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Response to Student Challenges

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Abstract

The purpose of this multiple instrumental case study (Stake, 2005, 2006) was to explore approaches of four high school instrumental music educators assuming the role of facilitative teacher in responding to challenges affecting the social and emotional well-being of their students. This study utilized the framework of social emotional learning as a lens to view the educators' interactions. The four participants represented diverse demographic settings and had at least 10 years of instrumental music teaching experience. Findings and implications include strategies for providing support, unique elements of the instrumental music classroom, and perceived outcomes from providing support.

Keywords

care, facilitative teacher, music education, social emotional learning, student challenges

Introduction

Students encounter myriad challenges that have an impact on their daily functioning. These challenges involve home life, peers, communities, and school, and can have negative effects on social and emotional elements of their lives (attention span, interpersonal relations, and self-

confidence) (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004). Of profound importance for educators are the negative effects that student challenges can have on academic performance and social behaviors in the classroom. When students' challenges are properly addressed, positive outcomes such as increased academic performance, greater emotional regulation, social competence, and willingness to take on challenges, as well as lower levels of attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) and delinquency, can result (Bergin & Bergin, 2009).

Teachers who utilize the teacher/student relationship to help children grow emotionally, socially, as well as academically (musically) are referred to as *facilitative teachers* (Wittmer & Myrick, 1980). Facilitative teachers exhibit characteristics of being attentive, genuine, understanding and respectful, and are good communicators (Wittmer & Myrick, 1980). Facilitative teachers may be in a prime position to offer support to student challenges: "Given schools' unique ability to access large numbers of children, they are most commonly identified as the best place to provide supports to promote the universal mental health of children" (NCMHP & CASEL, 2008, p. 1).

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this multiple instrumental case study was to explore approaches of four high school instrumental music educators assuming the role of facilitative teacher in responding to challenges affecting the social and emotional well-being of their students. Questions guiding this inquiry included: a) How do participants (instrumental music educators, students, and parents) describe instrumental music educators' support of students? and b) How do participants articulate the unique aspects of the instrumental music educator and instrumental music education classroom in regard to supporting students with their challenges?

Conceptual Framework

The framework used for this study was social emotional learning (SEL) as defined by Zins and Elias (2006), a strategy to equip students with the tools necessary to succeed socially and emotionally. The field of SEL developed out of work in emotional (Goleman, 1995) and multiple (Gardner, 1983) intelligences, but expanded on these to include a broader definition of mental health intelligence. SEL can be defined as:

> The process of acquiring the skills to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships, and handle challenging situations effectively…. Social and emotional education is a unifying concept for organizing and coordinating school-based programming that focuses on positive youth development, health promotion, prevention of problem behaviors, and student engagement in learning. (CASEL, 2006)

Five key components comprise SEL. Based upon the overall goals of knowing oneself and others, making responsible decisions, caring for others, and knowing how to act, the key components of SEL are self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship management (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010; Zins & Elias, 2006).

Researchers have extensively evaluated the effects of SEL in terms of increasing social emotional competence and academic success. In a meta-analysis of research on 80 SEL programs, 83% of the programs produced academic gains (CASEL, 2003). Increased academic performance was a common finding in research on SEL instruction (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2010). SEL instruction can also positively affect social emotional competence. A meta-analysis of 165 studies of school-based prevention activities suggests SEL instruction can reduce alcohol and drug use, dropout and nonattendance, and conduct problems (Wilson, Gottfredson, & Najaka, 2001).

Past Literature

Musical and extra-musical benefits are possible from participation in school music programs. Academic (musical) outcomes are often the focus of classroom music instruction; however, other areas of development are possible as well, specifically, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Barrett & Bond, 2014). Further, expanding the objectives of school curricular music to include student culture and their well-being focusing on the future lives of youths as well as musicianship is gaining critical attention (Allsup, Westerlund, & Shieh, 2012).

It is the goal of a facilitative teacher to capitalize on positive teacher student relationships to guide and motivate students. The foundation of facilitative teaching comes from a leadership style valuing the expertise of those the leader is leading—in the case of facilitative teachers, valuing the perspective and expertise of the students. It is the opposite of directive teaching or simply imparting knowledge. A teacher's philosophy attempting to be facilitative includes the characteristics of: (a) changing the role of teacher to guide, coach, and advisor; (b) encouraging student ownership and empowerment; (c) instilling a natural discussion and decision-making process; and (d) using challenges as opportunities (Elam & Duckenfield, 2002, p. 8). Facilitative teachers can have a profound effect on their students' development, including passion for the subject, social stability, emotional competence, and future career choice. Because of this influence, students could be more apt to approach these educators for help with their challenges. A prominent component of instrumental music educators' jobs can be supporting students with their challenges:

> It is a fact that music teachers develop close relationships with students who share their common interest in music. It is true that some students request their music teacher's advice and understanding regarding personal decisions. The more knowledge and skills

music teachers have in [counseling and communicative] skills, the better prepared they
will be to assist students who seek their help and guidance. (Wagner, 1985, p. 1)

It is common for students to approach teachers for support in the music ensemble classroom:
"Because of the unique nature of the ensemble experience, coupled with the opportunity for
extended instruction, music educators can closely monitor the well-being of their students"
(Carter, 2011, p. 30). For some students, the social environment of ensemble participation is a
primary motivator for participation.

The music classroom is a rich environment with musical and extra-musical benefits. Research
suggests music teachers have great influence on their students (Rickels et al., 2010) and their
classrooms can have powerful meanings for music students, ranging from a music room feeling
like a second home (Adderley, Kennedy, & Berz, 2003) to influencing student career and college
major choice (Rickels, et al., 2010). Sewell (1985) surveyed 150 instrumental music educators in
Florida on their role as counselor in one of the only music education studies addressing the
support of student social and emotional challenges explicitly. Findings indicated that 99% of
respondents stated that they functioned as a counselor for students and 98% felt it was their
responsibility to do so. Only 15.2% had training in counseling. Further, 93.3% of the teachers
stated that students solicit their opinions and advice on personal matters, regardless of whether
the teachers believed it was their role or they had received training in counseling.

The music classroom can be a place for social and emotional growth. Emotionally, students
advance because of responsibility, commitment, perseverance, and self-discipline fostered in
band classrooms. This can result in increased self-esteem, self-confidence, life skills and self-
knowledge.

Teachers have often used the inherent attributes of music to offer students a variety of opportunities to practice many of the skills they need to resolve life's daily challenges successfully. The ability to commit to a project or goal, to understand how personal success is often tied to the success of others, and to realize that there are many ways to measure and experience success are all examples of skills that enhance a student's ability to achieve objectives in both the music classroom and elsewhere. In education, such skills are referred to as societal and emotional skills. (McClung, 2000, p. 37)

McClung (2000) highlights social emotional learning as extra-musical skills that should be taught in music classrooms.

Methodology

A qualitative instrumental case study methodology was chosen to gain a holistic perspective of the participants in the individual settings (Stake, 2005, 2006). I defined the bounded systems as each band program during Winter 2012, including all instrumental ensembles the participants taught (concert band, jazz band, and percussion ensembles). The instrumental music educators, all of their students, and band parents comprised the participants within each program. Stake (2005) suggested that an instrumental case study could provide "insight into an issue or redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else" (p. 437). Four bounded systems were chosen to explore this phenomenon, resulting in a multiple case study (Stake, 2006). To adequately illustrate each case, elements of narrative inquiry were also utilized (Barrett & Stauffer, 2012; Merriam, 2009), described as "the use of stories as data, and more specifically, first-person accounts of experience told in story form" (Merriam, 2009, p. 32). The narratives were constructed from a psychological approach, which "concentrates more on the personal, including thoughts and motivations"

(Merriam, 2009, p. 33). In music education research, Stauffer (2014) states, "narrative inquiry is not merely storytelling; rather narrative inquiry in music education is scholarly engagement with stories of experience as a means of interrogating critical matters in education, in music, and the world" (p. 180).

Data included: instrumental music educator interviews (three each), an instrumental music educator focus group (one), student focus groups (one for each setting with one male and one female student from each grade 9–12 selected by the instrumental music educators), parent interviews (one from each setting, including a phone interview from Atwater HS, e-mail correspondence from Branford HS, in person interview from Cobblestone HS, none from Drake HS); and observations (three full days at each setting). This diversity of data represents the depth needed for case study research and also increases trustworthiness due to data triangulation (Denzin, 1978). The diversity of roles that the participants assumed (music educator, parent, student) and modalities of data provided varied internal validity. All transcripts were sent to participants to ensure that I was accurately interpreting their perceptions in text form. Finally, my experiences conducting prior research and experience as an instrumental music educator allowed me to interpret the observation and interview data critically.

Participant Selection and Data Collection

The four participant high school instrumental music (band) programs (grades 9–12) were selected based upon the instrumental music educator's reputation as having caring relationships with his/her students and exhibiting characteristics of a facilitative teacher (Wittmer & Myrick, 1980), and having at least 10 years of professional band directing experience. In addition, the cases were selected to represent diverse settings. I chose two male and two female instrumental music educators representing urban, suburban, and rural settings as defined by Hall, Kaufman

and Ricketts (2006)[1]. All four of the instrumental music educators were White. Public perception of caring teachers, as determined by discussions with area teachers and university student teaching supervisors, was the primary criterion in initial participant instrumental music educator selection. Based upon this initial list I scheduled observations with these teachers in their classrooms to confirm these teachers as facilitative and caring. Four of the five teachers I observed were chosen as participants. I utilized a purposeful, criterion-based sampling strategy seeking maximum variation (Patton, 2002). See Table 1 for instrumental music educator participant and school demographics.

Initial contact was made with participants via e-mail explaining my project and what participation would entail. Meetings were established to discuss logistics in October/November 2011. Observations and interviews were conducted from December 2011 to February 2012. The first individual instrumental music educator interview took place prior to the observations or after the first observation. The second and third interview took place following the observations so that I was able to reference specific examples of classroom interactions I observed. Following all observations, the student focus groups and parent interviews took place. The interviews and observations were purposefully scheduled in the same time period at all four settings. This helped streamline the interview and observation procedure. Being able to compare instrumental music educators and their classrooms on a regular basis aided my ability to compare and contrast settings.

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[1] The demographic categories of urban, suburban, and rural can have varied connotations and stereotypes involving race, crime rates, and socioeconomic levels. Hall, Kaufman, and Ricketts (2006) define these categories based on population density, with urban being the densest, followed by suburban, and rural being the least dense. This is the definition used in this study.

Table 1. *Participants [Population density calculated by the 2010 US Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The classification of urban, suburban, and rural was guided by Hall, Kaufman, and Ricketts (2006) based on those numbers]*[2]

School (pseudonym)	Instrumental Music Educator (pseudonym)	Years of Teaching Experience	# of Students in School	# of Students in Program	Demographic	Population of the City	Population Density (people per sq. mile)
Atwater	Mr. Andrew (male)	15	1,806	304	94% White 3% Asian 1% Black 2% Other 5% receive free or reduced lunch	8,932	1,930 Suburban
Branford	Mr. Brandon (male)	29	1,700	160	58% White 35% Black 7% Other 53% receive free or reduced lunch	33,315	3,004 Urban
Cobblestone	Ms. Catherine (female)	14	620	63	90% White 6% Hispanic 2% Black 2% Other 62% receive free or reduced lunch	3,783	1,485 Rural
Drake	Ms. Danielle (female)	13	1,925	126	85% White 11% Black 4% Other 20% receive free or reduced lunch	96,942	2,500 Suburban/ Small Urban

Analysis

Creswell (2007) suggested that analysis strategies for case studies should include: (a)

assertions—interpretation of the meaning of the case; (b) categorical aggregation—development

of a collection of instances from the data; (c) patterns—developing relationships between two or

more categories; and (d) naturalistic generalizations—generalizations that people can learn from

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[2] All names and places are identified by pseudonyms. To facilitate the organization of cases all pseudonyms associated with Atwater HS begin with A, all pseudonyms associated with Branford HS begin with B, all pseudonyms associated with Cobblestone HS begin with C, and all pseudonyms associated with Drake HS begin with D.

the case either for themselves or to apply to a population of cases.

To develop assertions, I maintained a document of potential codes comprised of key ideas arising out of data collection. Based on these preliminary codes, pieces of data from the interview transcriptions and observation field notes were attached until codes were formalized and saturated. This was conducted initially with individual cases and then compared across cases. The meaning of the individual cases was then ascertained by comparing findings with the research questions, and other cases. Codes and categories were created using an outline format. The patterns were initially influenced by the research questions but expanded to allow for emergent coding. The data were then organized into findings categories. I cautiously approached naturalistic generalizations to ensure that I was not overstepping the boundaries of my findings. Based on the experiences of the four participant instrumental music educators, I arrived at suggestions for future research and participants.

Findings

The findings are organized around the themes of: (a) instrumental music educator participant profiles including a vignette about the instrumental music educators providing support to their students; (b) the support provided; (c) ways in which the instrumental music educators provided support; (d) musical influences on the support; and (e) outcomes from providing support from both the students and instrumental music educators' perspectives.

Participant Profiles

Mr. Andrew, Atwater High School (HS). The band program at Atwater HS includes four concert bands (one freshmen band, two symphonic bands, and a wind ensemble), a jazz band, marching band, and pep band (an extra-curricular athletic band which performs at basketball games). The program employs one instrumental music educator, Mr. Andrew, who

has 15 years of experience. Atwater is being classified as suburban due to its primarily White population and the uniformly high socio-economic level of its residents. Its population density classifies it as suburban as well (Hall, Kaufman, & Ricketts, 2006). The median household income for Atwater is $67,103[3]. Mr. Andrew is a trombone player who did his undergraduate work at a large Midwestern school of music.

"I teach them life."[4] Mr. Andrew readily accepted the role of facilitative teacher, stating "You're not a music educator, you're a kid educator" (Mr. Andrew, Interview 1, February 3, 2012).

> We do technique requirement sheets. As one came across my desk at the end of the trimester I could tell at least three of the signatures on there were not mine—completely forged. So, I called him into my office, and I said, "Are these my signatures?" Immediately he knew he was caught…. We talked about how this is where you learn these mistakes. He came in, he worked, he cleaned, he did service. He took a C…. At the end of his senior year he wrote me a letter saying that was one of the most positive things in high school that possibly could have been. (Re-storied from Mr. Andrew, Interview 2, February 6, 2012)

Mr. Brandon, Branford HS. The band program at Branford HS includes four concert bands (one freshmen band, concert band, wind ensemble, and symphony band), jazz band, marching band, and pep band. There is one instrumental music educator, Mr. Brandon, who has 29 years of experience. Branford HS is situated in a small urban city of 33,315 people. Watson (2007) defines urban as an area with a majority of its population being non-White, located in a city that has a variety of income levels, and/or with low socioeconomic status. Branford is

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[3] All dollar amounts are in US currency.
[4] Mr. Andrew, Interview 2, February 6, 2012.

therefore classified as urban due to its large percentage of non-White students, the presence of varied income levels, and the population's low socio-economic status. This combined with the population density justifies Branford's categorization as urban. The median household income for Branford is $32, 167. Mr. Brandon was the most experienced teacher in this study but still views himself as a novice. Mr. Brandon is an active member of the community, playing trumpet in the Branford Symphony and directing his church music ensemble.

"If you focus on being a good human…"[5] Mr. Brandon did not always readily accept the role of facilitative teacher in his early teaching career; however, at the time of the study, he actively focused on being a facilitative teacher, noting "It comes down to being a good human…If you focus on being a good human, the rest takes care of itself" (Mr. Brandon, Interview 2, December 14, 2011).

> The kids came and swiped my regular podium—I was livid. I had everyone searching all over the school for this podium. They came back for the Christmas concert, had made that podium and had one of the local guys carpet it. Wrote "Sir" on it and all that stuff. That was my 'ah hah moment' when I said I can be somebody different in class. I didn't have to be that mean nasty person all the time. We could share, and love, and care, and hug, and everything else. (Re-storied from Mr. Brandon, Interview 2, December 14, 2011)

Ms. Catherine, Cobblestone HS. The band program at Cobblestone HS includes one concert band, jazz band, and marching band. There is one instrumental music educator employed at Cobblestone HS, Ms. Catherine, who has 14 years of experience. Cobblestone is being classified as rural due to its population density. Farming is a main source of employment for

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[5] Mr. Brandon, Interview 2, December 14, 2011

many inhabitants. The median household income is $39,727. Ms. Catherine is a trumpet player who did her undergraduate work at a university near Cobblestone. She has been teaching at Cobblestone HS for eight years.

"I should have gotten a degree in psychology."[6] Ms. Catherine sees being a facilitative teacher as such a major part of her job that she joked, "I should have a sign on my office door that says 'The Doctor is In'" (Ms. Catherine, Interview 1, January 4, 2012). In the context of her class, she realizes the power of the challenges her students are going through: "If they've just broken up with their boyfriend/girlfriend, the last thing they want to do is sit down and play the concert Bb scale…That's way more important and to keep that balance of what's important to them and try to help them deal with those things" (Ms. Catherine, Interview 1, January 4, 2012.

> Last year I put a student in a leadership position in the marching band. He struggled with his interactions with one particular peer in general. There were many times when he was in my office…But I like to think that by the end that by taking the time to talk instead of saying, "UGH forget about it, I'm so sick of this drama," that he hopefully grew a little bit. I remember he was one of these people that if he didn't get his way he would throw a little temper tantrum. So eventually I gave him the opportunity to be a leader. By the end he actually had a better way of dealing with people. (Re-storied from Ms. Catherine Interview 2, January 6, 2012)

Ms. Danielle, Drake HS. The band program at Drake HS includes two concert bands (symphony band and wind ensemble), marching band, jazz combos, and a percussion ensemble. There are two instrumental music educators; the other teaches exclusively orchestra. Ms. Danielle has 13 years of experience. Drake is being classified as suburban, but exhibits many

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[6] Ms. Catherine, Interview 1, January 4, 2012

urban characteristics (as defined by Hall, Kaufman, & Ricketts, 2006), including large non-White population, the presence of a variety of income levels, and a substantial population of low socio-economic levels. This school is located in a lower resourced part of the district and is attracting families and students leaving Detroit as it is experiencing profound hardship. Drake is the largest community in this study at almost 97,000 people. The median household income for Drake is $71,928, but that accounts for the wealthier areas of the district and is not indicative of Drake HS. Ms. Danielle is an above-the-knee amputee who played the trumpet. She is able to function completely in class but walks with a noticeable limp. "I feel like I cheat a little bit. So all I have to do is live life and people think I'm inspirational. I do what everybody else does, but they say, 'Man, she does it with one leg. She's an inspiration'" (Ms. Danielle, educator focus group, February 20, 2012). This speaks to Ms. Danielle's empathetic capacity.

"It's the decent thing to do."[7] At the beginning of the study Ms. Danielle expressed hesitation about her value, feeling that she did not actively support students with their challenges; she locks the door to keep them out in the morning, and her schedule and time prohibit her from developing relationships with her students. "It's time-consuming dealing with kids' personal lives. I don't know how band directors have time to get involved in personal lives" (Ms. Danielle, Interview 1, December 15, 2011. Ms. Danielle had the greatest revelations of all participants in the study. "I didn't feel like I really dealt with that many personal issues and now I'm more attuned to the ones I am dealing with and am realizing I deal with more than I thought" (Ms. Danielle, Interview 3, February 15, 2012.

> Shantie's going to be my drum major next year, supposedly. She started failing classes
> last semester and I can't have a drum major failing classes. She stopped coming to

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[7] Ms. Danielle, Interview 1

school—probably had 40 absences last semester. I called Shantie's mom, who was a single teen mother when Shantie was born—probably my age or younger with a 16 year old kid. This is a mom who works from eleven o'clock in the morning to one o'clock in the morning so Shantie has no parental supervision at all. She can do whatever she wants. So I sat Shantie down, "At absence number six, that's it, you're done—same thing with all your academic classes. If you have more than one missing project in art, more than three missing assignments in physics, whatever it is—no drum major for you." She's on such thin ice now, but I also know that being drum major is really important to her. (Re-storied from Ms. Danielle, Interview 3, February 15, 2012)

The Support

Due to their lack of preparation as counselors, there were certain challenges the participants felt were beyond their ability to support. All participants were aware of mandatory reporting laws and the participants knew that any issues such as abuse, neglect, or suicidal tendencies or treats were beyond their jurisdiction and must be reported to their administrators or school counselors. Mr. Andrew was aware of statements suggesting that a challenge was beyond what he should support. "I just don't think it's worth it anymore. Everything seems dark to me. I'll listen to them but as soon as they're out the door, I'm calling the counselor" (Mr. Andrew, Interview 2, February 6, 2012). Conversely, Mr. Andrew did feel prepared to support students with inter-personal challenges that arose in his classroom: "'This person never listens to me, they're always giving me a hard time in the sectionals,' that kind of stuff. Help them through situations where it's still part of the class" (Mr. Andrew, Interview 1, February 3, 2012).

Ms. Catherine realized that there are people better prepared to assist students struggling with some challenges: "Depending on what the situation is maybe you can direct them to people who

are better trained to deal with certain issues" (Ms. Catherine, Interview 2, January 6, 2012). After this initial diagnostic step of determining if the instrumental music educators were prepared to offer support, the next element of support arose—what to do now? This lack of preparation positioned the educators in a problematic space. The limited preservice education and professional development in facilitative teaching was largely overcome only by experience.

How Instrumental Music Educators Provide Support

One of the most difficult elements in providing support for students' challenges was that every situation was unique. When asked, "How do you support your students with their challenges?" the instrumental music educators struggled to articulate specific answers because each situation required a different reaction. "It's hard to say. Every situation is a little different" (Mr. Andrew, Interview 2, February 6, 2012).

The participant instrumental music educators used certain techniques to support students, including: (a) making time for students, (b) being aware, (c) fostering a classroom environment conducive for support, (d) listening to the students, and (e) modelling healthy functioning.

     "You need to find time."[8] It was important for the instrumental music educators to be available to students. **"**Joey needs to have an adult listen to him even if it's for a second. I always feel bad because if you totally give Joey your time, he'll be there for half an hour. He's oblivious that class is about to start. Joey lives for that 30 seconds. I think earlier in my career I would have been like, "You've got to stop following me around before class." Sometimes what is not a big deal for us is a huge deal for them" (Mr. Andrew, Interview 2, February 6, 2012). Ms. Catherine similarly believed: "I think you need to find time, even if it's just 'Hey' before class"

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[8] Ms. Catherine, Interview 1, January 4, 2012

(Ms. Catherine, Interview 1, January 4, 2012). The act of saying hello and using students' names helped develop positive teacher/student relationships for Ms. Catherine and her students.

It was not always a matter of choice to make time for students, as it was with Ms. Danielle and Ms. Catherine with split responsibilities between high school and middle school. Availability was important to Ms. Danielle, even if it was difficult: "I try to be open enough so the students can talk to me if they need to. I often don't have the time so I don't know how much they actually *can* do that" (Ms. Danielle, Interview 2, January 18, 2012). The reality of teaching and personal schedules can have a profound role in how available teachers can be for their students.

"Be aware of things that are going on."[9] The instrumental music educators stressed the importance of observation and being aware of students on a personal level. "Are you alright?" (Ms. Catherine, Interview 1, January 4, 2012) was the common response when the instrumental music educators noticed a student behaving differently. Mr. Andrew spoke of this as "being aware of what students need and always trying to stay connected and seeing how they perceive what's going on in your classroom" (Mr. Andrew, Interview 3, February 13, 2012). Ms. Danielle agreed, "I just need to be aware of things that are going on" (Ms. Danielle, Interview 2, January 18, 2012). Her students felt that she was successful in this awareness: "She can tell when you're having a bad day" (Devon, Drake HS, student focus group, February 1, 2012).

"You're all welcome."[10] The participant instrumental music educators attempted to create a classroom environment conducive to facilitative teaching. This occurred by creating a positive, relaxed environment where everyone was comfortable and allowing musical focus to help alleviate distress. "It's going to be a place where you're all welcome, where everybody's equal and everybody feels like they belong" (Mr. Andrew, Interview 3, February 13, 2012). Ms.

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[9] Ms. Danielle, Interview 2, January 18, 2012
[10] Mr. Andrew, Interview 3, February 13, 2012

Danielle realized students could not be forced to be good humans; however, being in a socially and emotionally rich setting could prove effective: **"**The only thing we can do is control the environment that they're going to walk into. We can't control the kid... Make it an experience they'll feel good about" (Ms. Danielle, Interview 3, February 15, 2012).

The students at Cobblestone HS appreciated the ability to leave their stresses and challenges at the door. Ms. Catherine facilitated this by executing a musically focused rehearsal.

> I think that when she tells us to get to work it kind of switches our minds so it's harder to think about other things. We have to think entirely about music. That puts us in an entirely different mindset. It separates us and creates a distance from what problems we have to just getting the music. It puts us almost in a different world where we can almost meditate through the music. (Casey, Cobblestone HS, student focus group, January 27, 2012)

It also helped Caleb: "When I go to band I can set aside all my problems and it's band class. I can play the whole hour and enjoy myself and set aside all my problems. That's probably the only class I can really do that" (Caleb, Cobblestone HS, student focus group, January 27, 2012). The instrumental music educators created these settings largely through high-quality teaching. Through observations, I discovered finely tuned educators teaching effectively, musically, and inter-personally. I was able to find examples of SEL and facilitative teaching; however, it was largely in the context of effective teaching. Specifically, a) developing schedules and routines; b) providing smooth transitions; c) giving clear, positive directions; d) establishing and enforcing clear rules, limits, and consequences; e) ignoring behavior when appropriate; and f) using positive feedback and encouragement.

"They want somebody to listen." [11] "Kids don't want answers, they want somebody to listen and to understand" (Mr. Brandon, Interview 2, December 14, 2011). All of the participant instrumental music educators commonly spoke of the importance of listening. Mr. Andrew starts his interactions by listening: "I say, 'Tell me what's going on' and see what they go to first…It just takes a couple of probing questions like, 'I've noticed you're upset'" (Mr. Andrew, Interview 2, February 6, 2012). Having a teacher willing to listen was very important for Austin: "My grandma had passed away the night before, and I came into band and told him that. He was very kind" (Austin, Atwater HS, student focus group, February 28, 2012).

Mr. Brandon, too, stressed the importance of listening. "Some of the greatest strengths we can have are just to listen. I'm not too much help other than listening" (Mr. Brandon, Interview 1, December 12, 2011). In line with this, he stressed how important it was to not give specific advice. "Kids need to figure it out on their own, don't give advice. Make them take the responsibility and not the easy way out" (Mr. Brandon, Interview 2, December 14, 2011). Instead of offering advice, the instrumental music educators suggested empathizing and relating as strategies in relation to listening. This was profound and consistent with traditional counseling strategies (Kottler & Kottler, 2007).

Mr. Brandon believed a listening-first perspective was counter-intuitive for instrumental music educators: "We're so ready as music educators to fix. We fix kids, we fix music, we fix notes, we fix school problems, you name it, we fix it. Sometimes as music educators we have to stop fixing and start listening. As much as I need to listen to them play, I need to listen to them being human so that I can be a better teacher" (Mr. Brandon, Interview 3, January 30, 2012).

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[11] Mr. Brandon, Interview 2, December 14, 2011

"The best thing I can do is model."[12] The participant instrumental music educators modeled healthy behavior regularly for their students. This took the form of musical modeling, conflict resolution, and problem solving. **"**The best thing I can do is model how I solve problems in the classroom as a way for them to solve problems in their lives. So, how I deal with frustration with students, how I deal with problems that occur, and treating people with respect and that kind of stuff is a good life lesson for this as a way you can chose to do this" (Mr. Andrew, Interview 1, February 3, 2012).

Instrumental Music Classroom Influence on Support

The participants suggested there were elements influencing support connected to the music education classroom including continuity and the importance of music making.

       Continuity. "We don't have them just for a trimester, we have them for a year, two years, three years, four years" (Mr. Brandon, Interview 1, December 12, 2011). Depending on teaching assignments, the instrumental music educators could teach the same group of students every year from middle school through high school. **"**It's my favorite part of my job! You get to see them as 14-year-olds, whacky, goofy, relatively unfocused. And then watching them grow up through the next four years…There's really no other class where they get that four-year continuity. So we have the opportunity to really be their anchor in school" (Mr. Andrew, Interview 1, February 3, 2012).

The instrumental music educators also see their students for more time, both during school and outside the bells. "I think we see some of our kids more than their parents" (Ms. Danielle, educator focus group, February 20, 2012). Mrs. Abbott, the band parent from Atwater HS, agreed it was continuity and time facilitating the relationship that Mr. Andrew has with his

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12 Mr. Andrew, Interview 1, February 3, 2012

students: "They interact with their band director every day. They can go to him, lean on him, and get support" (Mrs. Abbott, Atwater HS, parent interview, March 6, 2012).

This extended contact with the instrumental music educators was valuable for the students as well. Blake trusted Mr. Brandon because of the amount of time he has spent in the band: "You know him better. You've had him for four years in high school when you're a senior. Other teachers you have for, what, three months sometimes?" (Blake, Branford HS, student focus group, February 10, 2012). Derick felt the reason he trusted Ms. Danielle was due to the amount of time they spent together: "You have the same teacher for four years. So that makes her a very approachable person because she knows who you are, you know who she is. As opposed to different subjects where you have a different teacher every year most of the time, so you don't really get to build the same bond" (Derick, Drake HS, student focus group, February 1, 2012).

Music making. The participants cited music making as an important part of building relationships and facilitating the classroom environment necessary for support. Ms. Catherine and her students valued the power of music to distract in difficult situations. Before I began my observations at Cobblestone HS, there was a tragedy where a freshman athlete died on school grounds. Ms. Catherine talked about how she handled this situation in her class: **"**Hopefully by being able to come in and just play music it's kind of a time to just forget about that…Every other class they've just been sitting and crying, and not that you can't do that, that's great, but let's just be together and enjoy music and set it aside for a moment" (Ms. Catherine, Interview 1, January 4, 2012).

Another unique element of the music education classroom was the collaborative music making relationship between instrumental music educator (conductor) and student (performer):

"It really opens up that collaborative feel and also helps, in general, these kinds of discussions [support] with kids. You build relationships much stronger. Something about performing with other people and being under pressure together where they have to rely on me and I have to rely on them" (Mr. Andrew, Interview 3, February 13, 2012).

Students also felt there was a collaborative element to band class that was unique from other classes:

> In a normal class, math class, the teacher, they do everything. They're the person with knowledge and teach you everything. You just sit there taking notes. In a band class the atmosphere is different. You have to contribute to the learning. She's just there to help you, direct you. You can't just sit there and take notes in band class. You have to actually play and improve yourself, practice and play your parts. (Dennis, Drake HS, student focus group, February 1, 2012)

There was also an inherent emotional connection and therapeutic quality to music. "Music itself is a therapy. 'My day could be going horrible, but just playing, the actual art of making music has made such a difference'" (Mr. Andrew, Interview 3, February 13, 2012). This could be attributed to a link between music and emotion: "Music is an emotional art. It's about expressing emotion and if you're going in and just teaching the craft side of it without the art side of it, without the emotional side of it, connecting with people, you're missing a lot of the music" (Mr. Andrew, Interview 1, February 3, 2012).

Mr. Brandon felt the emotional connection to music, as well. "Music really comes to the core of being personal. You really can't succeed in music without giving something of yourself" (Mr. Brandon, Interview 3, January 30, 2012). Bridget felt that this emotional connection with the music was a catalyst for the relationship she built with Mr. Brandon. "A lot of the reason it's

easy to connect to your band teacher is because band is an emotional thing. You have to get into the music" (Bridget, Branford HS, student focus group, February 10, 2012). This emotional connection to the music and each other put the instrumental music educators in prime positions to serve as facilitative teachers.

Student Outcomes from Being in a Facilitative Classroom

The students were able to belong to something by being in the band. Dennis felt this: "I've made some of the best friends I have now in band. I go to those friends" (Dennis, Drake HS, student focus group, February 1, 2012). Clara described the importance of her sense of belonging and the possible alternative: "Without band I'd probably be just some lonely kid in the school" (Clara, Cobblestone HS, student focus group, January 27, 2012).

Students from all four settings articulated how they felt a close relationship with their instrumental music educator and have bonded with them. The students at Atwater HS stated how close they felt to Mr. Andrew: "I've had to find people to be good role models and father-figures for me. At Atwater HS that is Andrew" (Austin, Atwater HS, student focus group, February 28, 2012); and "Mr. Andrew is like my second dad" (Allison, Atwater HS, student focus group, February 28, 2012). The students at Branford HS felt similarly about bonding with Mr. Brandon: "Mr. Brandon is the second closest person to family that I have. That's just because I have a biological relation to the rest of them" (Ben, Branford HS, student focus group, February 10, 2012). At Cobblestone HS: "Mrs. Catherine really influences my life and she's helped me grow as a musician, especially when I get down on myself…Without her, I'd probably be just another bum in the back" (Calvin, Cobblestone HS, student focus group, January 27, 2012). This bonding and belonging led to a positive experience for the students.

Instrumental Music Educator Outcomes from Providing Support

Positive outcomes. The instrumental music educators perceived being a facilitative teacher as increasing the quality of the music they helped produce. They articulated no negative academic or musical results from facilitative teaching. Conversely, Mr. Andrew felt that the musical benefits were profound: **"**It's a critical part of your job every day, looking out for the social and emotional well-being of kids and creating an environment that fosters that. You don't have to give up the quality music program, you don't have to give up much rehearsal time to make that happen. The musical benefits alone are so much" (Mr. Andrew, Interview 3, February 13, 2012).

Ms. Danielle believed that her students worked harder for her because of the relationships they have developed: "Kids who feel comfortable with you are going to play better for you. They're going to be more loyal to you, and do what you say more than a kid that feels there isn't any connection at all or that you really don't care about them" (Ms. Danielle, Interview 2, January 18, 2012). Mr. Brandon summed it up with, "Always reinforcing the strength of the personal relationship will improve the band" (Mr. Brandon, Interview 2, December 14, 2011).

The instrumental music educators and parents considered that interacting with students in a facilitative manner helped students gain social and communicative competency as well. Dr. Corbin, Casey's mother from Cobblestone HS, thought that band was the ideal environment to foster social skills: "Band probably does force them to communicate with each other. They have to learn how to play together, literally play together…They have to work as a team. I can't imagine a better way to have a social training session" (Dr. Corbin, Cobblestone HS, parent interview, February 2, 2012).

This was not lost on Ms. Catherine: "You're forced into these social situations with these people and you have to work as a team. Just by the act of being in the band I feel you have no choice but

to become a little more social and develop those skills" (Ms. Catherine, Interview 1, January 4, 2012).

        Negative outcomes. The students only articulated positive outcomes from their instrumental music educators' provision of support; however, there were negative effects articulated by the facilitative teachers. When students sought support the instrumental music educators sometimes found themselves in uncomfortable situations. Mr. Brandon spoke to this snowball effect:

> If you bring a young person in and try to find out why they couldn't play a Bb concert scale, you very well may be going down that path—much to your chagrin if you're not prepared for it. Why can't you get a deep breath? Because I'm pregnant! You're what?! I'm pregnant. Whoa! Ok, well let's deal with that and then we'll try to deal with trying to get you a deep breath of air to make an eight-measure phrase. (Mr. Brandon, Interview 3, January 30, 2012)

Providing support was a stressful part of the instrumental music educators' job. Ms. Danielle articulated this feeling: "I've been really stressed because we're in the middle of festival time and I want my focus to be on the music and I can't have it be on the music. And if my focus isn't on the music, the kids' focus isn't on the music. And if the kids are going through these personal issues, I know that's [music] not what they're thinking about during class" (Ms. Danielle, Interview 3, February 15, 2012). The students' challenges had a profound impact on Ms. Danielle, her teaching, and her class.

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Discussion

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The multitude of roles that instrumental music educators fill is diverse and time-consuming. The instrumental music educators navigated these roles with relative ease, but more importantly they

readily accepted the role of facilitative teacher. They were able to address musical and extra-musical concerns, simultaneously focused on preparing students for their future lives (Allsup, Westerlund, & Shieh, 2012; Barrett & Bond, 2014). Their model suggests the roles of music educator and facilitative teacher need not be mutually exclusive and can interact simultaneously, but not without challenge. With time commitments being of utmost concern for music educators (Conway, 2008), the ability to support students with their challenges in the context of their classrooms seemed critical to these instrumental music educators.

There is a stigma attached to band directors relating to a tendency to be dictatorial from the podium (Allsup & Benedict, 2008). The participant instrumental music educators offered an alternative, facilitative model—one of caring, compassion, and respect. There was a necessity for a certain level of teacher-driven interaction, but always with the best intention of the students being the primary concern. The teacher can maintain the role of mentor and leader of their classroom but, as these instrumental music educators demonstrated, they are driven by care for their students.

As facilitative teachers, the participant instrumental music educators looked to provide the students with skills to address their challenges. This took the form of leadership education and "teaching them to be better humans" (Mr. Brandon, Interview 1, December 12, 2011); a skill-based approach is consistent with how SEL can be taught (Zins & Elias, 2006). These instrumental music educators built positive teacher/student relationships (as surmised by the instrumental music educator interviews, student focus groups, and observations) and the results were stronger socialization in the school setting and fewer instances of misbehavior (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Fraser & Walberg, 2005; Schlichte, Stroud & Girdley, 2006). The foundation of being a facilitative teacher for the participant instrumental music educators was demonstrating

the disposition to show care, compassion, and respect in their classrooms. While not explicitly being referred to as SEL, the components of self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, relationship management, and self-management were at the foundation of the facilitative teaching.

It was evident that students cooperated more with a teacher with whom they had a positive teacher/student relationship. In addition, the participant instrumental music educators suggested that being a facilitative teacher not only increased cooperation, but also productivity and musical performance quality. Positive teacher/student relationships can result in increased academic (musical) performance (Fraser & Walberg, 2005). These findings counter the assumption that time spent on facilitative teaching reduces the time available for enhancing musical outcomes. However, the issue of teacher stress is of major concern due to the already overwhelming challenges facing instrumental music educators, including student discipline, physical exhaustion, isolation, and scheduling (Conway & Garlock, 2002). Providing support, especially as a novice teacher, could add additional stress. While not suggesting that teachers avoid providing support, it could be prudent to be aware of the possible stress and time commitment that such an endeavor could present. As these facilitative music educators moved beyond musical instruction in their classrooms they discovered a different set of challenges beyond those of merely teaching music. They were reluctant to be counselors, but longed to help students in a personal manner (Allsup, Westerlund, & Shieh, 2012). The rewards highlighted above came with a heavy personal price for the music educators. As teachers choose whether or not to engage students in a facilitative manner, especially in band classes reaching over 100 students, careful thinking needs to occur regarding how to best serve students musically and personally.

The issue of teacher preparation, balance, and professional safety are inherently problematic in facilitative teaching. Questions regarding how facilitative teachers learn to do this safely, balance interpersonal support with pedagogical responsibilities, and interact with students on this level without advising beyond their expertise, all essentially remain. However, the stories of the students and instrumental music educators are a testament to the positive value of supporting students with their challenges.

Conclusion and Suggestions

While not intended to serve as a guidebook, these experiences and suggestions could serve as a resource for teachers looking for guidance in this area. The critical first step to providing support to students was to make time for the individual. Time is a limited commodity for music teachers (Conway, 2008); however, with student interactions being one of the primary concerns for beginning teachers, this seems to be an area where time is warranted. With proper teacher/student relationships facilitating a decrease in classroom management issues, better socialization, and increased academic (musical) performance (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Fraser & Walberg, 2005; Schlichte, Stroud, & Girdley, 2006), time and attention in this domain could decrease areas cited as beginning teacher difficulties[13].

While the findings from this study are not inherently surprising, one of the most profound benefits coming from this study was to establish empirical findings for what we, as music educators, have anecdotally touted as benefits for participation in music education. Music education advocacy points such as the benefits from longitudinal continuity with the same teacher, and the social benefits of participation in ensembles, have emerged as powerful findings from this study. These findings, however important for the lives of the participant instrumental

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[13] For more information regarding instructing teachers to be facilitative and to instruct SEL, see Edgar, 2013, 2015.

music educators and their students, are not substantial enough to measure social and emotional growth for the students. Experimental studies measuring social and emotional competencies in varied settings and points in students' music education would be beneficial to determine the true power of a facilitative music educator in the social emotional lives of their students. To do this accurately, music-specific evaluation tools to measure students' musical, social, and emotional competencies would be required. Further interaction with the adolescent development literature would be necessary for this type of inquiry.

SEL programs are readily available for school implementation. With the unique elements present in the instrumental music classroom, a curricular SEL program for implementation in music education classrooms could prove beneficial. Findings from this study provide the groundwork for this program. Research-based SEL programs have had successful outcomes in schools; findings from this study suggest they could be equally as powerful in music education classrooms.

This study looked specifically at high school instrumental band classrooms and their teachers. Replicating this study with a broader population would provide more breadth for this vein of research. Varied student age groups and curricular classes should be investigated, including elementary, middle school, choir, orchestral, and general music settings. Another element for diversifying the population could be years of teaching experience. An evaluation of how novice teachers navigate supporting students could provide further insight as to how to prepare facilitative teachers.

In an era when advocacy is necessary to maintain music education in schools, highlighting the musical, social, and emotional benefits from music education is a powerful argument. Mr. Andrew, Mr. Brandon, Ms. Catherine, and Ms. Danielle all had thriving music programs. It is my

belief their success is based on the relationships they have built with their students and families at school. They are facilitative teachers creating great music: "You just do it. You teach, you open up your doors, you open up your life, you open up your heart. You're there until the kids go home then you open up tomorrow. That's just kind of the way we operate" (Mr. Brandon, educator focus group, February 20, 2012).

Acknowledgments

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