivation.

A preponderance of research illustrates that intrinsic motivation has a direct connection to student practice. Miksza's (2006) survey of 175 junior high band students found that they believed practice was important. Likewise, a study of 48 eighth grade Australian band students revealed that a majority of participants reported some type of intrinsic motivation that led them to learn to play an instrument and to continue playing (Lowe, 2010). In their survey of 190 pianists, McPherson and McCormik (1999)

concluded that there was a direct relationship between the amount of time a student practiced and the intrinsic value the student placed on practicing their instrument.

Studies indicate that intrinsic motivation may lead to a higher retention rate of music students (Bradley, 2002; de Bézenac & Swindells, 2009; Driscoll, 2009; Hallam, 2002; Lacaille, 2008; Lowe, 2010; Miksza, 2006; Schmidt, 2005). Diaz's study (2010) of 169 university instrumental musicians revealed that the students favored intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation, which supports earlier research findings (Schmidt, 2005; Schmidt, Zdzinski, & Ballard, 2006). Diaz stressed the importance of intrinsic motivation at all levels of study and warned that giving rewards and relying on extrinsic motivation could be "detrimental to the overall quality and retention of music students" (2010, p. 32). Schmidt (2005) concurred that extrinsic motivators could have a negative effect on students and impede their ability to understand the intrinsic value of music.

The attribution theory, which addresses self-perception as it relates to beliefs concerning success and failure, is oftentimes discussed in conjunction with intrinsic motivation (Weiner, 1972). Asmus (1986) performed a study based on Weiner's attribution theory, in which he surveyed 589 fourth through twelfth grade music students. When asked what determines their success or failure in music, the primary response was internal motivation. Vispoel and Austin (1995) conducted a similar survey of 211 junior high students enrolled in general music and found similar results.

Other studies have contained elements of the attribution theory in their results. Schmidt (2005) surveyed 300 seventh through twelfth graders to identify the nature of their motivation. He found that intrinsic orientation, self-concept, and commitment to band all had a positive correlation to a student's performance level and amount of practice. Campbell (2009) posited that students would be more motivated if they were encouraged to view themselves as musicians.

A study of a general population of elementary students revealed three strategies that enhance intrinsic motivation: contextualized material, personalization, and choice (Malone & Lepper, 1996). All of the students in the study experienced increased intrinsic motivation, which led to higher student achievement. Although this specific study was not focused on music classes, the results clearly indicated that intrinsic motivation led to greater success.

Extrinsic Motivation

Methods of external motivation are oftentimes aligned with the achievement goal theory, which proposes setting goals and achieving them. Studies indicate that students are more motivated when they have goal-directed practice (Bradley, 2002; Midgely, Kaplan, Middleton, & Maehr, 1998; Nielson, 2008; Pearce, 2004; Smith, 2005). Schatt (2011) stated that it is critical for the educator to teach students a mastery of goal-oriented practice. Green and Hale (2011) added that by familiarizing students with

the achievement goal theory and incorporating it in the classroom, a teacher can foster a positive learning environment that motivates students to continue in music.

Patrick, Kaplan, and Ryan (2007) investigated goal setting in conjunction with the different dimensions of the classroom climate. They determined that regardless of the classroom dimension, using the mastery goal structure had a positive impact on the students' motivation. Anguiano (2006), Bailey (2006), and Hruska (2011) maintained that goal setting is one of the most effective methods to motivate students. They also advocated that teachers inspire their students to learn and practice by providing them with clear goals and a support system. Ciabattari (2006) suggested that the best motivation is a blend of enjoyment and goal-directed learning.

Strategies to Motivate Students to Practice

Some studies provide specific strategies to motivate students to practice. Barfield (1981) suggested giving rewards, varying the music, teaching students how to practice, and encouraging students to perform. Bradley (2002) concluded that directors should focus on the intrinsic value of being a musician and providing goals to encourage students to practice. Some of his recommendations included an emphasis on the joy of playing, praise of students, enjoyment of music, group activities, being an inspiring teacher, and portraying a conscientious character.

When band directors were asked to name the most effective techniques to motivate students, their lists included: training them how to practice, teaching them

how to self-correct, helping them develop a practice routine, and encouraging them to meet their goals (Hammel, 2003). Wolfe (1984) recommended motivational contracts, written and signed by the student and the teacher, with incentives for the student fulfilling the contract.

Motivational models have been proposed by some researchers, including Jones (2009), who developed a model containing five components to consider while planning a class. His model included: 1) empowerment, 2) usefulness, 3) success, 4) interest, and 5) caring (p. 272). Oare's model (2011) consisted of supervision, an aural image, motivation, goals, strategies, and assessment. Further, he maintained that an educator's primary goal should be to teach students to be independent learners.

Parents

Parents play an important role in students' musical achievement. When parents demonstrate minimal interest and place little value on a subject, their children are more likely to underperform (Bandara, 1997; Hurley, 1995; Sichivista, 2007). McPherson (2008) explained that a child's "commitment to music is partially shaped by parental influences" (p. 99). He identified six dimensions that influence children's musical learning—interest, importance, usefulness, difficulty, competence, and confidence. He explained that the interaction between the parent and student regarding each of these areas empowers parents to play a vital role in their child's success in music.

The influence of parental involvement in a child's musical development has been the source of a number of studies (Creech, 2007; Driscoll, 2009; Hickok, 2009; Woody, 2001). Creech (2007) posited that parents could support their child's learning by: 1) asking the child about parental involvement, 2) talking about practicing, 3) providing a structured environment, 4) promoting a good teacher-student relationship, 5) communicating with the teacher, and 6) being an interested audience. He added that parents who are flexible with their level of involvement create the best parenting style for successful band students. McDowell (2010) maintained that both the teacher and the student would greatly benefit from the teacher initiating a meeting with their students' parents. Peterson (2001) suggested that parents supervise, encourage, and actively listen to their children when they practice.

Parents have a profound influence on the decision of their children to pursue a career in music. Davidson, Howe, Moore, and Sloboda (1996) interviewed 257 students and one parent of each student. The students were divided into five groups, ranging from Group 1, who aspired to be music teachers, to Group 5, who had dropped out of a public school music program. The researchers found that the students in Group 1 had the strongest parental support. Davidson and Borthwick (2002) discovered that students who went on to be professional musicians had more parental involvement than those who did not. Further, they found that student-parent interaction was extremely important and that parental and student expectations were closely aligned.

Tomlinson's (2010) case study of a gifted musician demonstrated the importance of one's environment. The cellist, who had begun playing at a young age, was accepted into a university cello performance program. An examination of the socio-cultural influences on the student throughout her musical development indicated that being a gifted musician was not enough to guarantee being successful. In order to fully realize their musical potential, students need motivation and positive reinforcement from their environment (Criss, 2008; Tomlinson, 2010; Wong, 2009).

Zdzinski (1996) surveyed 406 instrumental students between fourth and twelfth grades and formulated five conclusions regarding parental involvement from his study:

1) parental involvement was related to overall performance, affective, and cognitive musical outcomes, 2) for cognitive musical outcomes, parental involvement was only related at the elementary level, 3) for musical performance outcomes, parental involvement was only related at the elementary level, 4) for affective out-comes, the strength of the parental involvement relationship increased with student age, and 5) items concerning concert attendance, providing materials, participating in parent groups, and tape-recording student performances were related to all outcome areas.

(p. 34)

Henderson and Map (2002) offered nine recommendations for increasing parental support to facilitate academic achievement:

- 1) Recognize that all parents, regardless of income, education level, or cultural background, are involved in their children's learning and want their children to do well in school.
- 2) Create programs that will support families to guide their children's learning, from preschool through high school.
- 3) Work with families to build their social and political connections.
- 4) Develop the capacity of school staff to work with families and community members.
- 5) Link family and community engagement efforts to student learning.
- 6) Focus efforts to engage families and community members in developing trusting and respectful relationships.
- 7) Embrace a philosophy of partnership and be willing to share power with families. Make sure that parents, school staff, and community members understand that the responsibility for children's educational development is a collaborative enterprise.
- 8) Build strong connections between schools and community organizations.
- 9) Design and conduct research that is more rigorous and focused, and that uses more culturally sensitive and empowering definitions of parent involvement.

(pp. 66-74)

Although this research was not focused specifically on music, these recommendations can easily be related to music programs.

While a number of anecdotal studies have highlighted the techniques used by various band directors, little empirical data are available regarding the most effective ways to encourage students to practice. Due to the direct correlation between practice and development as a musician, further investigation into this topic appears to be critical.

CHAPTER II
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Justification for Study

Identification of successful motivational techniques for encouraging adolescent band students to practice is an area of research that has not been extensively investigated. While the benefits of practice and importance of proper practice methods have been established through research, there is a paucity of studies providing empirical data regarding which motivational practices are most effectual. The purpose of this study is to identify the motivational techniques that are most successful in encouraging middle school band students to practice.

Research Questions

This study will address the following research questions:

- 1) What techniques do band directors use to motivate students to practice?
- 2) How do a majority of the students respond to these motivational techniques?
- 3) What motivational techniques seem to be the most/least successful?
- 4) Is there a relationship between the time band directors practice their instrument in the presence of their students and the amount of time students practice?

- 5) Do band directors focus more on proper practicing techniques or motivational techniques?
- 6) What role does parental involvement play in a student's motivation to practice?

Method

The researcher-designed survey instrument was based on a study conducted by Duke and Byo (2011) in which they advocated a “radical approach” to practicing which incorporated the development of expressive skills. A pilot study was conducted in which 10 graduate music education students were asked to provide feedback regarding the content and clarity of the survey questions. The survey was modified, based on suggestions from the pilot study, and then posted on the SurveyMonkey.com website for distribution via email (see Appendix A).

The first portion of the survey requested demographic information, including gender, age, years of teaching experience, and principal instrument. The second part of the survey contained checklists and opened-ended questions regarding the practice tendencies of students, practicing tendencies of directors, use of motivational techniques and practice guidelines, parental involvement, and professional music conference attendance.

Participants

Participants ($N=86$) included middle school band directors with valid Texas teaching certificates from 7 of the 28 regions as delineated by the Texas Music

Educators Association (TMEA). Email addresses of band directors in the randomly-selected regions—7, 9, 16, 13, 19, 21, and 27—were obtained from their respective TMEA region websites. Out of the 554 emails sent to junior high and/or middle school band directors, 208 (38%) were returned as undeliverable. The 346 band directors that had valid email addresses were contacted on three occasions, requesting that they complete the online survey via SurveyMonkey. The respondents ($N=86$) represented a 25% response rate.

Raw data, assembled using the data collection function on the SurveyMonkey.com website, was downloaded in an Excel format for analysis. Analysis included the use of both Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data programs to report frequency, percentages, distributions, and correlations. The open-ended responses were assigned to researcher-developed categories for the purpose of analysis.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Demographics

Respondents included 86 middle school/junior high band directors currently teaching in the state of Texas. The gender division of the respondents was 71% male and 29% female. In terms of teaching experience, 23% of respondents reported having taught band between 1 and 5 years, 17% had taught 6 to 10 years, 28% had taught 11 to 15 years, and 32% had 16 or more years of teaching experience. The majority of the directors either played a brass (42%) or woodwind (43%) instrument. Thirteen percent of the respondents indicated their primary instrument was either percussion, piano, or voice, with 2% not answering the question.

Practice Habits

When asked to identify the weekly practice habits of the majority of their students, 12% ($n = 10$) of respondents indicated that their students do not practice outside of band (see Figure 2). Thirty-six percent of the directors ($n = 31$) believed their students practiced less than an hour a week, 40% ($n = 34$) reported their students practiced one to two hours a week, 10% ($n = 9$) stated their students practiced three to four hours a week, and 2% ($n = 2$) of the directors conveyed their students practiced five

or more hours a week. A majority of respondents (88%) indicated their students practiced two or less hours a week.

A 94% majority of participants ($n=77$) provided their students with guidelines for effective practice. Among the band directors that provided practice guidelines, 59% ($n= 43$) discussed them with their students 1 to 2 times per week, 13% ($n= 9$) discussed them 3 to 4 times per week, and 28% ($n= 20$) discussed them daily.

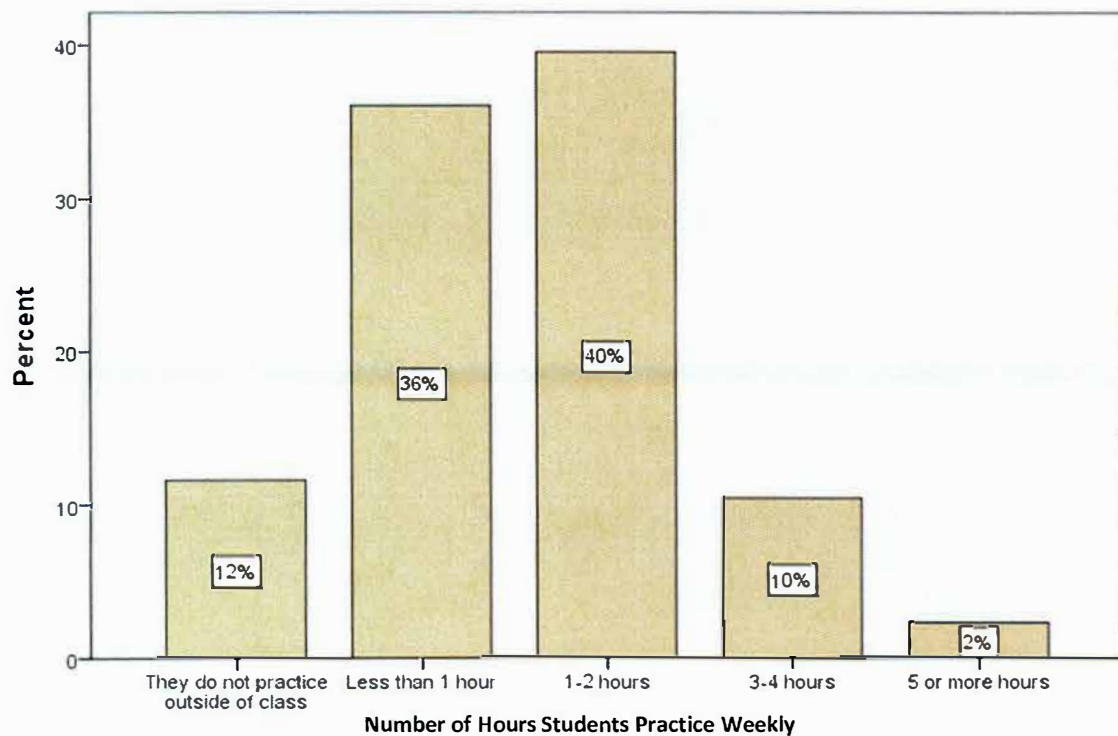


Figure 2. Weekly practice habits of students, as perceived by band directors

Respondents were asked to provide the top three practice guidelines they impart to their students. The 135 open-ended responses were assigned to ten categories: routine ($n= 24$), goals/plan ($n= 21$), slow tempo ($n= 19$), warm-up ($n= 19$),

focus on difficult or unfamiliar music ($n= 15$), small sections ($n= 15$), other ($n= 9$), repetition ($n= 5$), playing something fun ($n= 4$), and focusing on sound ($n= 4$) (see Figure 3).

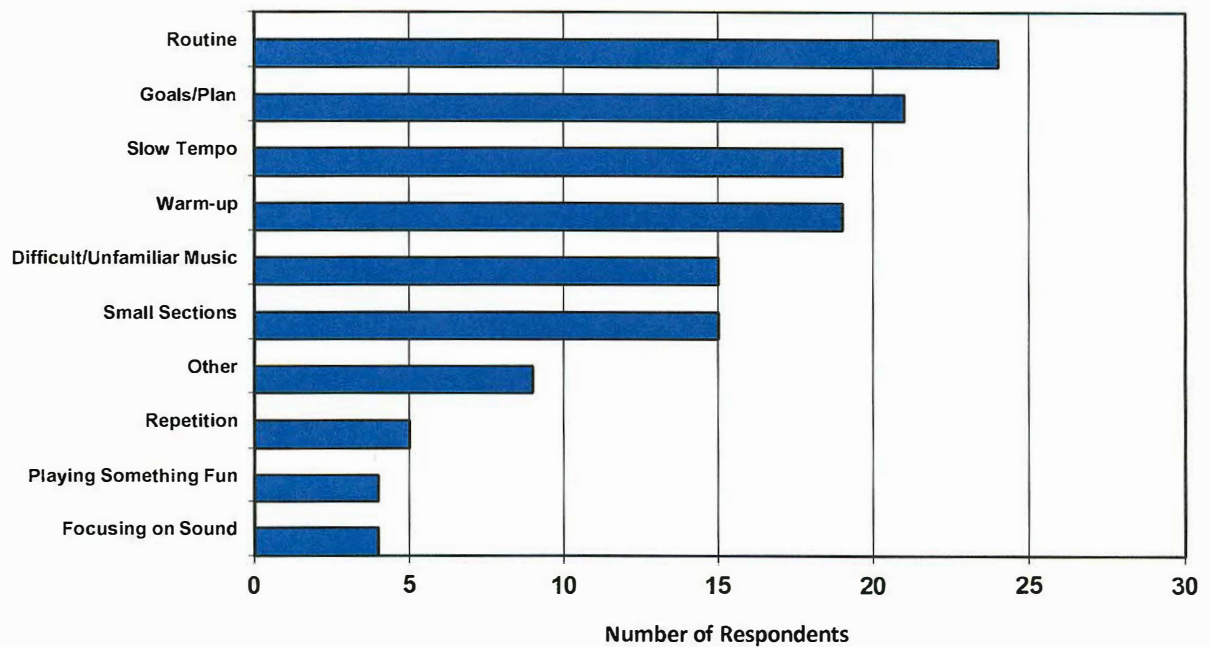


Figure 3. Types of practice guidelines implemented by band directors.

The “routine” category included responses regarding helping students to develop a routine and ensuring that they practice the same way, in the same place, and have the proper supplies every day. “Slow tempo,” the second most common guideline, suggested playing sections slowly at first, then gradually increasing speed. The next classification, “warm-up,” stressed technical exercises, including long tones, lip slurs,

and other fundamentals. “Focus on difficult and unfamiliar music” encouraged students to work on mastery of musical challenges during practice.

The “small sections” category included suggestions regarding working measure by measure prior to playing the entire section. “Repetition” was centered on students repeating the portion of the music that was most challenging until it was mastered. In the category, “fun,” directors encouraged their students to play something enjoyable during their practice, regardless of whether or not it was band class music. An additional guideline suggested students focus on making their best “sound.” The final category included a variety of answers, i.e. axioms like “practice makes permanent.”

Instrument Choice and Practice Habits

A majority of respondents (58%) reported a relationship between instrument choice and the amount of time students practice. Woodwind players (64%) were cited by band directors as the instrumentalists who practiced the most, followed by brass players (25%), and percussionists (8%). Other (1%) responses included comments regarding competition and students enrolled in private lessons.

Internal motivation was the factor provided by 68% of respondents to explain why some students practice more than others. Some of the directors’ comments included:

“I think it’s just the personality of the students that play those instruments.”

“It has always been my experience that the woodwinds tend to practice more. I think that the fact that woodwind players are primarily girls is the reason that they seem to practice more.”

Figure 4 demonstrates the cross-tabulated relationship between type of motivation and practice time. Practice time was divided into two categories, less than three hours per week and more than three hours per week. The Cramers V coefficient, calculated to interpret the association between practice time and motivation, was .348 ($p = .032$), which suggested a moderate association between the variables.

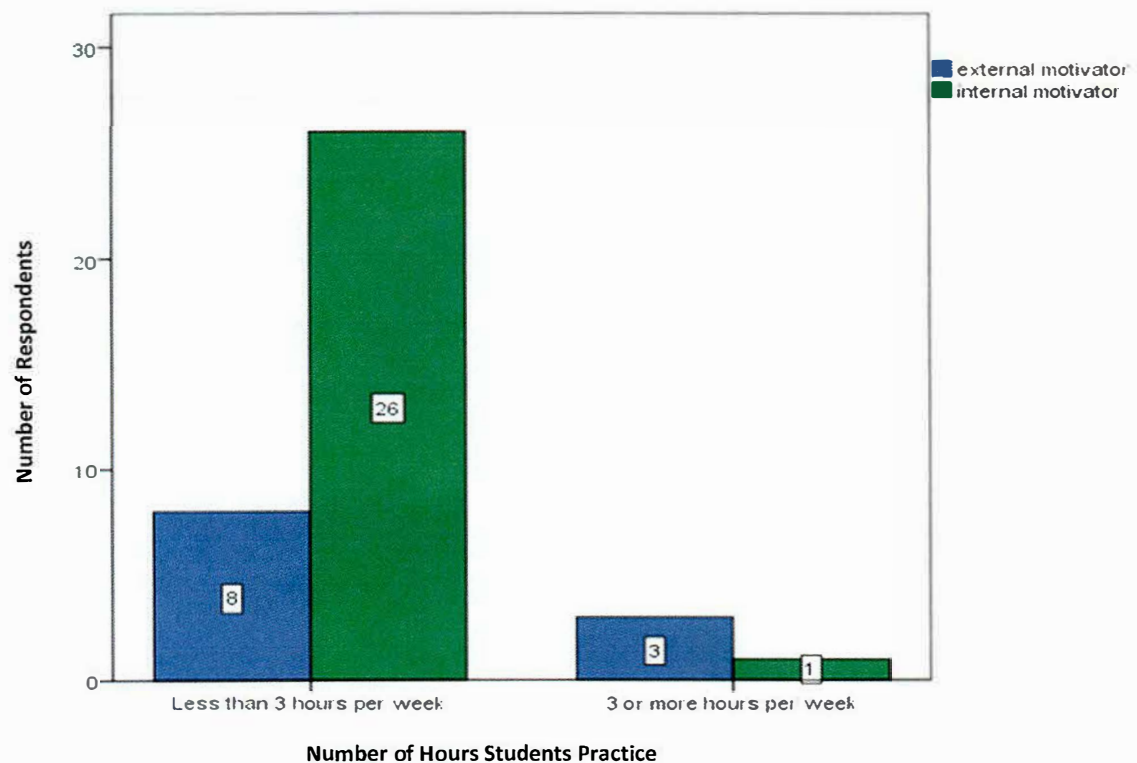


Figure 4. Type of motivation affecting practice time.

Intrinsic motivation was also demonstrated by 82% of respondents ($n=61$) who stated that they still practice their instruments. Eighty percent of the directors reported practicing up to 2 hours per week, with the other 20% practiced more than 2 hours per week. Additionally, 80% of the participants that practice, do so in the school, where their students can observe them. No significant relationship was found between the amount of time a director practices and the number of hours they reported that their students practice.

Extrinsic Motivation

Eighty-three percent ($n=68$) of the respondents indicated that they used motivational techniques, while 17% reported not employing motivational strategies. Among directors who implement motivational techniques, 39% employ them 1 to 2 times per week, 15% utilize them 3 to 4 times per week, and 45% use these techniques on a daily basis. The most frequently cited techniques utilized by respondents to motivate students to practice involved some type of extrinsic reward. The principal three areas of motivation listed were playing assessments, tangible rewards, and competition (see figure 5).

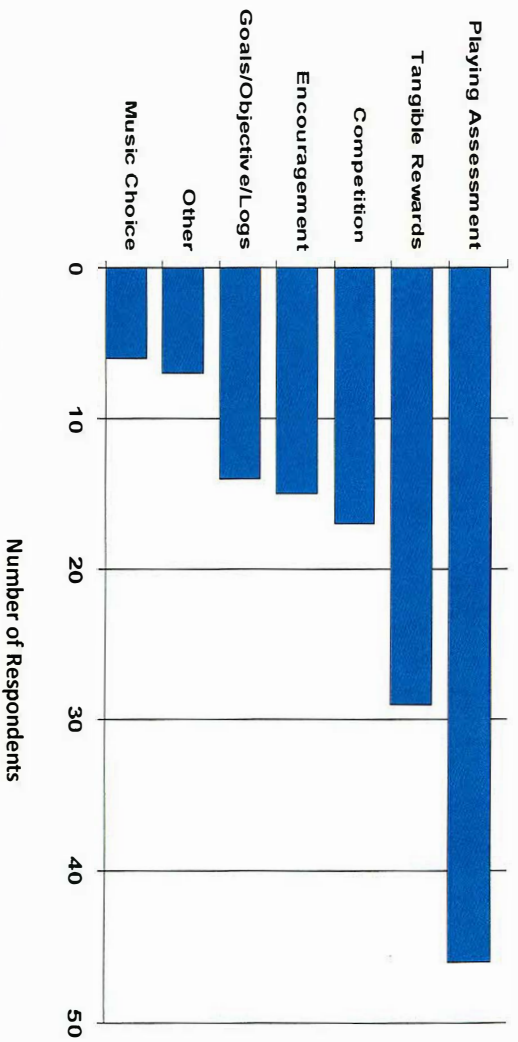


Figure 5. Motivational techniques used by directors

A comparison of motivational techniques and perceived practice time showed that students who practice three or more hours a week have directors that actively use motivational techniques (see Figure 6). A Somer's d analysis of the relationship between the two variables yielded .180 ($p=.004$), a moderate positive association.

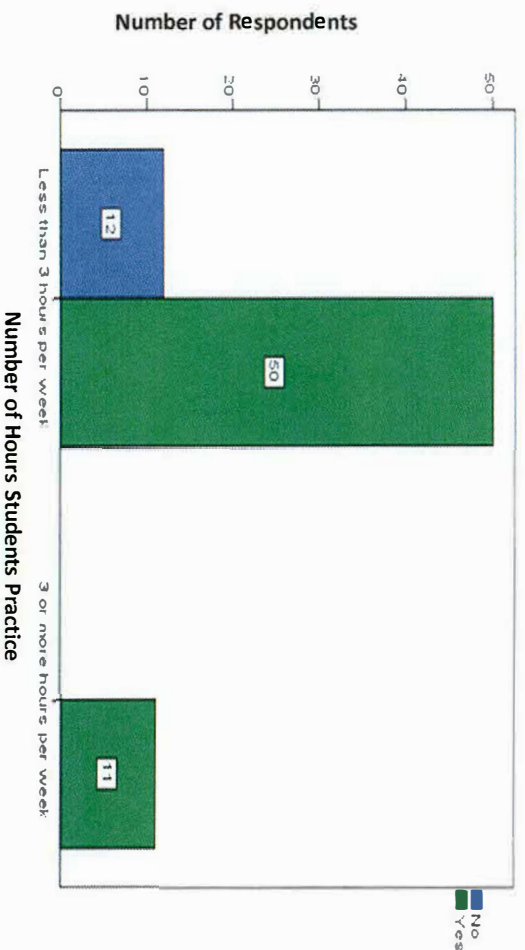


Figure 6. Practice times based on directors' use of motivational techniques.

An additional external motivator used by 47% of respondents was practice logs. No significant relationship was indicated between the use of practice logs and the amount of time students practice (Figure 7).

A 94% majority of respondents believed that parents play a vital role in the amount of time students practice. The primary methods of assistance suggested by respondents included: managing their child's practice, being ready and willing listeners, and showing interest in the students practice and playing.

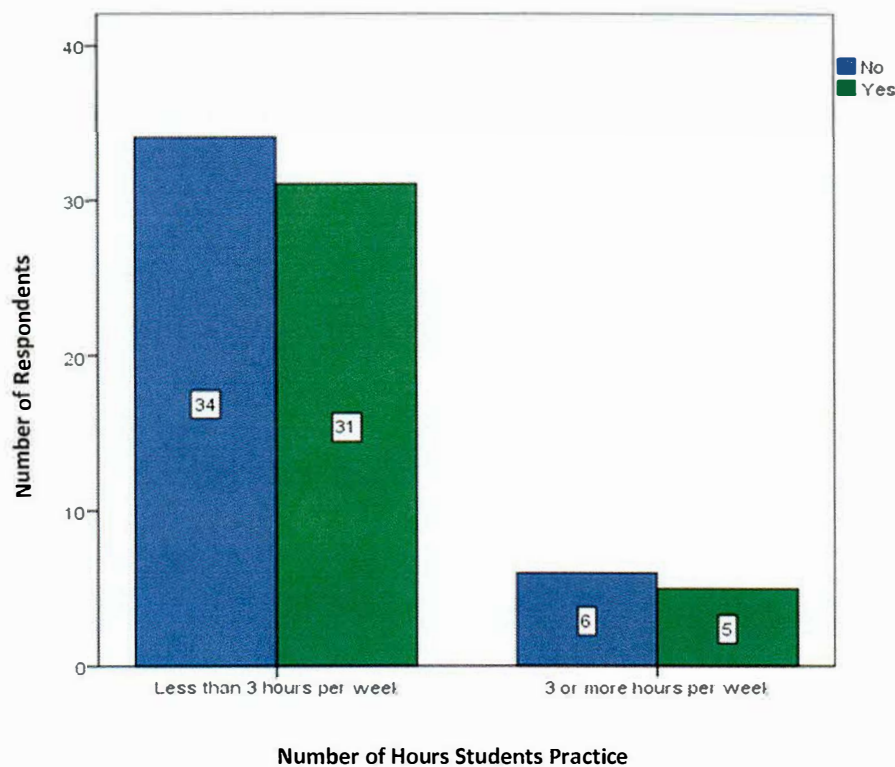


Figure 7. Practice log effects on amount of students practice time.

Respondents were asked to indicate the size of their school population, which was categorized as 1C (smallest), 2C, or 3C (largest) (see figure 8). Results showed that

students from the larger schools practiced more than those who attended the smaller schools (see figure 9). A calculation of the relationship between the two variables indicated a strong association, with Somer's d equaling .340 ($p=.030$).

The final portion of the survey asked respondents' questions regarding participation in workshops at the Texas Music Educators Association Conference (TMEA) and Texas Bandmasters Association (TBA) concerning the practice and motivational

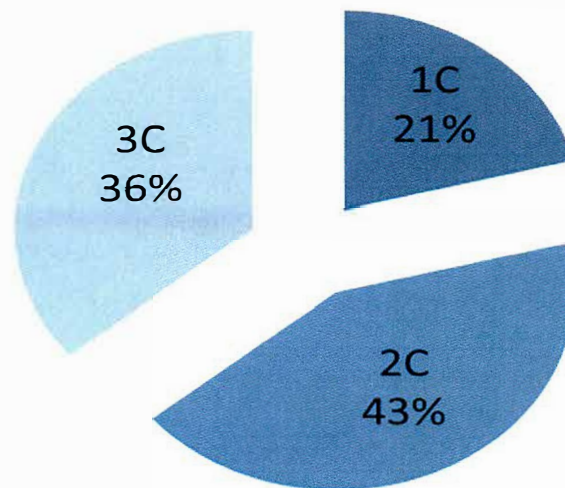


Figure 8. Breakdown of the size of school.

techniques they learned from attending sessions. Fifty-four percent of respondents indicated that they had attended workshops related to student practice at TMEA and TBA. However, no significance was indicated between directors' attendance at these sessions and the amount of time students practice. However, there was a strong relationship between attendance at professional conference sessions and the use of motivational techniques in the classroom, with a Somer's d of .308 ($p=.000$) (see Figure 10).

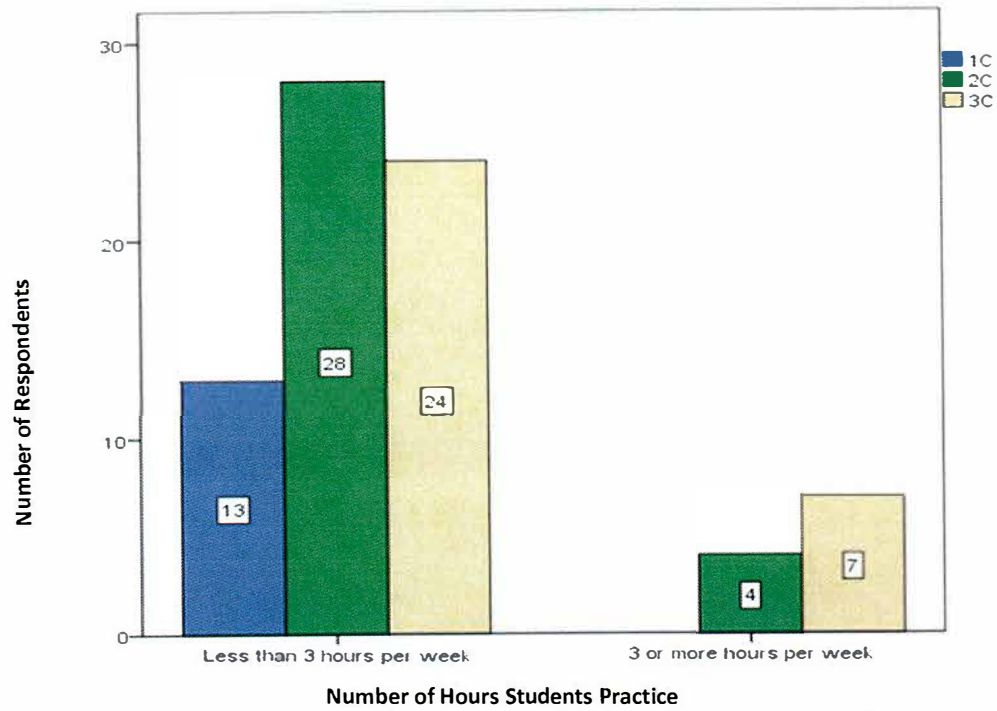


Figure 9. School size effect on amount of students practice time.

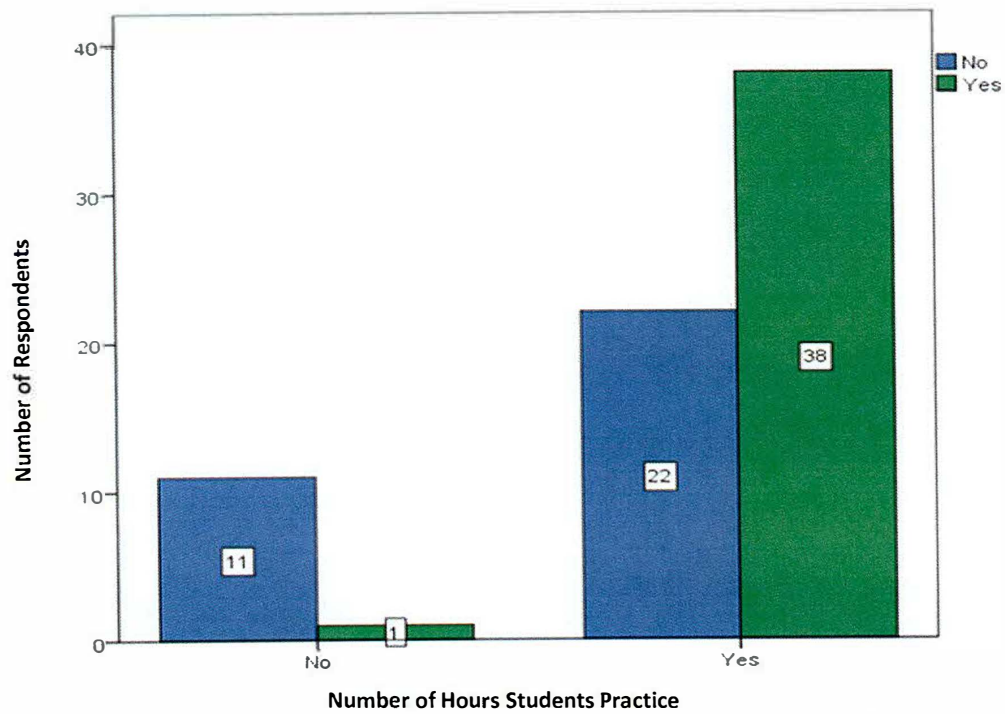


Figure 10. Attendance at conferences effect on students' practice time.

Upon analyzing the techniques that directors had incorporated into their band rehearsals from sessions at professional music conferences, 86% of the methods involved extrinsic motivation, while only 6% mentioned types of intrinsic motivation. Further, there is no significance between the amount of time band directors practice their instruments and their attendance at TMEA and other music conferences.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

A majority of the respondents were male, which is not surprising, given the fact that public school band directors in Texas are predominantly male. Over one-half of the respondents (59%) had taught for 11 or more years, thus collectively representing many years of teaching experience. The even distribution between respondents whose primary instrument was brass versus woodwind provided a more equitable perspective. The smaller percentage of percussionists was not unexpected due to the fact that they tend to be more specialized and thus represent a smaller percentage of band directors.

Research Question One

What techniques do band directors use to motivate students to practice?

Directors used multiple techniques to encourage their students to practice. The most common techniques incorporated types of external motivation. Of the participants in this study, the most frequent motivational techniques implemented were assessment followed by tangible rewards, and competition. While assessment and tangible rewards are both techniques that were mentioned in Barfield's 1981 study, these findings are surprising in that current literature focuses on praise and empowerment (Hammel, 2003; Jones, 2009; Oare, 2011).

Research Question Two

How do a majority of the students respond to these motivational techniques?

The standard stereotypes concerning instruments and student practice align with the study's results. Respondents indicated that one's personality and drive are what cause the students to choose certain instruments, which corresponds with findings from previous research (Kemp, 1981; Lautzenheiser, 1983; MacLellan, 2011). Further, the study showed that intrinsic motivation plays an integral part in motivating students to practice, which is supported by earlier studies (Bradley, 2002; de Bézenac & Swindells, 2009; Driscoll, 2009; Hallam, 2002; Lacaille, 2008; Lowe, 2010; Miksza, 2006; McPherson & McCormik, 1999; Schmidt, 2005). The results seem to suggest that band directors need to employ internal motivational methods to increase the amount of time their students practice.

There was a significant correlation between the amount of practice and size of school. While this study does not address the causal factors, some possible reasons students in smaller schools practice less are: fewer students have access to private lessons, the level of performance demands in competition is lower, directors cover multiple campuses and are unable to be present to facilitate practice in school on a regular basis, students are involved in many activities, and the drive for placement in a higher-level ensemble is non-existent in that there is only one band. It is important that band directors at small schools create a culture of practice and give greater attention to

motivational methods. These results point to studies that have found that students' needs are unique, thus motivational techniques for practicing should be individualized and student-centered (Anderman & Maehr, 2009; Bresler, 2009; Burwell & Shipton, 2011; Klinedinst, 1991; Kostka, 2004; Leon-Guerrero, 2008; Pitts & Davidson, 2000).

Research Question Three

What motivational techniques seem to be the most/least successful?

The data showed that it is extremely important for the director to use motivational techniques to encourage students to practice. Further, both intrinsic and extrinsic methods of motivation are important. Assessment, a common method of motivation, is an inherent part of the assignment of grades each six weeks. Utilization of playing tests as an assessment tool not only motivates students to practice to achieve a higher grade, but also helps the band director validate the students' grades. Students are also motivated to practice when they are allowed to challenge one another for chair placement.

While many of the directors reported using extrinsic motivation, it is important to note that tangible rewards have been found to be detrimental (Diaz, 2010). This may be a technique that is easy to incorporate in the classroom, but students then rely on instant gratification. This also offers a challenge to get students to practice outside of the classroom setting.

The practice log does not have a looming effect on the amount of time a student practices. In their comments, directors either firmly believed in the use of practice logs or were adamantly opposed to their use. Results of this study indicated that the amount of time students practice was not impacted by the requirement of practice logs. This finding was not surprising due to many directors expressing concerns regarding parents and students providing inaccurate reports of practice time.

One of the most successful techniques that band directors reported using was providing their students with practice guidelines, which is supported by previous research (Austin & Berg 2006; Byo, 2004a; Byo, 2004b; Hammel, 2003; Kaplan, 2004; Miksza, 2007; Oare, 2012; Pearce, 2004; Peterson, 2004). The guidelines that directors cited most frequently were creating a practice routine, having clear goals and planning the practice, always warming up, and slowing the music to an attainable practice tempo.

Research Question Four

Is there a relationship between the time band directors practice their instrument in the presence of their students and the amount of time students practice?

Directors modeling practice showed no effect on students' practice time. Perhaps this could partially be due to the fact that students are unable to observe those directors at the times they practice in that students are in other classes. When students are in the band hall, directors are typically working with them, rather than practicing their instrument.

Research Question Five

Do band directors focus more on proper practicing techniques or motivational techniques?

These data demonstrate that there can be a wide variation in the amount of time a student practices. Thus, practice techniques are important and need to be addressed in the classroom. Further, there was a clear connection between directors who did not teach practice techniques and the students who rarely practiced. The participants did indicate that they focus more on practice techniques than motivation to practice, which is in alignment with previous research (Kaplan, 2004; Oare, 2012; Peterson, 2004).

Research Question Six

What role does parental involvement play in a student's motivation to practice?

A majority of the directors stated that parents play a crucial role in encouraging students to practice, which supports findings from previous studies (Creech, 2007; Driscoll, 2009; Hickok, 2009; Woody, 2001). However, none of the directors stated that they actively worked with parents to motivate students to practice. Perhaps this is due to the amount of time it would take to provide parents with information regarding practice strategies and to remain in active communication with parents regarding their children's progress. Band directors might be unwilling to add anything to their busy schedules; however, the benefits would probably be worth the investment of time.

Regardless of time constraints, it is important to communicate with parents regarding the role they play in their children's development as musicians. Increased parental involvement will lead to greater student motivation to practice and higher levels of musical skills and achievement.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study reinforces the importance of motivational techniques to encourage middle school band students to practice their instruments. Findings of this study provide several helpful tips for music educators. First, it is helpful for directors to stress the importance of practice techniques in the classroom on a daily basis. Second, educators should focus on intrinsic motivation. Third, practice logs do not make a significant difference in the amount of time students practice. Fourth, communication with parents regarding their role in motivating their children to practice is key to musical development. Fifth, band directors from the smaller programs need to develop methods of motivation that meet their students' unique needs. Lastly, TMEA and TBA sessions are beneficial, and directors that attend these sessions are more likely to implement motivational techniques in their classroom.

Further research is required in that the return rate of the survey was 25% and the geographic area was limited to seven regions in Texas. Additional studies could include both middle school/junior high and high school band directors, and their responses could be compared to those of their students. Also, a survey of Texas band directors whose ensembles traditionally have high scores at UIL competition could be

Conducted to determine what techniques they utilize to motivate their students to practice.

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Appendix A
Survey: Middle School Band Directors' Motivational Techniques

Survey: Middle School Band Directors' Motivational Techniques

1. How many years have you been teaching band?

A. 1-5

B. 6-10

C. 11-15

D. 16 or more

2. What is your gender?

A. Male

B. Female

3. What is your age?

A. 20-29

B. 30-39

C. 40-49

D. 50-59

E. 60 or above

4. What is your primary instrument?

5. What is your school classification?

A. 1C

B. 2C

C. 3C

6. Are your students required to submit a weekly practice log?

A. Yes

B. No

7. How would you characterize the WEEKLY practice habits of the MAJORITY of your students?

A. They do not practice outside of band

B. Less than 1 hour

C. 1-2 hours

D. 3-4 hours

E. 5 or more hours

8. Do your students who play certain instruments tend to practice more than others?

A. Yes

B. No

If your answer is NO, advance to #11.

9. What are the instruments that students tend to practice the most?

10. Why do you think students tend to practice some instruments more than others?

11. Do you use motivational techniques to encourage your students to practice?

A. Yes

B. No

If your answer is NO, advance to #14.

12. What are the motivational techniques that you have found to be most effective?

13. How frequently do you use motivational techniques to encourage your students to practice?

A. Never

B. 1-2 days a week

C. 3-4 days a week

D. Daily

14. Do you provide your students with guidelines to practice more effectively?

A. Yes

B. No

If you answered NO, advance to #17.

15. What are the top three guidelines that you use?

16. How frequently do you discuss practice guidelines to encourage your students to practice?

- A. Never
- B. 1-2 days a week
- C. 3-4 days a week
- D. Daily

17. Do you feel that parental involvement has an impact on how much your students practice?

- A. Yes
- B. No

If you answered NO, advance to #19.

18. List some of the ways parents can increase their students' practice time:

19. Do you still practice your principal instrument?

- A. Yes
- B. No

If you answered NO, advance to #22.

20. How much time do you practice a week?

- A. Less than 1 hour
- B. 1-2 hours
- C. 3-4 hours
- D. 5 or more hours

21. Do you practice at school at a time when students can observe you?

A. Yes

B. No

22. Do you believe that students are motivated to practice more when they observe their band director modeling that behavior?

A. Yes

B. No

23. Have you attended any training sessions on student practice at TMEA, TBA, or other music conferences?

A. Yes

B. No

If your answer in NO go to #25.

24. What, if any, techniques did you learn from a music conference that have been effective in improving your students' practice habits?

25. Do you have any other comments you would like to make regarding band students' practice habits?
