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An investigation of the causes of attrition in instrumental music students grades six, eight, ten and twelve.

William Lovgren

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CAUSES OF ATTRITION
IN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC STUDENTS
GRADES SIX, EIGHT, TEN AND TWELVE

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Music

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Music

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

William Lovgren

April 9, 1996

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree Master of Music,
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence attrition in instrumental music students in grade six, eight, ten and twelve. The investigation utilized a thirteen statement survey to elicit information from students. Categories included in the survey were: 1) scheduling as it relates to the availability of classes and opportunity for enrollment; 2) students' perceived level of encouragement and support from parents and band directors; 3) students' perceived level of musical ability and success; and, 4) other influences such as friends, jobs, other activities (school and non-school related), type of performances, and instrument ownership. Non-parametric statistics utilizing chi square procedures were used to analyze the data. Responses from students (N=1006) revealed the highest dropout rate occurred after the eighth-grade year. The results indicated teachers and parents have more influence on students' band participation at the lower grade levels. In addition, students in the upper grade levels reported more often that conflicts with school schedules and other activities were reasons for dropping band. Finally, the study demonstrated that marching band may be a significant attrition factor, particularly at the eighth-grade level.

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Chapter I Introduction

The retention of instrumental music students is an important element in the growth and continuation of every instrumental music program. However, as students pass through the different levels of instruction, a large percentage of them often discontinue studying instrumental music. Lawrence (1985) found the dropout rate for instrumental students from fifth- to sixth-grade was 39%, from sixth- to seventh-grade was 31%, from seventh- to eighth-grade was 23%, from eight- to ninth-grade was 49% and from ninth- to tenth-grade was 46%. His investigation reported that if 1,000 students started band in the fifth-grade only 90 would still be enrolled by the tenth-grade.

At what level of instruction students drop out and their reasons for leaving has been a concern to music educators in the past and present. Kruth (1964), and Martignetti (1965) identified attrition as a major concern of instrumental music instructors over thirty years ago. Research focusing on the factors contributing to the musical success or failure of students has been and continues to be of great interest to those involved in music education (Klinedinst, 1991).

The attrition of instrumental music students at any grade level may ultimately omit individuals from continuing music education throughout their life. Sandene (1994) reported that students who discontinue instrumental music instruction after their first year rarely return and therefore, miss the advantages of music instruction. Likewise he stated, students who leave choral ensemble programs in the middle school may have less opportunity or

interest to pursue music in high school. Students who drop out of music instruction lose an opportunity for a basic component of education (National Standards for Arts Education, 1994). It appears imperative that all music educators retain a larger number of students as they progress through the grade levels.

The arts have often been viewed as being on the defensive following the success of Sputnik in 1958 which caused America to redefine its educational system. In response to Sputnik the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 authorized matching grants for public schools and loans to private schools for the purchase of equipment used in teaching science, mathematics, and foreign languages. The NDEA also identified music as a “critical subject” of national concern (Mark 1986). In the 1960’s an increased emphasis by educators and our general society on math and science-related courses raised graduation requirements in these subject areas for students nationwide. Competition for time in the academic day and a potential loss of students caused music educators to search for new methods to retain music students. Conferences such as the Tanglewood Symposium, the Yale Seminar, and the Ann Arbor Symposia were attempts to justify and promote music in the schools. These conferences helped unify music educators and provided philosophical guidance that is still referred to today. Yet, these conferences did not provide information regarding the retention of music students.

In 1991, President George Bush and the nation’s governors issued national goals in education to be achieved by the year 2000. These goals called for American students to be “first in the world” in science and math

achievement and “to demonstrate competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history and geography” (Glenn, 1992). Originally, arts education was not included in the National Standards. After significant national debate leading to the addition of the arts into the National Standards, arts educators were challenged to establish high standards for the arts as a basic educational component. The Music Educators National Conference (MENC) along with the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations responded by publishing the National Standards for Arts Education (1994) which asserted that the arts are a basic component to a complete education. The National Standards for Arts Education also stated that 1) all students deserve access to arts education, 2) that the arts are important to life long learning, and 3) the arts have value and significance in daily life.

The tenets of the MENC are much like the writings and doctrines of early Greek philosophers such as Plato, Socrates and Pythagoras. Abeles (1984) stated, “In essence, the Greek doctrine of ethos was established on the assumption that music affected an individual’s character, and that character could be affected in different ways by different kinds of music” (p. 5). The Greeks believed that music was governed by mathematical laws and a force that affected everything in the universe. A complete Greek education included oratory for the mind, gymnastics for the body, and art and music for the soul.

As in the past, the arts must remain a basic component to a whole education. Former Secretary of Education William J. Bennett (1986) said “No education is complete without awareness of music; music is an essential

expression of the character of a society” (p. 32). Because the arts place importance on life long learning, the MENC believes the retention of students in the arts is critical to the success of arts education and contributes to a student’s complete education. Therefore, it would appear that music educators should strive to increase the enrollment and involvement of students in instrumental music.

In order to better understand student retention, music instructors must first determine why students drop-out of their classes. Reasons given by students for discontinuing are varied and difficult to measure (Klinedinst 1991). Klinedinst recommended that all students be tested with a valid and reliable music aptitude test. He suggested those results be used in conjunction with academic ability and achievement test scores to identify students most likely to succeed in music instruction. Other attrition factors which have been studied are the relationship of attrition to musical achievement, musical performance, and music aptitude (Dregalla, 1983).

Rawlins (1979) found the reasons for students leaving instrumental music included scheduling of music classes, conflict with the instructor, and students’ feelings about themselves. He also noted poor sequencing of the instrumental program and the lack of opportunities to perform and continue participation in music after graduation as additional problems.

Johnson (1990) stated that changes in high school graduation requirements and schedule conflicts caused serious declines in music enrollment in many Alabama schools. At the elementary level, Martignetti (1965) concluded that parents, teachers and students have cited different

reasons for dropping out of band. Teachers believed that the lack of support at home caused a loss of interest in students. Students cited the difficulty in mastering the instrument as the primary reason for leaving band. Parents indicated that the amount of time required for practice was the primary reason for dropping band.

Another element in understanding instrumental music retention is to determine what aspects of band motivates students to continue participation. Fant (1995) listed six possible reasons that students participate in instrumental music: 1) they love music; 2) their friend is part of the group; 3) the way a certain instrument sounds; 4) past performances of other players on a particular instrument; 5) maybe it is the "thing to do" at your school; and, 6) because of the teacher. Klinedinst (1991) concluded that the retention of students can be predicted with much more accuracy than student dropout.

Despite previous research, the retention of instrumental music students appears to be a continuing area of concern. In the past thirty years, music educators have identified the retention of students as essential to the maintenance and growth of their programs. Solutions to attrition problems may not be universal for every teaching situation at every grade level. However, additional research may discover new information on attrition and provide instrumental music educators with additional methods to reduced student dropout.

The purpose of this study was 1) to discover the causes of attrition at the sixth-, eight-, tenth-, and twelve-grade, 2) to determine the attrition rate for those specific grade levels, and 3) to compare the causes of attrition between

the four grade levels: six, eight, ten, and twelve. Six specific null hypotheses guided the investigation: 1) there will be no differences in the attrition rate between grade levels; 2) there will be no differences in parental support between the grade levels; 3) instrumental music instructors have no influence on attrition; 4) scheduling of music classes has no affect on attrition; 5) musical ability as perceived by the student has no effect on attrition; and 6) other activities, as perceived by students, do not interfere with band participation.

The primary intent of this investigation was to discover the reasons students leave instrumental music so that solutions may be found to increase the retention rate at all levels of music instruction. Findings from this study will benefit music programs interested in reducing attrition of instrumental music students. The results can be used by administrators and music educators at the primary and secondary levels to increase band participation through the reduction of attrition. Finally, the goal of this study may best be summarized by Sandene (1994) when he stated, "The overall health and long-term growth of a school music program depend on the development of stable student enrollment at all grade levels. Instructors who actively strive to reduce student attrition have the best educational interests of both the individual students and the school music program at heart" (p. 33).

Chapter II

Related Literature

The review of literature indicated that many factors may influence the attrition of instrumental music students. The investigated factors are 1) music achievement of the student; 2) music aptitude of the student; 3) motivation of the student; 4) frequency and type of performances of the music program; 5) other activities that may interfere or conflict with band; 6) parental support 7) scheduling of band classes in the school day, and 8) the influence and effect of the teacher.

Achievement

Predicting success or failure in instrumental music has been of interest to researchers. Hedden (1982) used the Music Achievement Test, Attitude Toward Music Scale, a Music Background scale, the Self-Concept in Music scale, and the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills to predict music achievement in fifth- and sixth-grade band students. His study concluded that the general academic achievement measure (ITBS) clearly was the best single predictor of music achievement. Hedden also stated that a teacher might be able to heighten music achievement by stressing the development of positive attitudes toward music and positive self-concepts in music.

Hufstader (1974) used A Test of Musicality, the California Test of Mental Maturity and the California Achievement Test to predict music achievement. Hufstader asked the directors of fifth-grade band students to divide their students into three groups according to achievement classified as high,

middle, and low. His data concluded that there is a difference between the scores of successful and less successful beginning instrumental music students on his seven selected variables: 1) Rotary Pursuit Apparatus; 2) Visual Choice Reaction Timer; 3) Tachistoscope; 4) Tapping Board; 5) Test of Musicality; 6) Intelligence Test; 7) Academic Achievement Test.

Studies have also found a positive relationship between reading achievement and music achievement (Klinedinst, 1991, McCarthy, 1980). McCarthy studied individualized instruction compared to group instruction of fifth- and sixth-grade band students. He concluded that when compared to group instruction, individualized instruction resulted in significantly superior scores on the performance test for students of higher than normal academic reading skills. No other instructional interactions or main effects were found. Klinedinst studied only fifth-grade band students and concluded that during the first year of instruction, performance achievement is best predicted by scholastic ability and academic achievement tests.

Aptitude

Of the standardized tests developed to assess behaviors, the largest portion are aptitude tests (Abeles, Hoffer, and Klotman, 1984). Seashore (1919) was the first to develop aptitude test material that concerned students' perception of pitch, loudness, rhythm, timbre, and tonal memory. His Seashore Measures of Musical Talents was widely used by music educators for nearly fifty years. More recently, Gordon (1965) developed Musical Aptitude Profile to be used for students grades four through twelve. Gordon (1968) believed it is important to music educators to identify students with

potential in music and expose them to special music instruction rather than for teachers to know how intelligent music students are in general. Gordon states:

It appears that over and beyond musical aptitude scores neither intelligence nor academic achievement test scores have much if any thing at all to contribute to the accuracy with which success or achievement in instrumental music may be predicted. (p. 44)

Motivation

Music educators have long realized the importance of motivating students to participate and achieve in music (Asmus, 1985). Asmus studied the views of sixth-grade general music students regarding the reasons for success or failure in music. He demonstrated that musical achievement and success can provide the student with the confidence and motivation to continue in instrumental music. Asmus implied that students believe they can achieve in music if they apply themselves diligently and produce the required amount of effort.

The Attribution Theory developed by Weiner (1974) used students' success and failure at achievement related tasks to determine motivational characteristics. The theory considers that the causes of student success and failure at a task will determine how that task will be approached in the future. Asmus (1986) utilized the Attribution Theory as a basis for understanding the motivational elements inherent in the reasons student cite of why some people are successful in music and others are not. Asmus also described the implications of the Attribution Theory for music educators:

A basic tenet of Attribution Theory applied to music education is that beliefs students have about the causes for success and failure at a musical task will influence how the students approach the task in the future. Teachers who encourage students with effort related attributions are more likely to have students who adopt the view that if they try hard and apply themselves, they can achieve in music. Such a view is congruent with the idea that practicing will make a student a better musician and is more likely to result in students who do practice. Those teachers who promote ability related attributions are suggesting to students that it is some innate characteristic that only a few people possess that allows them to be good at music. Students who adopt such a belief pattern are less apt to practice unless they view themselves as an individual with the requisite talent. (p. 274)

Austin and Vispoel (1992) stated that placing excessive emphasis on ability as the key to success in the music classroom may undermine the motivation of the average or struggling music student. Their study involved band students in grades five through eight. Students were presented with a situational description of a failure event in a common music performance scenario (music contest) and then responded to a thirty-five item questionnaire concerning the scenario. The authors' findings implied that music students would respond more constructively to failure if instructors emphasized strategic effort more and ability estimates less. They concluded that for motivation to pervade the music classroom, students must believe that musical skill and knowledge can be improved continuously in all students at

all levels at any moment.

For students, the motivation to continue in instrumental music can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Thomas (1992) compares intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for instrumental music students:

Because the external pressure in school to study music is much less than it is in other areas, the degree to which motivation is intrinsic rather than extrinsic may be especially crucial to persistence in music (Covington, 1983; Nicholls, 1983). Students may pursue mathematics as "a way to get ahead," but music has rarely been thought a route to fame and fortune. Thus the motive "to do one's best" or "just enjoy," as opposed to "being better than" the next person, may be not only desirably but essential to maintaining students' continuing motivation in music. These contrasting motives are termed: task involvement, which refers "to states where our concern is to develop or demonstrate (primarily to oneself) high ability in the less differentiated sense"; and ego involvement, which refers "to states where our concern is with developing or demonstrating (to self or others) high rather than low ability (Nicholls, 1984). (p. 43)

Unfortunately, many schools typically promote ego involvement rather than task involvement - that is, extrinsic rather than intrinsic motivation (Nicholls, 1983, 1984). As the salience of students' "rank in the hierarchy" increases over the grades, this may be exactly, and ironically, the wrong emphasis if motivation is to be sustained. As students become more certain that ability means capacity, a "maturity"

attained at about age 11 and consolidated by early adolescence (Nicholls, 1984), they come in turn to view ability as something innate and unchangeable; with the result that, if they are not doing well, they may judge further striving as not worth their best effort (p. 430).

Fant (1995) believed extrinsic motivators that recognize or honor achievement can be motivating factors for instrumental music students. He suggested using merit charts and musicianship awards to develop good behaviors and musicianship. Fant stated that teachers who promote extrinsic motivational activities will develop students with intrinsic motivation who find satisfaction in music without observable rewards.

Music Performance

Research in attrition related to music performance has also been conducted. Bundy (1993) reviewing a dissertation by Mills, stated the relationship between the amount of marching and non-marching musical activity, and what participants find important in the band experience, raises some questions regarding the impact of various activities in band programs. Mills stated that understanding student statements concerning band performances will be useful in planning future band activities.

Bergee (1989) listed three performance related topics among his recommendations to restructure band scheduling in secondary schools: 1) reorganize marching band and make it voluntary, 2) maintain a reasonable performance schedule, and 3) make band classes cooperative rather than competitive. He expressed that marching band performance has minimal value to music education and it should not consume one-quarter of the

allotted instruction time in the school day. Bergee also stated that lengthy performance schedules are the sort of “blatant empire building” that has no place in public education.

In discussing the impact of marching band on the overall band program Battisti (1989) expressed concern that instrumental music educators may be forgetting that the band program is part of the music education curriculum. He believed that there are high school band programs that are geared toward the short-term reward of competitive recognition rather than toward the development of musical skills, understanding, creativity, and the long-term appreciation of great music. Battisti stated:

In high schools that continually expand marching band activities, there is frequently a gradual loss of emphasis on the concert band and other ensemble activities. The instrumentation available to the concert band in these institutions is often restricted, reflecting the needs of the marching band and not the demands of “concert music.”

Specifically, the practice of eliminating some or all of the woodwinds from the marching band and expanding the number of brass and percussion instruments has contributed to the decreasing number of students who study woodwind instruments because it has made woodwinds instruments less attractive to students. When one sees a marching band equipped with an extensive number of field-type percussion instruments, special “corps style” brass instruments, and flags, and then finds a

depleted band component of the band program, one has to question the philosophy and priorities of this part of the school music program. (p. 24-25).

McManus (1984) discussed the document Bands: Guidelines, Expectations, and Limitations. This document, which has been adopted as official state policy by the Oregon Band Directors Association, sets guidelines for performances of high school bands. McManus stated:

In establishing a school policy with respect to public performance, the primary criterion must always be the educational value of the experience. It is important that the demands of public performance and competitive activities not be allowed to become dominant or excessive, and that public performance remain secondary to education in the curriculum. There is no dichotomy between the two, and the former clearly supports the latter, but this relationship must be kept in perspective. It occasionally happens that students tend to be exploited by finding themselves required, in order to retain membership in the group, to devote excessive amounts of time, energy and money to enterprises of questionable educational merit. These pressures, which can come from any of a variety of sources and often tend to focus on students in select performing ensembles, can and should be resisted in the interest of balanced, quality education. (pg. 29)

The National Standards for Arts Education (1994) also discussed music

performance. It stated music performance as a 'Content Standard' and qualified student achievement in performance by the demonstration of specific music skills not the number of performances. Achievement standards in performance include, students; 1) perform with expression and technical accuracy a large and varied repertoire of instrumental literature with a level of difficulty of 4, on a scale of 1 to 6; 2) perform an appropriate part in an ensemble, demonstrating well-developed ensemble skills; and, 3) perform in small ensembles with one student on a part. The National Standards for Arts Education also asserted assessment measures should incorporate traditional pencil-and-paper technique demonstrations while at the same time make use of a broad range of performance tasks. Written standards for students include; 1) Content Standard 4, Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines; 2) Content Standard 5, Reading and notating music; and, 3) Content Standard 6, Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.

Cutietta (1986) observed that music education is moving toward a more educationally based curriculum than a performance curriculum. He stated music educators should be more concerned about the education of their students than with the performance quality of their groups. Cutietta believed this movement is more evident in the primary grade levels than the secondary level.

Parental Support

Parental support of music programs and students is an attrition variable which has been investigated. Stouffer (1992) reported that sometime between the fifth- and eighth-grades schools "lose" significant numbers of

parents who had previously been somewhat involved in the academic and co-curricular lives of their children. While stating that parental involvement is important to students at all grade levels, Stouffer suggested that parental involvement declines as students mature.

Brand (1985) attempted to construct reliable measures of family musical involvement as related to music aptitude and achievement. He stated, "The best musical learning is achieved when the home and school work in concert so that the unique opportunities and special resources of home and school operate simultaneously and co-operatively to positively influence the musical growth of children" (p. 4).

Other studies have found less significance in parental involvement and music achievement. Zdzinski (1992) reported that parental involvement (as measured by student responses) is not related to overall musical achievement among middle school instrumental music students. Zdzinski also stated that for middle school instrumental music students, other factors such as teacher influence, music aptitude, grade level, and gender have stronger relationships to musical achievement than parental involvement.

Shinichi Suzuki felt strongly about the importance of parental involvement when he began his string music study in the the 1940's. Brady (1992), when discussing the Suzuki teaching method stated, the pupil often becomes interested because the parent and teacher both show one-on-one interest in the pupil.

Student Schedules

Students' ability to schedule instrumental music during the school day is

another attrition factor receiving research attention. Johnson (1990) stated students have more choices when scheduling classes and also have more classes required for high school graduation. He listed increased credit requirements for graduation as a special concern to secondary band directors because of the increased likelihood of a students' encountering conflicts with elective music courses and required courses.

Bergee (1989) regarded the six-hour day, added graduation requirements, and a greater array of activities available to students as reasons students are being squeezed out of band programs. He suggested limiting the class size of large instrumental groups and placing students in smaller groups by ability to allow students greater access to a musical education. He would also like to see marching band removed from the school day and reorganized into a voluntary after-school activity.

Lehman (1988) called increasing the course requirements for both middle school and high school students, without increasing the number of periods in the school day, a threat to music programs. He suggested it is almost impossible to maintain an adequate arts program in a six-period day. Lehman stated schools with nine-period days have fewer problems in scheduling the arts.

Teachers

Much has been written about the role of the instrumental music instructor in attrition. When students were asked by Lawrence (1985) to suggest ways to solve the dropout problem "getting better teachers" was their number one response. Lawrence or the students did not qualify what a "better" teacher

was, however. The role of instrumental music teachers and arts educators in general may be misunderstood. Larson (1992) when defending music education said subjects such as music and the arts should not be given second-class treatment, nor should teachers of the arts be treated any differently than core teachers.

Dodson (1989) suggested the purpose of the secondary band director is changing from simply teaching performance skills for the next band function, to teaching musical skills that will provide a meaningful involvement with music that will continue throughout their lives. He stated that psychomotor and cognitive skills should be integrated into daily classroom activities. This integration, Dodson continued, will benefit the individual student and the performance level of the group by developing the musical abilities of the band students and achieving accurate and expressive performances by the band.

Teachers must relate to students the importance of practice, and how to practice. Minahan (1986) contends that many students go through music instruction without being taught how to practice, resulting in hours of time spent playing instruments without making any progress. He stated that musicians are not performers, but practitioners who go before the public from time to time.

Wolfe (1984) also believed students must be taught how to practice. He stated many students lack the self-discipline to practice and that good practice habits are a learned behavior. For students to learn good practice behavior, Wolfe suggested a contractual agreement be made between

student and teacher. In his behavior contracting, rewards are given to students who fulfill the practice requirements on their contract. The rewards and requirements are adjusted periodically until the desired practice behavior is achieved.

Other Activities

Music educators have previously studied aspects of instrumental music programs which students enjoy and find the most rewarding. A recent survey of band directors' perceptions identified a non-musical reason (social) as the highest factor of students' motivation for being in band (Chodoroff, 1990). In contrast, the same study found students ranked a musical reason (enjoyment of playing instrument, performing music) as the highest motivational factor. This difference in perception between students and directors may be cause for music educators to continue to examine attrition factors in instrumental music.

Students' interests and attitudes about participating in instrumental music can change rapidly for apparently little reason. According Hagner (1985) a higher percentage of students drop out in the elementary and junior high level for reasons that are non-musical rather than musical. Some of these reasons were; 1) incorrect instrument choice; 2) the student does not like who he or she sits by; 3) the student may not like to wear the uniform; and 4) the child is too immature to choose between activities.

Sandene (1994) stated that students who drop instrumental music in their first year of instruction rarely get the opportunity to become involved in band or orchestra programs later in their academic careers. He also stated

that recruiting large numbers of students into a program and then failing to retain the program enrollment squanders time, energy, and money.

Conclusion

The attrition of instrumental music students is a continuing concern for music educators (Kruth 1964; Klinedinst 1991). The related literature indicated that many factors may influence the attrition of instrumental music students. Student dropout, however, appears inevitable, not every student who begins a band instrument in fifth-grade will continue to the college level. Hagner (1985) described this situation:

There are times, as parents and teachers must learn, when the best thing for a child is to allow him to end his participation in band. Not every child who starts band and lessons is going to continue indefinitely. (The majority, in fact, continue only into junior high.)

Most children can accomplish something with a band instrument, but occasionally you do come across a student who, for one reason or another, is absolutely not ready. Maybe the child truly cannot count; coordination may be so poorly developed that he can't put the fingers where they ought to go; his sense of pitch may be terrible. You name it - he does it wrong. If the child has enough sense to be aware of these things, let him quit gracefully. You are probably doing everyone a favor, especially the child; he may feel awful about his lack of accomplishment in music. (p. 36)

Sandene (1994) suggested that when students leave instrumental music, educators should take the opportunity to evaluate and improve the way

the music program is managed. Some of the questions educators should ask themselves when students dropout are 1) does your schedule permit time to work with individual students? 2) is the school instrument given to student full of dents and scratches and in need of repair? 3) did the teacher make the proper instrument selection for the student? 4) is the music selected appealing to boys and girls, and to students of various cultures and background? and 5) does the program have a balanced and varied selection of music in the curriculum?

Solutions to attrition problems will not be universal for every teaching situation at every grade level. However, additional research may discover new information on attrition and provide instrumental music educators additional methods to reduced student dropout . Once again, the purpose of this study was 1) to discover the causes of attrition at the sixth-, eight-, tenth-, and twelve-grade; 2) to determine the attrition rate among the four grade levels; 3) to compare the causes of attrition among the four grade levels: six, eight, ten, and twelve.

Chapter III

Procedure

The subjects for this investigation were all of the sixth-, eighth-, tenth-, and twelfth-grade band students in the Omaha Public School system in Omaha, Nebraska (N=1125). The Omaha Public School system was selected for the investigation because: 1) it is a good representation of school districts and students populations of the area; 2) of its large student population from which to acquire subjects; 3) of its ethnic and socioeconomic diversity; 4) using local subjects simplified the studies facilitation. The Omaha Public School District is the largest district in the state and educates 44,247 students, 60.9% of whom are white, 29.7% of whom are African American, 6.6% of whom are Hispanic, 2.8% of whom are Asian or Native American (School District of Omaha, 1995). Twenty-seven band directors representing seven high schools, ten middle schools, and forty elementary schools were invited to participate in the investigation.

The investigation utilized a survey format consisting of thirteen statements (Appendices A-D) developed by the investigator and administrated to the students by their instrumental music instructor. The survey was constructed to elicit information in the following categories: 1) scheduling as it relates to the availability of classes and opportunity for enrollment; 2) students' perceived level of encouragement and support from parents, band instructors and other faculty; 3) students' perceived level of musical ability and success; and 4) other influences such as friends, jobs, other activities (school and non-school related), type of performances, and

instrument ownership.

The survey questions and their directions were identical for all grade levels. No questions were organized by category or topic. The only variation in the survey instrument between grade levels was the use of different colored paper to assist in the collection and tabulation process.

Twelve of the thirteen statements were designed using a four-point Likert-type response scale. An even-numbered scale was chosen by the researcher to isolate specific traits and attitudes by requiring the subject to either agree or disagree. Students were asked to circle either "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Disagree", and "Strongly Disagree" to represent their feelings and attitudes on response numbers two through thirteen. For the response to question (1) I use a school instrument, the selections were "Always", "Sometimes" or "Never".

After the development of the survey, permission was sought to conduct the investigation. In compliance with the conditions applying to research requests to the School District of Omaha the researcher: 1) sent a formal letter of application (Appendix E) to the Research Office of the Omaha Public School District; 2) submitted a proposal of the study including a description, statement of scope of the project, staff and students to be involved, and the length and time of the study; 3) submitted written consent from the Institutional Review Board from the University of Nebraska at Omaha; 4) communicated to the music staff participants involved (Appendix F); and 5) requested permission from all building principals in writing (Appendix G).

After permission to conduct the investigation was obtained from the

Omaha Public Schools, a pilot study was conducted to test the survey's validity and reliability. The pilot study transpired in October 1995 with approximately sixty (fifteen per grade level) selected fifth-, seventh-, ninth- and eleventh-grade band students in the Omaha Public Schools. Students involved in the pilot study were not involved in the full investigation. The administration of the pilot study followed the proposed procedures of the full investigation. Based on the comments, reactions, and results, the effectiveness of the survey's administration, readability and validity was evaluated by the researcher and his supervisor. Changes in the survey, the examples, and the methodology were made at that time. The revisions included 1) changing the size of the font on the survey so all questions would fit on one 8 1/2 X 11 inch piece of paper; 2) rewriting the instructions for students directing them to complete both the front and back pages of the survey; and, 3) emphasizing the due date to participating instructors and implementing procedures for follow-up reminders.

Next, a letter of introduction was sent to all the Omaha Public Schools' band directors (Appendix H) describing the investigation and requesting their participation. Correspondence to participating instrumental music instructors and building principals was via the Omaha Public School's interdepartmental mailing system. Completed surveys were also returned to the researcher at no cost to the participating instructor via this mailing system.

In November 1995, the participating instructors were sent a cover letter (Appendix I) thanking them for their assistance and restating the purpose of the study. Also included in this mailing were the procedures for

implementation (Appendix J) to be read to the students prior to administration and one survey for each student based on enrollment figures from the beginning of the fall semester. Directors were not required to explain, define or interpret any of the survey questions or directions. The completed surveys were confidential and were not identified by student, school, or director.

After a two-week interval, follow-up reminders (Appendix K) were sent to all directors who had not returned the materials. After two more weeks, the investigator contacted the directors by telephone who had not returned the survey to determine the status of the survey. Of the total completed surveys (N=1006), ninety percent were returned to the researcher before the conclusion of the first semester 1995. The remaining 10% were received during the first week of the second semester 1996.

In January 1996, the results of the full investigation were transferred from the student questionnaire to computer forms acquired from the University of Nebraska at Omaha Computer and Data Communications Department. Non-parametric statistics utilizing chi square procedures were used to analyze the data. Nominal scaling compared how items within the sample were distributed among the different categories. Chi square served as a test of the goodness of fit between the four grade levels. Questions in each age group were evaluated using measures of central tendency.

Chapter IV

Results

Preliminary data analyses revealed a high rate of return with 96.4% of the eligible directors participating in the investigation. Twenty-seven of twenty-eight directors returned surveys from thirty-two locations. Eleven of the participating directors administered the survey to students at two different grade levels, two directors were involved with students from three different grade levels. The total number of completed surveys returned (N=1006) represents 89.4% of the eligible subjects. Comments from some participating directors indicated that the total return rate may have been higher if all eligible students had participated in the investigation. Directors stated that in some instances, students were absent at the time of administration and a few chose not to participate. Based on coding, it can be determined that the middle school and high school buildings had 100% representation. The elementary school representation was 85.1%. Table 1 shows the participation and percentage of directors and schools included in the results data.

Table 1
Number of Teachers and Schools Participating

Grade	Teachers			Schools		
	Eligible	Responding (%)		Eligible	Represented (%)	
6th	15	14	93.3	47	40	85.1
8th	11	11	100	10	10	100
10th	8	8	100	7	7	100
12th	8	8	100	7	7	100
Total	28	27	96.4	71	64	90.1

Table 2 shows the total number of surveys returned by grade level. An examination of survey participants shows a dramatic attrition of band students from the eighth-grade to the twelfth-grade. Eighth-grade students (N=399) participating in the survey exceed the twelfth grade (N=88) participants by more than four to one (81.9%). The 79.2% attrition rate between sixth-grade and twelfth-grade students may have been higher if all elementary schools (N=47) had been represented in the investigation.

The mean for Table 2 was established by assigning the number (6) for sixth-grade, (8) for eighth-grade, (10) for tenth-grade, and (12) for twelfth-grade subjects. The mean ($x = 8.012$) indicates more subjects participated in the survey at the lower grade levels. Responses from sixth-grade and eighth-grade students (N=735) represent 74.3% of all returned surveys.

The missing cases (N=17) are a result of incomplete forms returned by the subjects and/or errors by the researcher when transferring data to the computer forms. The total number of returned surveys (N=1006) remained constant throughout the computation process. The missing cases however differed among grade levels and among survey questions due to the omitted or unrecorded responses.

Table 2

Total of Completed Surveys (N=1006, Valid=989, Missing=17)

Mean: 8.012		Std Dev: 1.859
<u>Grade</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Percent</u>
6	336	34.0
8	399	40.3
10	166	16.8
12	88	8.9
All	989	100.0

Table 3 illustrates the student responses to all survey questions. The responses "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree" are represented by "SA," "A," "D," and "SD" on the tables. For the purpose of tabulation the responses were assigned numbers. "Strongly Agree" is represented by (1), "Agree" by (2), "Disagree" by (3), and "Strongly Disagree" by (4). The mean is calculated from the numbers assigned to student

Table 3

Frequency of Responses with (%) to Survey Statements (N=1006).

Statement	Gr.	1 Always	2 Sometimes	3 Never	Mean	Std D	
1. I use a school instrument.	All	213 (21.4)	147 (14.6)	637 (63.3)	2.425	.820	
	6th	54 (16.1)	36 (10.7)	242 (72.0)	2.566	.757	
	8th	93 (23.3)	56 (14.0)	245 (61.4)	2.386	.843	
	10th	35 (21.1)	32 (19.3)	99 (59.6)	2.386	.814	
	12th	28 (31.8)	19 (21.6)	41 (46.6)	2.148	.878	
Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
2. My band teacher believes I can succeed in band.	All	455 (45.2)	498 (49.6)	31 (3.1)	21 (2.1)	1.620	.650
	6th	176 (52.4)	159 (47.3)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	1.479	.506
	8th	176 (44.1)	194 (48.6)	15 (3.8)	13 (3.3)	1.661	.705
	10th	57 (34.3)	97 (58.4)	8 (4.8)	4 (2.4)	1.753	.655
	12th	37 (42.0)	40 (45.5)	7 (8.0)	4 (4.5)	1.750	.791

Table 3 (continued)

Frequency of Responses with (%) to Survey Statements (N=1006)

Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
3. My parents make me stay in band.	All	78 (7.8)	203 (20.2)	432 (42.9)	289 (28.7)	2.930	.893
	6th	27 (8.0)	74 (22.0)	124 (36.9)	111 (33.0)	2.949	.934
	8th	41 (10.3)	85 (21.3)	173 (43.4)	46 (24.1)	2.820	.918
	10th	5 (3.0)	29 (17.5)	89 (53.6)	43 (25.5)	3.024	.746
	12th	5 (5.7)	12 (13.6)	40 (45.5)	31 (35.2)	3.102	.845
Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
4. I want to play in marching band.	All	255 (25.3)	367 (36.6)	233 (23.2)	148 (14.7)	2.273	1.002
	6th	92 (27.4)	130 (38.7)	73 (21.7)	41 (12.2)	2.188	.973
	8th	75 (18.8)	125 (31.3)	119 (29.8)	77 (19.3)	2.500	1.010
	10th	56 (33.7)	67 (40.4)	26 (15.7)	17 (10.2)	2.024	.953
	12th	27 (30.7)	37 (42.0)	13 (14.8)	11 (12.5)	2.091	.978

Table 3 (continued)

Frequency of Responses with (%) to Survey Statements (N=1006)

Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
5. I am successful in band.	All	343 (34.1)	578 (57.5)	64 (6.4)	20 (2.0)	1.762	.655
	6th	150 (44.6)	173 (51.5)	10 (3.0)	3 (0.9)	1.601	.595
	8th	114 (28.6)	234 (58.6)	38 (9.5)	12 (3.0)	1.869	.698
	10th	40 (24.1)	116 (69.9)	8 (4.8)	2 (1.2)	1.831	.557
	12th	33 (37.5)	45 (51.1)	7 (8.0)	3 (3.4)	1.773	.739
Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
6. The music we play in band is too easy.	All	103 (10.2)	294 (29.2)	548 (54.6)	58 (5.8)	2.559	.754
	6th	38 (11.3)	109 (32.4)	170 (50.6)	18 (5.4)	2.501	.766
	8th	34 (8.5)	111 (27.8)	230 (57.6)	23 (5.8)	2.608	.725
	10th	21 (12.7)	40 (24.1)	98 (59.0)	6 (3.6)	2.539	.761
	12th	10 (11.4)	31 (35.2)	38 (43.2)	9 (10.2)	2.523	.830

Table 3 (continued)

Frequency of Responses with (%) to Survey Statements (N=1006)

Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
7. My parents encourage me to practice.	All	233 (22.2)	526 (52.3)	197 (19.6)	55 (5.5)	2.084	.796
	6th	118 (35.1)	173 (51.5)	37 (11.0)	8 (2.4)	1.807	.722
	8th	76 (19.0)	228 (57.1)	75 (18.8)	18 (4.5)	2.088	.745
	10th	18 (10.8)	83 (50.0)	47 (28.3)	15 (9.0)	2.362	.800
	12th	7 (8.0)	33 (37.5)	36 (40.9)	12 (13.6)	2.602	.824
Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
8. I am involved in other activities that interfere with band.	All	187 (18.6)	300 (29.8)	360 (35.9)	156 (15.5)	2.484	.967
	6th	39 (11.6)	79 (23.5)	132 (39.3)	86 (25.6)	2.789	.956
	8th	85 (21.3)	111 (27.8)	152 (38.1)	49 (12.3)	2.416	.959
	10th	37 (22.3)	65 (39.2)	50 (30.1)	13 (7.8)	2.236	.890
	12th	23 (26.1)	39 (44.3)	21 (23.9)	5 (5.7)	2.091	.853

Table 3 (continued)

Frequency of Responses with (%) to Survey Statements (N=1006)

Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
9. I intend to play in band next year.	All	423 (42.0)	363 (36.1)	144 (14.3)	72 (7.2)	1.865	.914
	6th	198 (58.9)	108 (32.1)	24 (7.1)	6 (1.6)	1.518	.708
	8th	122 (30.6)	150 (37.6)	80 (20.1)	45 (11.3)	2.121	.975
	10th	75 (45.2)	70 (42.2)	13 (7.8)	7 (4.2)	1.709	.789
	12th	20 (22.7)	31 (35.2)	24 (27.3)	13 (14.8)	2.341	.993
Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
10. I participate in band because my friends do.	All	30 (3.0)	157 (15.6)	482 (47.9)	331 (32.9)	3.114	.772
	6th	8 (2.4)	22 (6.5)	151 (44.9)	155 (46.1)	3.348	.709
	8th	10 (2.5)	57 (19.3)	204 (51.1)	123 (30.8)	3.117	.739
	10th	7 (4.2)	54 (32.5)	80 (48.2)	24 (14.5)	2.733	.758
	12th	3 (3.4)	22 (25.0)	39 (44.3)	24 (27.3)	2.955	.815

Table 3 (continued)

Frequency of Responses with (%) to Survey Statements (N=1006)

Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
11. I have trouble finding time for band in my school schedule.	All	66 (6.6)	178 (17.7)	510 (50.7)	247 (24.6)	2.937	.828
	6th	18 (5.4)	43 (12.8)	165 (49.1)	110 (32.7)	3.092	.814
	8th	30 (7.5)	77 (19.3)	201 (50.4)	86 (21.6)	2.871	.839
	10th	12 (7.2)	37 (22.3)	91 (54.8)	26 (15.7)	2.789	.792
	12th	6 (6.8)	19 (21.6)	43 (48.9)	20 (22.7)	2.875	.842
Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
12. My instrument is difficult to play.	All	38 (3.8)	118 (11.7)	514 (51.1)	329 (32.7)	3.135	.763
	6th	12 (3.6)	27 (8.0)	152 (45.2)	145 (43.2)	3.280	.760
	8th	13 (3.3)	37 (9.3)	221 (55.4)	122 (30.6)	3.150	.718
	10th	10 (6.0)	36 (21.7)	86 (51.8)	33 (19.9)	2.861	.803
	12th	2 (2.3)	13 (14.8)	47 (53.4)	26 (29.5)	3.102	.728

Table 3 (continued)

Frequency of Responses with (%) to Survey Statements (N=1006)

Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
13. My band teacher encourages me to practice.	All	497 (49.4)	388 (38.6)	78 (7.8)	36 (3.6)	1.653	.774
	6th	217 (64.6)	94 (28.0)	21 (6.3)	3 (0.9)	1.433	.653
	8th	198 (49.6)	151 (37.1)	24 (6.0)	22 (5.5)	1.671	.824
	10th	45 (27.1)	97 (58.4)	18 (10.8)	6 (3.6)	1.910	.720
	12th	29 (33.0)	41 (46.6)	13 (14.8)	5 (5.7)	1.932	.841

responses. In Table 3 a mean is reported for all survey questions combined as well as for individual grade levels on all thirteen statements.

In response to the first statement, I use a school instrument, 36% of the total number of subjects said they used a school instrument "Always" or "Sometimes." The most frequent users of school instruments are twelfth-graders with 53.4% indicating "Always" or "Sometimes". The least likely to use school instruments were sixth-graders who responded "Always" or "Sometimes" on 26.8% of the returned surveys.

Statement 2, My band teacher believes I can succeed in band, had the highest degree of agreement among the grade levels with the lowest mean of 1.620. A total of 953 subjects either "Strongly Agreed" or "Agreed" with the statement. Only one sixth-grade respondent "Disagreed" or "Strongly Disagreed." The eighth-grade was the most negative age group responding to statement 2. They represented 53.8% of all responses indicating "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree." Strong support to students from teachers was also indicated by the responses to statement number 13, My band teacher encourages me to practice. "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" represented 88% of the total subjects' responses. The highest level of disagreement on statement number 13 was received by the twelfth-grade subjects who "Disagreed" or "Strongly Disagreed" on 20.5% of the returned surveys and had a mean of 1.932.

An examination of the seventh statement, My parents encourage me to practice, revealed stronger parental support for band students at the lower grade levels. A total of 86.6% of the sixth-graders "Strongly Agreed" or

“Agreed” with the statement. In contrast, 54.5% of the twelfth-grade subjects “Disagreed” or “Strongly Disagreed” with statement 7, My parents encourage me to practice. For all grade levels however, parental encouragement to practice was high with a mean of 2.084.

With a mean of 2.930, responses to statement number three, My parents make me stay in band, indicated most students 71.6% participate voluntarily in their band classes. The grade level that indicated the greatest degree of parental influence was the eighth-grade where 31.6% “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with the statement. The grade level reportedly the least influenced by their parents to stay in band were the twelfth-graders who disagreed to the statement on 80.7% of the responses.

Preliminary observations indicated most students felt successful in their band class with all subjects responding with a mean of 1.762 to statement 5, I am successful in band. This concurs with findings from statement 12, My instrument is difficult to play, were 843 subjects (83.8%) “Disagreed” or “Strongly Disagreed” with the statement. Statement 6, The music we play is too easy was evenly divided among all grade levels with a composite mean of 2.559. The mean for statement 6 was also particularly narrow among grade levels. A mean of 2.501 was the low for sixth-graders and a mean of 2.608 was the highest reported by eighth-grade subjects.

Most subjects (80.8%) disagreed with statement 10, I participate in band because my friends do. The grade level with highest rate of agreement on statement 10 was the twelfth-grade with 28.4% selecting “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.” Scheduling does not appear to be concern to most subjects.

Statement 11, I have trouble finding time for band in my school schedule, had a mean of 2.937. According to the data, the grade level most likely to have a schedule problem was the tenth-grade who agreed to statement 11 on 29.5% of the surveys.

Statement number 8, I am involved in other activities that interfere with band, was evenly divided among all grade levels with a mean of 2.484. However, an examination of the mean at each grade level shows interference increasing as students get older. The data shows the mean decreasing from 2.784 in sixth-grade to 2.416 in eighth-grade to, 2.236 in tenth-grade to 2.091 for twelfth-grade indicating that extra-curricular interference increases as the student progresses through the grade levels. Statement 4, I want to play in marching band, was also evenly distributed among the grade levels with a mean of 2.273. The mean for eighth-grade subjects was 2.500 indicating exactly half wanted to play in marching band and half did not. The grade level feeling the most positive toward marching band was twelfth-grade where 72.7% "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed."

Statement 9, I intend to play in band next year, had a mean of 1.865. The grade levels most likely to continue are the sixth- and tenth-grade. The sixth-grade respondents reported "Strongly Agreed" or "Agreed" on 80.1% of their surveys while tenth-grade respondents stated "Strongly Agreed" or "Agreed" on 87.4% of the surveys.

Table 4 illustrates how non-parametric statistics utilizing chi square procedures were used to analyze the data. Nominal scaling compared how items within the sample were distributed among the different categories. All

Table 4
Comparison of survey statements using Chi Square.

Statement	df	chi square	p
1. I use a school instrument.	6	27.098	<.0001
2. My band teacher believes I can succeed in band.	9	40.995	<.0000
3. My parents make me stay in band.	9	26.016	<.0000
4. I want to play in marching band.	9	41.926	<.0000
5. I am successful in band.	9	45.649	<.0000
6. The music we play in band is too easy.	9	15.388	<.0808
7. My parents encourage me to practice.	9	111.208	<.0000
8. I am involved in other activities that interfere with band.	9	73.607	<.0000
9. I intend to play in band next year.	9	115.419	<.0000
10. I participate in band because my friends do.	9	92.722	<.0000
11. I have trouble finding time for band in my school schedule.	9	25.991	<.0020
12. My instrument is difficult to play.	9	48.088	<.0000
13. My band teacher encourages me to practice.	9	87.099	<.0000

statements were found to be significant by testing at the $p < .05$ level except for statement 6, The music we play in band is too easy. The differences within the grade levels of the statements were significant at the $p < .05$ level. Statement 6 was non-significant at the $p < .0808$ level, indicating a high level of agreement among the grade levels. This statement also had a mean of 2.559 which indicated that all subjects (N=1006) are evenly divided as to the difficulty of the music they play.

Table 5 illustrates the differences between the responses of individuals who disagreed with statement 9, I intend to play in band next year (N=216) and the responses of all subjects (N=1006). Preliminary analysis revealed that 21.5% of all subjects indicated they do not intend to play in band next year. In Table 5 individuals who do not intend to continue in band are represented by "Dis", and all subjects by "All".

Comparisons between the 216 individuals who indicated they would not continue in band and all subjects revealed different levels of agreement on the twelve remaining statements. The effect of instrument selection or ownership appeared similar among all respondents. Responses to statement 1, I use a school instrument were nearly the same between both groups, the difference in mean was .07. Statement 12, My instrument is difficult to play, also shows agreement among all subjects, with a smaller difference in mean of .06. In addition, responses to statement 10, I participate in band because my friends do, indicated that all students, those who chose to continue in band and those who did not, agreed that participation in band was not influenced by friends.

Table 5

Responses (N=216) of those who disagreed with Statement 9, "I intend to play in band next year," compared to the responses of all subjects (N=1006).

Statement	Gr.	1 Always	2 Sometimes	3 Never	Mean	Std D	
1. I use a school instrument.	All	213 (21.4)	147 (14.6)	637 (63.3)	2.425	.820	
	Dis.	56 (25.9)	26 (12.0)	132 (61.1)	2.355	.869	
Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
2. My band teacher believes I can succeed in band.	All	455 (45.2)	498 (49.6)	31 (3.1)	21 (2.1)	1.620	.650
	Dis.	62 (28.7)	124 (57.4)	20 (9.3)	10 (4.6)	1.898	.746
Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
3. My parents make me stay in band.	All	78 (7.8)	203 (20.2)	432 (42.9)	289 (28.7)	2.930	.893
	Dis.	30 (13.9)	50 (23.1)	87 (40.3)	48 (22.2)	2.712	.967

Table 5 (continued)

Responses (N=216) of those who disagreed with Statement 9. "I intend to play in band next year."
compared to the responses of all subjects (N=1006).

Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
4. I want to play in marching band.	All	255 (25.3)	367 (36.6)	233 (23.2)	148 (14.7)	2.273	1.002
	Dis.	18 (8.3)	39 (18.1)	84 (38.9)	75 (34.7)	3.000	.930
Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
5. I am successful in band.	All	343 (34.1)	578 (57.5)	64 (6.4)	20 (2.0)	1.762	.655
	Dis.	38 (17.6)	133 (61.6)	33 (15.3)	12 (5.6)	2.088	.739
Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
6. The music we play in band is too easy.	All	103 (10.2)	294 (29.2)	548 (54.6)	58 (5.8)	2.559	.754
	Dis.	18 (8.3)	47 (21.8)	133 (61.6)	17 (7.9)	2.693	.735

Table 5 (continued)

Responses (N=216) of those who disagreed with Statement 9, "I intend to play in band next year," compared to the responses of all subjects (N=1006).

Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
7. My parents encourage me to practice.	All	233 (22.2)	526 (52.3)	197 (19.6)	55 (5.5)	2.084	.796
	Dis.	20 (9.3)	103 (47.7)	69 (31.9)	24 (11.1)	2.449	.811
Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
8. I am involved in other activities that interfere with band.	All	187 (18.6)	300 (29.8)	360 (35.9)	156 (15.5)	2.484	.967
	Dis.	61 (28.2)	58 (26.9)	67 (31.0)	29 (13.4)	2.298	1.025
Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
10. I participate in band because my friends do.	All	30 (3.0)	157 (15.6)	482 (47.9)	331 (32.9)	3.114	.772
	Dis.	11 (5.1)	38 (17.6)	111 (51.4)	56 (25.9)	2.981	.801

Table 5 (continued)

Responses (N=216) of those who disagreed with Statement 9, "I intend to play in band next year," compared to the responses of all subjects (N=1006).

Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
11. I have trouble finding time for band in my school schedule.	All	66 (6.6)	178 (17.7)	510 (50.7)	247 (24.6)	2.937	.828
	Dis.	32 (14.8)	61 (28.2)	93 (43.1)	29 (13.4)	2.553	.905
Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
12. My instrument is difficult to play.	All	38 (3.8)	118 (11.7)	514 (51.1)	329 (32.7)	3.135	.763
	Dis.	8 (3.7)	25 (11.6)	124 (57.4)	57 (26.4)	3.075	.728
Statement	Gr.	1 SA	2 A	3 D	4 SD	Mean	Std D
13. My band teacher encourages me to practice.	All	497 (49.4)	388 (38.6)	78 (7.8)	36 (3.6)	1.653	.774
	Dis.	86 (39.4)	87 (40.3)	24 (11.1)	15 (6.9)	1.849	.885

In contrast, the success or perceived success of the students differed between the two groups. Statement 2, My band teacher believes I can succeed in band, revealed that 58.8% (30/51) of individuals disagreeing are among the 21.5% who do not intend to continue. There are similar differences with statement 5, I am successful in band. For the statement 5, 20.9% of those not continuing disagreed, compared to 8.4% of all respondents. In addition of all respondents who “Strongly Disagreed” with statement 13, My band teacher encourages me to practice, 41.7% of those indicated they would not continue in band.

There were also differences among subjects in the statements concerning parents. For statement 7, My parents encourage me to practice, 74.5% of all subjects agreed compared to 57.0% for those who do not intend to play in band next year. Conversely, those who chose not to continue were more likely to be required to stay in band by their parents. For statement 3, My parents make me stay in band, “All” subjects agreed 28.0% of the time while 37.0% of the subjects who intended to drop agreed.

Statement 4, I want to play in marching band, demonstrated the largest contrast of opinion between the groups with a mean difference of .727. A total of 159 (73.6%) of the subjects who intended to quit band disagreed with statement 4, compared to 37.9% of all subjects who disagreed. The difficulty level of the music students play illustrated a slight contrast between the groups. Results showed that 69.5% of band students who intended to drop band disagreed with statement 6, The music we play in band is too easy, while 60.4% of all subjects disagreed.

The other activities that students are involved in appear to have an influence on band participation. A total of 28.2% of those who did not intend to continue strongly agreed with statement 8, I am involved in other activities that interfere with band, compared to 18.6% of all respondents. The difference in mean for statement 8 was .186. An examination of the ability to schedule band in the school day revealed those who did not intend to continue in band agreed with statement 11, I have trouble finding time for band in my school schedule, more frequently than all respondents. Those who indicated they would not continue “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” on 43.0% of the surveys compared to 24.3% of all respondents.

Chapter V

Conclusion

The primary concern posed in this investigation regarded how instrumental music educators can increase enrollment in their band programs through the reduction of attrition. The high participation rate (96.4%) from the study's eligible instructors indicated they may share the assumption that more students could be involved in instrumental music classes in grades six through twelve. With their assistance, the number of returned surveys (N=1006) provided a sizable sample from which to extract data.

Based on data gathered from this investigation, hypothesis number one: "there will be no differences in the attrition rate between grade levels" is rejected. Instrumental music students appear to be leaving their music program as they progress through the grade levels. The number of twelfth-grade respondents (88) represents only 8.7% of all respondents represented in the data. The number of sixth- and eighth-grade respondents (735) compared to the number of tenth- and twelfth-grade respondents (254) appears to indicate that students are leaving instrumental music in larger numbers as they advance through the middle grade levels. The highest dropout percentage occurred between the eighth-grade (399) and tenth-grade (166) year. These figures indicated an average dropout rate of 35% a year between the eighth-, ninth- and tenth-grades. Although the attrition rate demonstrated in this investigation seems high, it represents a marked improvement in the attrition rate of the same school district revealed by Lawrence (1985). Lawrence discovered the dropout rate for band students

from eighth-grade to ninth-grade to be 50% and from ninth-grade to ten-grade to be 48%. His goal was to reduce the dropout rate to an average of 25% between each grade level. The average dropout rate for subjects in this investigation for grades eight to twelve was 31% each year. Students can be retained in instrumental music if they feel successful and they have encouragement to continue.

The highest dropout rate, between eighth- and tenth-grade, may be due to the participating school district's policy that requires seventh- and eighth-grade students to participate in a music class. Parents and students alike may view the eighth-grade year as the end of their music career. Because the highest dropout rate occurs after the music requirement ends, it appears that students may play in band only to fulfill a curriculum requisite. Therefore, for some middle school music students the feeling of being successful is not as important as fulfilling the requirement.

The study demonstrated that parents have a greater influence on students' music participation in the sixth- and eighth-grades than in the tenth- and twelfth-grades. Therefore, null hypothesis two: "there will be no differences in parental support between grade levels" is rejected. A total of 31.6% of the eighth-graders agreed to statement 3, My parents make me stay in band, compared to 19.3% of the twelfth-grade respondents. Similarly sixth-graders felt the most successful in band with a mean of 1.601, and eighth-graders the least successful with a mean of 1.869 to statement 5, I am successful in band.

Results from this study illustrates the importance of practice outside the

school day from teachers and parents as a means for improvement. Those students who intended not to continue, reported receiving less encouragement from parents and teachers than those who intended to play in band next year. The influence of parents and teachers decreased as the students progressed through the grade levels. Conversely, the data indicated that the influence of having friends in band increased as the students grew older. The effects of having friends in band was essentially the same between those who intended to continue and those who did not.

The participating students reported receiving positive reinforcement from their music instructors. A large number of the respondents (94.8%) agreed with statement 2, My band director believes I can succeed in band. Statement 13, My band teacher encourages me to practice, also shows a high level of agreement among the respondents with 88% agreeing. Based on this information null hypothesis number three: "instrumental music instructors have no influence on attrition" is rejected. The data illustrates that teachers who participated in this survey demonstrated strong support and interest in the success of their students. It appears that music educators can reduce attrition by increasing the perceived success of their students. The results suggest that successful teachers may: 1) place students on appropriate instruments; 2) select music that students find rewarding; 3) schedule lessons and band class at times available to students; and, 4) provide encouragement to practice as a path to improvement. The positive effects of the instructors was perhaps predictably the highest at the sixth-grade level.

The responses to statement 11, I have trouble finding time for band in

my school schedule, were consistent among the top three grade levels with a variance in mean of just 0.086 among the grades. In contrast, the variance in mean for those who chose not to continue compared to all respondents was 0.384. A total of 43.0% of those not continuing in music agreed they have a conflict with band in their school schedule compared to 24.3% of all subjects. This data rejects the study's fourth null hypothesis: "scheduling has no effect on attrition." The effects of scheduling and graduation requirements on the attrition of instrumental music students will vary between school districts, grade levels and music students themselves. Music as an elective subject will always allow students to leave at their discretion. Results from this study are similar with past research (Martignetti, 1965; Lehman, 1988; Bergee, 1989; and Johnson, 1990) which indicated that as our educational system changes music educators should examine the current trends to provide as many students as possible a quality music education.

Students were evenly divided among all grade levels concerning the difficulty of the music they play in band. Approximately of the total subjects at disagreed that the music they play is too easy. This suggests that the music selected by the instructors is appropriate for the ability level of their students. However, those who chose to dropout felt their music was more difficult to play than did all respondents combined. Also, of those who intended to drop band, 20.9% disagreed to statement 5, I am successful in band, compared to just 8.4% of all respondents. Based on this data, null hypothesis five: "musical ability as perceived by students has no effect on attrition" is rejected.

The intrinsically and extrinsically motivated music students may choose

different paths as they advance through the grade levels. There will always be a percentage of students who will discontinue instrumental music. As a result, studies in the attrition of instrumental music students will continue to be warranted. An instrumental music requirement at any level should be considered a benefit to students and music educators. Students who are involved in instrumental music for whatever the reason will experience the value of the arts. There is a current philosophical belief among many music educators that no individual can claim to be truly educated who lacks basic knowledge and skills in the arts (National Standards for Arts Education, 1994).

Students who discontinue instrumental music at the upper grade levels appeared to cite school schedule conflicts and participation in other activities as reasons for leaving rather than for a lack of success. This data appears to reject null hypothesis six: "other activities, as perceived by students do not interfere with band participation." Seven out of ten twelfth-graders agreed they were involved in other activities that interfered with band, this number is doubled that of sixth-graders (35.1%) who agreed with that statement. A variety of activities at the secondary level might be considered conflicts and could include work outside of school, boys or girls athletics, other school clubs, or extra family responsibilities. Further study is needed to identify specific conflicts that affect band participation at all levels.

The only performing ensemble examined in the investigation had a profound influence on attrition, particularly at the eighth-grade level. Fifty-percent of the eighth-grade respondents indicated they did not want to play in

marching band. More revealing regarding attitudes students may have toward marching band is that 73.6% of those citing they did not intend to continue in band disagreed with statement 5, I want to play in marching band. Reasons for agreeing or disagreeing on any of the thirteen statements were not solicited in this investigation. It is possible that many students are involved in instrumental music because of the opportunity to participate in marching band. An intensive study of marching band and its effect on attrition appears to merit further attention. Additional study is also needed regarding the positive or negative attitudes of students toward other performing ensembles such as concert band, pep band, honor bands, and small ensembles and solos.

In conclusion it is the responsibility of every music educator to personally examine on a regular basis factors that affect student participation in their programs. Current events such increasing graduation requirements, changes in the family unit, and unstable budget situations require music educators to continually justify and promote their programs. Directors must be willing to make the necessary changes in their curriculum to provide a meaningful musical experience to more students in the dynamic profession of music education.

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Appendix A

Survey for Sixth-Grade Band Students

Directions: Circle the response that most clearly represents your attitude or feeling.

1. I use a school instrument.

Always

Sometimes

Never

2. My band teacher believes I can succeed in band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

3. My parents make me stay in band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

4. I want to play in marching band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

5. I am successful in band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

6. The music we play in band is too easy.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

7. My parents encourage me to practice.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I am involved in other activities that interfere with band.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. I intend to play in band next year.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. I participate in band because my friends do.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. I have trouble finding time for band in my school schedule.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

12. My instrument is difficult to play.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

13. My band teacher encourages me to practice.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Appendix B

Survey for Eighth-Grade Band Students

Directions: Circle the response that most clearly represents your attitude or feeling.

1. I use a school instrument.

Always

Sometimes

Never

2. My band teacher believes I can succeed in band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

3. My parents make me stay in band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

4. I want to play in marching band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

5. I am successful in band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

6. The music we play in band is too easy.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

7. My parents encourage me to practice.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I am involved in other activities that interfere with band.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. I intend to play in band next year.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. I participate in band because my friends do.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. I have trouble finding time for band in my school schedule.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

12. My instrument is difficult to play.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

13. My band teacher encourages me to practice.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Appendix C

Survey for Tenth-Grade Band Students

Directions: Circle the response that most clearly represents your attitude or feeling.

1. I use a school instrument.

Always

Sometimes

Never

2. My band teacher believes I can succeed in band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

3. My parents make me stay in band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

4. I want to play in marching band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

5. I am successful in band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

6. The music we play in band is too easy.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

7. My parents encourage me to practice.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I am involved in other activities that interfere with band.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. I intend to play in band next year.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. I participate in band because my friends do.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. I have trouble finding time for band in my school schedule.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

12. My instrument is difficult to play.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

13. My band teacher encourages me to practice.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Appendix D

Survey for Twelfth-Grade Band Students

Directions: Circle the response that most clearly represents your attitude or feeling.

1. I use a school instrument.

Always

Sometimes

Never

2. My band teacher believes I can succeed in band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

3. My parents make me stay in band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

4. I want to play in marching band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

5. I am successful in band.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

6. The music we play in band is too easy.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

7. My parents encourage me to practice.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I am involved in other activities that interfere with band.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. I intend to play in band next year.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. I participate in band because my friends do.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. I have trouble finding time for band in my school schedule.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

12. My instrument is difficult to play.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

13. My band teacher encourages me to practice.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Appendix E
Letter of Application

October 16, 1995

John Jorgensen, Research Department-Omaha Public Schools,

I am writing to ask your permission to distribute a survey to the band students in grade six, eight, ten or twelve in your school district. My name is Bill Lovgren and I have taught instrumental music at Northwest High School for the past twelve years.

While teaching in the Omaha Public Schools I have had the opportunity to work with many outstanding young people. However, as I am sure you are aware, there are also many fine students who discontinue instrumental music as they pass through the grade levels. This study will examine the reasons students dropout of band and at what grade level. The research is being conducted to fulfill a graduate degree requirement at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

The short, thirteen question survey will require only ten minutes of instruction time to distribute, complete and collect. The instrumental music teachers' participation is optional. A proposal, including the survey and correspondence is submitted for your examination. If you have any questions or concerns please write or call me at Northwest High School, 557-3500.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

William Lovgren

Appendix F

Introductory letter to participating directors

November 13, 1995

Dear Colleague,

I am writing you this letter to ask your assistance in completing a short student survey. My name is Bill Lovgren and I have taught band and orchestra at Northwest High School for the past twelve years. With your help, I would like to investigate why students dropout of band and at what level. This survey is being undertaken to fulfill a graduate degree requirement at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

The investigation is confidential and the surveys will not be identified by student, school or director. I anticipate this survey will take only ten minutes of your instruction time, including distribution, completion and collection. I will mail you the survey and further instructions in November. I hope you will take the opportunity to offer this short, thirteen question survey to your instrumental music students in grades six, eight, ten or twelve at your convenience before the conclusion of the current semester.

The results will be available for your inspection before the conclusion of the second semester. If you have questions or comments concerning this investigation feel free to call or write me at Northwest High School, 557-3500. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Bill Lovgren

Appendix G

Letter to building principals

November 9, 1995

Dear Principal,

My name is Bill Lovgren and I have taught instrumental music at Northwest High School for the past twelve years. I am writing to ask your permission to distribute a survey to the band students in grade six, eight, ten or twelve in your school.

This investigation will examine the reasons students dropout of band and at what grade level. The study has been approved by the Research Department of the Omaha Public Schools. All information is confidential and the surveys are not identified, by student, school or instructor.

The short, thirteen question survey will require only ten minutes of instruction time to distribute, complete and collect. Your instrumental music teachers' participation is optional. If you have any questions or concerns please write or call me at Northwest High School, 557-3500.

If you would like the results of the survey please complete the attachment and return to Bill Lovgren at Northwest High School via the school mail system. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

William Lovgren

Please send the results of this study to:

NAME:

SCHOOL:

Appendix H

Participating band directors

<u>Name</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Grade Level</u>
Abrahams, Dan	Bryan Senior High	10th & 12th
	Chandler View	6th
	Gilder	6th
Badie, Linda	Dundee	6th
	Hartman	6th
	Rosehill	6th
	Western Hills	6th
	Yates	6th
Brader, Beth	Marrs	6th & 8th
Bluford, Michelle	Benson	10th & 12th
Diffey, Diane	King Science Center	6th & 8th
Edwards, Norm	Beveridge	8th
	Columbian	6th
Ferrel, Warren	Harrison	6th
	Lewis and Clark	8th
Jensen, Bonnie	Belvedere	6th
	Druid Hill	6th
	Ponca	6th
	Sherman	6th
	Walnut Hill	6th
Johnson, Michelle	McMillan	6th & 8th
Kearney, Bill	North	10th & 12th
Lovgren, Joan	Bryan Middle	8th
	Pawnee	6th

Lovgren, William	Northwest	10th & 12th
Laux, Therese	Ashland	6th
	Bancroft	6th
	Highland	6th
	Indian Hill	6th
	Jefferson	6th
Mattran, Dan	Morton	8th
McKean, Curt	Morton	8th
Mickey, Murl	Burke	10th & 12th
Millar, David	Beals	6th
	Belle Ryan	6th
	Field Club	6th
	Spring Lake	6th
	Washington	6th
Miller, Mark	South	10th & 12th
Musick, James	Adams	6th
	Boyd	6th
	Dodge	6th
	Edison	6th
	Masters	6th
	Pinewood	6th
	Springville	6th
Philson, Rick	Hale	8th
Richards, Rick	Fontenelle	6th
	Mt. View	6th
	Prairie Wind	6th
Schmidt, Doug	North	10th & 12th

Thompson, Michael	Catlin	6th
	Crestridge	6th
	Joslyn	6th
	Oak Valley	6th
	Picotte	6th
	Sunny Slope	6th
Walker, Brian	Norris	6th & 8th
Wass, Kevin	Adams	6th
	Boyd	6th
	Dodge	6th
	Edison	6th
	Masters	6th
	Pinewood	6th
	Springville	6th
Westbrook, Otis	Central Park	6th
	Florence	6th
	Minne Lusa	6th
	Mt. View	6th
	Wakonda	6th
Wilger, Pete	Central	10th & 12th
Williams, Gene	Monroe	6th & 8th

Appendix I

Cover letter for participating directors

November 17, 1995

Dear Colleague,

Thank you again for your assistance in completing this survey about attrition of instrumental music students. This survey has been approved by the Omaha Public School District Research Department and your building principal. All results are confidential and surveys are not identified by student, school or teacher. Your participation in this study is optional, but the larger the sample is the stronger the results will be.

Enclosed are the surveys (one per student grades six, eight, ten or twelve) and a letter of procedure to be read to the participants. Please administer the survey at your convenience before the conclusion of the current semester. If you would like the results of this study please complete the attachment and return to me with your completed surveys. Return all surveys via the school mail, (completed and incomplete) to Bill Lovgren, Omaha Northwest High School. If you have questions or concerns feel free to write or call me at Northwest High School, 557-3500.

Thanks Again,

William Lovgren

Please send the results and findings of this study to,

NAME:

SCHOOL:

Appendix J

Procedures for implementation

Dear Colleague,

Please read the following instructions to participating students prior to distributing the survey.

To all participating students,

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. You will be asked to agree or disagree with a statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Simply circle the response that most clearly represents your feeling or opinion about the statement.

This survey is being conducted by a graduate student from the Music Department of the University of Nebraska at Omaha. It does not necessarily reflect any opinions of the Omaha Public Schools or your band director. This survey will not affect your grade in band. Please do not write your name, your director's name, or your school name on the survey. All information is confidential.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

The Researcher

Appendix K
Follow-up reminder

December 1, 1995

Dear Colleague,

Thank you again for your assistance in completing my survey on attrition of instrumental music students. I would like to remind you that all surveys should be returned by December 23, 1995. If you are unable to distribute the survey, or if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at Northwest at your convenience, 557-3500.

Thanks Again,

Bill Lovgren