

Student Motivation through Repertoire Selection

Student Motivation through Repertoire Selection

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Abstract

Selecting repertoire for an ensemble is one of the most important and most difficult tasks as a music educator. Pieces of music selected can inspire students to push themselves and improve their abilities as musicians, if done correctly. The goal of this project was to find and define connections between student motivation and repertoire selection in an ensemble setting.

Different types of motivational theories were explored and applied in an ensemble medium. The subject of familiarity and repertoire was also researched in-depth to see how music educators can improve motivation in the classroom. A survey was composed and sent out to educators currently working in the field with 349 responses reported and analyzed in order to find commonalities in different teaching levels and environments. Finally, conclusions were drawn from the research and the survey to show that selecting repertoire can have profound effects on the students and improve the ensemble experience.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview

A couple years ago, my assistant principal and I had an intense conversation about my repertoire selections. She basically communicated to me that the students did not seem to be interested in my selections. I did not agree with her at the time since I believed I picked excellent, educational repertoire appropriate to the skill and age level of my ensemble. She suggested that I choose something more relevant or familiar to the students. At first I scoffed at the idea but after reflecting, I decided to be more open minded and include an arrangement of *The Incredibles* to the repertoire for the Spring Concert. It was a major success. I was also fairly satisfied with the choice because it was a jazzy selection which was different from the rest of the concert. It appeared to have “checked” all the boxes that made for a good piece of music. The students were hooked on it. Motivation improved and interest peaked during band rehearsal whenever we pulled the arrangement out to work on. Students always cheered whenever we rehearsed that piece. Since then I have decided to add a familiar piece or “pops selection” to my repertoire every Spring with a great degree of enthusiasm and success. My assistant principal was right.

No matter how enthusiastic I was about the literature, a successful ensemble program must have thoughtful repertoire selections that both challenged students while motivating them at the same time. Why do students find certain pieces of music so exciting? This project will attempt to answer these and other questions by investigating why certain repertoire improves student motivation more than others. Multiple theories on motivation will be studied, assessing how this type of energy can be created and instilled in an ensemble setting. While motivating a

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music student can be approached from various differing angles, the main goal of this project will be centralized on how an outside factor such as repertoire can have an effect on students.

Research is somewhat sparse in this area. Often literature on motivation in music usually refers to the act of playing. Rarely are musical selections themselves listed as consequential to a students' enthusiasm for ensemble participation. In light of this, motivation will be studied from a more orbital view, referencing other subject areas.

Repertoire in general will also be researched on. Performing musical selections for each concert season takes an enormous amount of class time to prepare and becomes the focal point of a directors' lessons throughout the year. The selection of repertoire is an arduous task which, if done correctly, can foster great success in an ensemble and, if miscalculated, can hamper one's goals. Veteran directors have contended to select literature that "fits" the ensemble and are often a vehicle for exposing students to multiple forms of musical terminology, techniques, and other nuances of the art form. The selection process will be investigated to see how students react to the method. Ones that elicit a reaction from students will be focused upon to find a deeper meaning.

Often overlooked from research of music education is a student's relatability to the musical literature selected for performances. Too often music directors hear bursts of excitement when moving to a popular piece of music during rehearsal. This reaction should be capitalized upon. Students' familiarity to pieces of music is a key factor often not considered when selecting repertoire for an ensemble. Yes, directors need to be mindful of the "musical integrity" of a selection but directors should be open to more contemporary, relatable options. It is possible to find pieces of literature that can both be full of worthy teachable moments while being relatable.

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This project will explore improving student motivation through repertoire selection by researching what factors draw people to certain types of music. Studies will be cited to help draw conclusions on how the familiar improves peoples' interest and motivation.

Chapter 3 will feature a study surveying band directors of all grade levels, asking which of their repertoire did they find the most success with and why. Coincidentally, directors will also be asked which pieces of theirs did they find the least success with and why. Parallels will be drawn between each case and will provide explanations for the successes and struggles of the band directors. Once analyzed, conclusions will be drawn and summarized. Connections will be drawn between motivating repertoire and motivation as well as the selection of poor choices.

The final chapter will draw conclusions between the research studied and the survey to explain how repertoire selection can improve motivation. Once these connections are explored, suggestions and advice will be made to aid directors while selecting literature to capitalize on their impressions of new repertoire. Directing an ensemble of students is a difficult task full of multifaceted issues and obstacles. However, it is my belief that if directors can select worthy literature and improve their students' motivation, then they will have a much more successful, musically inclined ensemble. While motivation can be approached from a variety of angles, this project aims to offer one more way to support and inspire directors in the field of teaching music.

Chapter 2: Motivation, Familiarity, and Repertoire

Motivation

According to Barker (2004), trying to “understand all these theories is...well, it’s messy. Some characteristics of motivation defy categorization... [appearing] inseparable from seemingly unrelated and/or continually changing aspects of human behaviour” (p. 71). There are numerous theories on motivation that, while do contain commonalities, also have different perspectives. Some of the theories referenced in this project cannot be discussed in a vacuum, but under the medium of other subjects like language or music. While they will seem to be overlapping each other in multiple ways, there is no one be-all and end-all theory that will confidently define how to motivate students in a musical setting. Therefore, multiple theories will be reviewed and studied, as it appears that students can be inspired in innumerable ways. This study will choose, define, and explain prevailing theories that are most relatable to this project.

In Barker’s paper (2004) on motivation, he gives a brief overview of research in motivation citing significant theories including goal theory, expectancy-value theory, and self-determination theory. The three theories are orientated around goals and benefits initiated by an individual. Though simple and straightforward, these theories are consistently relevant in modern day society. Achievement Theory simply states that people aim to achieve success or to avoid failure. Expectancy-Value Theory is more complicated because people are motivated if and when the goal is possible and of high enough priority. This is similar to Goal Theory which leads an individual solely towards goals and benefits from the effort.

Self-Determination Theory is essentially a metatheory which is representative of many theories that explain a student's motivation. Evans states the following:

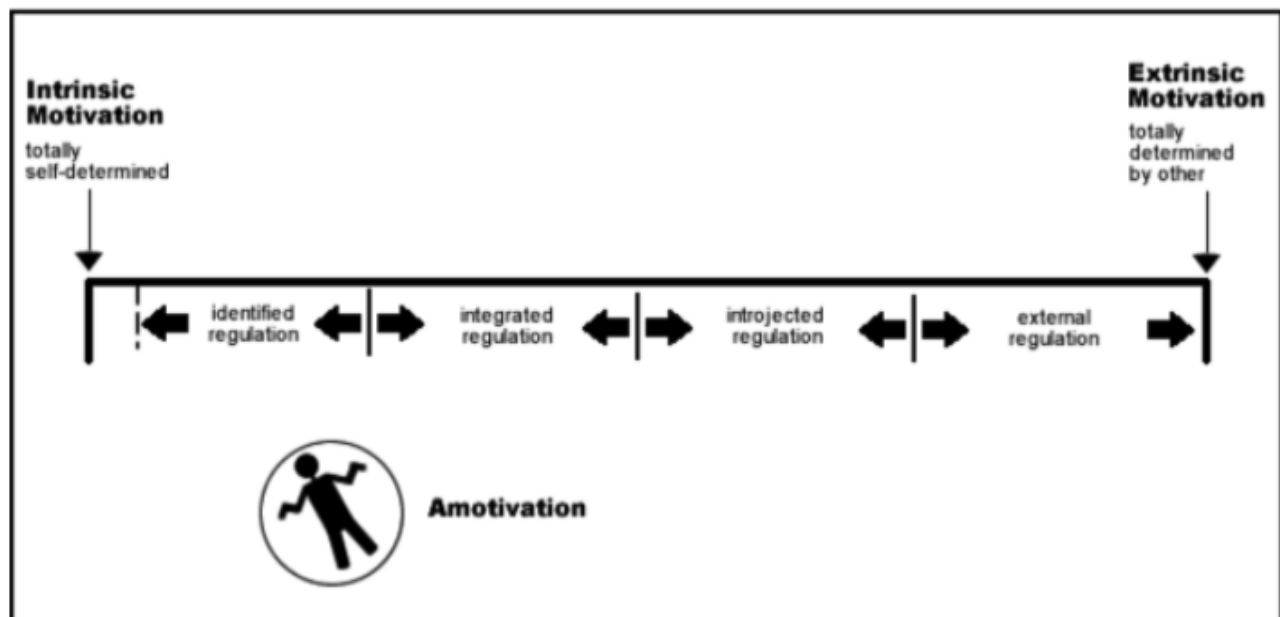
“[Self-Determination Theory] contends that humans have an innate set of psychological needs. Through interactions with the social environment, these needs are either fulfilled, leading to growth and psychological well being, or they are thwarted, leading to psychological illbeing. SDT considers the needs to be innate and universal—that is, a fundamental aspect of the human psyche—rather than acquired from the social or cultural environment. Three needs are posited: competence, relatedness, and autonomy. While other needs can be identified, these can usually be explained conceptually either as a subset or as combinations of the three needs" (pp. 67-68).

According to Evans (2015), Self-Determination Theory asserts that every person has the same set of needs that require fulfillment, including competence, relatedness, and autonomy. There can be more than the three but these are considered the most basic and fundamental. Competence posits that the individual has an innate desire to improve one's skills and abilities and be able to use them to enact change to the social environment. Children from a young age enjoy effecting change to the environment no matter how small and is innately carried through adulthood. This is called “effectance motivation” where people are motivated by the change to the world around them. The second component is relatedness which highlights people's sense of belonging. Human beings are social creatures that desire to be part of a group or society. Relatedness explains this tendency. Finally, there is autonomy which is more than simple independence. Concerning Self-Determination Theory, autonomy is more deeply defined as the freedom to

exert one's will no matter how small. Any choice that makes an environmental change is satisfying to the subject (Evans, 2015).

Two common and distinctive types of motivations, which are also components of Self-Determination Theory, would be intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. These two theories are concerned with what causes the motivation of an individual. This is very applicable in the classroom setting. The goal of the instructor is to use extrinsic motivation to stimulate a student and in the future, assist the student in becoming intrinsically motivated. Here is a graph taken from Barker's work being extrinsically and intrinsically motivated:

Figure 4 – Self-directedness Spectrum



Note. The image was created from Barker's work on motivation. Barker, M. (2005, May). *Understanding Motivation: A Review of Relevant Literature*. Carleton Papers in Applied Language Studies. https://carleton.ca/slals/wp-content/uploads/5_Understanding_Motivation_BARKER_CPALS_2004_05.pdf.

Extrinsic motivation is the act of working towards a goal initiated and guided by an outside force. While being completely motivated without any self-direction is known as "external

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regulation”. Individuals can be influenced towards their goals by both positive and negative consequences for their actions. However there is no personal involvement imposed by the individual. The student is acting only under direction of the instructor. When a student begins to direct him or herself, this state is defined as “introjected regulation.” Following the rules or social norms of a society in a workplace but still not fully grasping the reasons for its inherent structure of rules would fit in this category. Emotions come into play at this stage and can include pride, self-worth, and guilt. There is an emotional consequence for success and failure which is felt by the individual. The next phase would be “identified regulation,” where the subject begins to understand the utility of the outside motivator and its purpose. Understanding inherently leads to further self-regulation of motivation. The final category before achieving internalization is “integrated regulation.” This is where the student is able to fully understand the reasons for the external force and where these newly acquired realizations can be valuable in the real world. It should be noted that Barker pointed out that the student has not achieved autonomous intrinsic motivation as of yet because of the initial outside “push” to work on the task. However, at some point internalization can be achieved from this stage where that push isn’t required to complete the task. The graph also takes note of “amotivation” which shows the lack of any kind of acknowledgement of the effects of an effort. There is an absence of force to complete the tasks because the benefits do not seem worthy of this person’s time. An apt example would be a student who is writing a thesis paper and is completely unmotivated even though the effort will improve his teaching as a whole and help him attain a sweet pay raise, hypothetically speaking of course (Barker, 2004; Evans, 2015).

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The concept of “orientation” plays a distinctive role in the realm of motivation by asking the individual why he or she set a goal. What reasons does the individual have for this goal? This can be powerful, as the goal can logically provide reasons for the effort and thereby motivate him or her to complete the necessary tasks. There are two types of motivations Barker discusses in his work: integrative orientation and instrumental orientation. Instrumental orientation is a goal set for practical purposes such as “a Spanish-speaking engineer at a US-owned factory in Mexico learns English so he can speak more comfortably with his supervisor” (Barker, 2004, p.83). This type of orientation is reasoned as purely utilitarian by which the individual has a direct, straight-forward benefit. Integrative motivation on the other hand, reasons that the goal was set because of the desire to be immersed in a targeted culture. While the goal does have utilitarian reasons, there is an element or sense of belonging that is the driving force in this case. While Barker uses the medium of language as a way of understanding the material, one can easily apply theory to music on how orientation can play a powerful role in goals set by both the teacher and student. Students inherently in an ensemble have a desire to be part of the community.

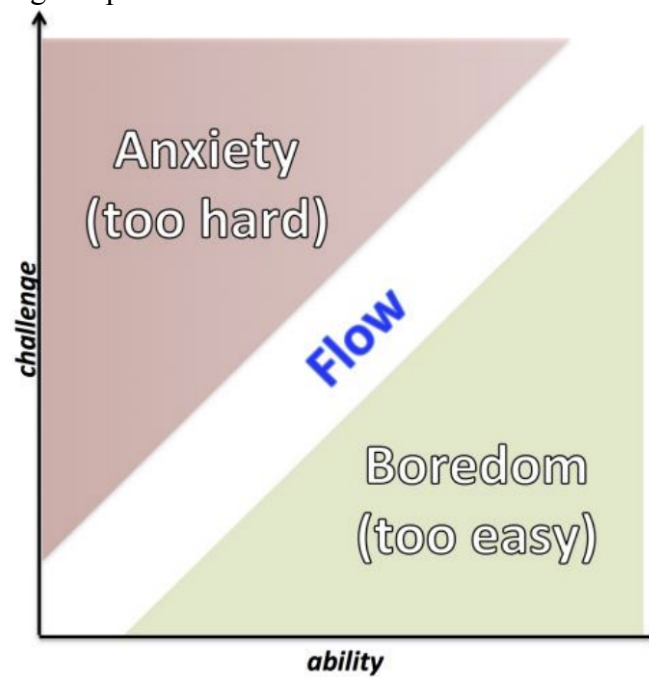
New theories and hypotheses have materialized in recent years, such as the Mental Foraging Hypothesis. The Mental Foraging Hypothesis basically theorizes that people are motivated to reach certain goals because of the neurological stimulation and sensations produced in the brain. There’s a sense of satisfaction gained from completing a task that keeps one focused on repeating or intensifying the reactions. This could potentially explain that indiscriptive, unexplainable need to achieve a set goal.

Csikszentmihalyi’s Flow Theory on motivation is arguably the most relatable concept in this chapter as the apparent strong connection to the arts. In Hopkin’s article (2013), he draws the

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connection between music and Flow Theory. Flow Theory is the area where the challenge is high enough but does not overshadow the subject's ability to complete the task. If the assigned task is too easy, then the subject will get bored as it is beneath his or her abilities. However, if the task is above their abilities, then anxiety and frustration is bred from the experience due to the fact the subject is not equipped with the necessary faculties. That being said, if a task is challenging enough to keep the subject's attention and is just on the "edge" of his or her abilities, the subject will enter what Csikszentmihalyi calls Flow - "a mental state where individuals simultaneously exhibit energized awareness, full focus and involvement, and enjoyment in an activity" (Beese, 2019, p.6). In flow, students focus is at its highest level where educators should attempt to reach and maintain in all their lessons. A chart taken from an analysis of the theory from authors from University of São Paulo simply yet effectively frame flow:

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Note. The image was created from Chalco's work on Flow Theory. Geiser C. Chalco, Fernando R. H. Andrade, Simone S. Borges, Ig I. Bittencourt, & Seiji Isotani. (2016). Toward A Unified Modeling of Learner's Growth Process and Flow Theory. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 19(2), 215-227. Retrieved May 8, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/jeductechsoci.19.2.215>

There are four conditions that must be present to enter flow which are “(a) clear goals and expectations are established with progress towards reaching those goals; (b) a high degree of concentration or focused attention during the activity; (c) a distortion of time and loss of self-consciousness; and (d) a balance between the challenges of the activity and their ability to meet them” (Beese, 2019, p. 7). It's the loss of self-consciousness, fear, and other distractions which typically cloud the mind that allow the subject to enter the flow state and achieve the assigned goal. Csikszentmihalyi sees this ever more present in participation of the arts.

“I followed artists working in their studios and tried to understand how they got their ideas for doing art. I was most interested in the fact that these people would spend weeks and weeks working on a painting and they would forget everything while they were working. Then they'd finish a work of art, and instead of enjoying it, which is what

you would expect from the theories of psychology...that you work in order to get something rewarding at the end. After 10 minutes or so they would put it against the wall and start a new painting. They weren't really interested in the finished painting. So, I wondered, that doesn't fit the theories of psychology, which say that people strive in order to achieve something. Here, people strove more than anybody I knew who worked in a regular occupation. They were completely immersed for hours. But when they finished, the object, the outcome was not important. Apparently, what was important was the striving, the process" (Beard, 2014, p. 355).

Journal for Learning Through the Arts conducted a study on Flow Theory, where the researchers interviewed groups of students who volunteered their free time at a school. All of these students were involved in the arts programs at their school. Open-ended questions pertaining to the flow experience were given to the group where discussion between the individuals took place. Responses were positive, saying how the students were trying to get in touch with their feelings and/or their creative side. Participants were highly motivated to develop their skills and abilities, focusing on their work, hours on end. Prevalent to the students was this concept of loss of time where students felt time slip by with lack of awareness. It's clear that even without the mention of flow or any real knowledge of the theory, the researchers were able to make clear connections between Flow Theory and students' experiences. Researchers concluded that "participants did have flow experiences, for which they provided rich descriptions as well as, aspects of growth mindset, emotional intelligence and self-actualization" (Beese, 2019, p. 21). The arts programs appear to be an excellent catalyst for entering flow where students can focus themselves and improve their skills.

Familiarity

In regards to music education, familiarity plays a major factor in the classroom setting. Student's exposure to varied musical styles and genres have profound effects on their education. King and Prior's rather concise and expansive text, "Music and Familiarity: Listening, Musicology and Performance," defines the term in the introduction here:

"The notion of familiarity is ubiquitous in our lives: it pervades everyday conversations, thoughts and activities. If one is familiar with someone or something, one might be described as being 'well acquainted', 'intimate' or 'close' to it. Idealistically, the Latin familia ('family') from which the word derives connotes a domestic, tightly knit unit. One might become more familiar with someone or something through repeated exposure, such as through meetings between people, frequenting a particular place, regular practice or dedicated study" (King, 2013, p. 1).

The more familiar we are with a subject, the more willing we are to accept it and the faster we are to understand it. Understanding what role familiarity plays in students' lives and how familiarity affects them at the neurological level is an important component to selecting repertoire and connecting to an ensemble of students.

For example, when students first listen to a piece of music, they usually will form a perception of the piece and, given how familiar they are with the structure and/or genre, have varying degrees of detail. This conception of a piece of music is called a "schemata". Schemata according to King and Prior (2013) are "highly versatile and flexible mental frameworks for representing knowledge that may be related hierarchically, associatively or in a time-dependent order" (pp. 33). Depending on the listener's experience with music, the schemata will contain

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more or less detail. Understanding the structure of the piece will give the listener a better sense of where the piece of music is going. What is most advantageous to music educators is that the more the listener engages and becomes more familiar with a piece, the more their schemata changes. Their understanding becomes more precise and detailed and therefore becomes more predictable. A student's schemata may be "low resolution" at first with few details and filled with more general overviews. However, the more one reviews the work, the "higher" the resolution becomes and more details in the schema emerge. The most amazing part of this concept is that the more music the listener is exposed to, the faster he or she is in forming a more precise schemata sooner. This is most insightful from an educational perspective as this information can guide educators in selecting more accessible repertoire. "Free atonal music, for instance, is a musical language less familiar to most Western listeners than tonal music, and this lack of familiarity might be expected to have an effect on listeners' perceptual responses" (King, 2013). Something with a very predictable structure would be an excellent selection for an elementary band whereas an atonal piece would be more suitable to a more advanced ensemble.

"Starting at birth, the dynamic between the familiar and the non-familiar shapes all our cognitive and affective relationships with our environment and continues to form the basis of all learning, or further acquisition of knowledge" (King, 2013, p. 272). According to King and Prior, everything we listen to affects our familiarity with music right from our time in the womb. It is clear that familiarity plays a role in people's everyday lives.

"There is evidence to suggest that familiarity not only organises the allocation of attentional resources but also recruits different kinds of neural networks in comparison to the processing of non-familiar information (Goel, Makale and Grafman 2004). 3

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Familiarity further facilitates the achievement of cognitive tasks by rendering many of the steps involved in the processing of new information and the retrieval of stored ones automatic: the more one is familiar with what is currently encountered, the less cognitive effort is required to understand and make decisions about it” (King, 2013, p.272).

In summary, the more familiar we are with the subject matter, the less we have to work to achieve the desired result. Individuals who are familiar with the subject absorb less new information on a subject versus someone not familiar will be working harder to absorb more information. This reality is excellent for an ensemble setting as directors can select repertoire that fits the majority of the group and therefore makes the piece of music as accessible as possible. The more familiar the group is with the basic components of the selection, the more successful the ensemble will be initially, and the easier they will be able to focus on the unfamiliar content.

Musical performance is considered a complex, multilayer task that requires multiple physical and mental skills operating at the same time. Familiarity even plays a role in students’ technical abilities on their instruments. The more students know their fundamentals or become more familiar with their instruments, the more successful they will be when performing a piece of music. Developing motor skills is paramount to achieving success in an ensemble. Being able to focus more on the music instead of the technicalities of the instrument would lead to a lot less work for the participant. This is something to keep in mind for directors as they should be focusing heavily on fundamentals in group lessons so that when the ensemble meets to go over the repertoire, the students will have an easier time. There should also be consideration for technical limitations of the individual players. If the students have a limited range of abilities,

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directors should find pieces that fit within the confines of those limitations. According to King and Prior (2013), many “skills are acquired simultaneously so new skills are constantly added to the repertoire.” As new skills are learned, the older fundamental skills begin to become automated and become easier. Acquiring musical skills, the student must become familiar with these skills over a long period of time through practice and repetition. This of course causes change in the brain. While learning, many neurons in the brain are active and through repetition and practice, new synapses connect to said neurons together, thereby making the activity easier. Through persistence, efficacy of those new connections occurs which is known as myelinisation. This occurrence leads to automation.

In the womb, humans begin to utilize their auditory system right before and after birth (King, 2013, p. 271). This means that once an infant is able to process sound, he or she can begin to develop their own schemata. This is important to note as what they hear from that point onwards will affect their familiarity with different kinds of music in the long run. Regarding development of understanding the fundamentals of music, King and Prior state:

“Developing understanding of particular tonal systems takes time and depends on the type and extent of exposure to music. The greater the exposure, the more fully and speedily this knowledge will be acquired. It is not necessary for children to focus on listening to music for this to occur. Musical schemata are acquired without conscious awareness. This means that the environment of children in their early years can enhance their implicit knowledge of music even while they are undertaking other activities” (King, 2013).

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It's important for educators to realize this, as being aware of these fundamental developments can help shape what kind of curriculum they want to introduce to the students. As children mature and develop, they begin to take note of elements of music including patterns, tempo, and timbre. Even music from different cultures affects their familiarity as children may have more difficulty with understanding the piece of music. As the growth of the children continues, musical taste is conceived through familiarity and other social factors. This is how our musical tastes develop from before birth. Our exposure to different kinds of music shapes our preferences and makes us more or less open to other types of music. There is clearly a direct correlation between these facts and a student's musical education in a classroom (King, 2013, p. 274-275).

Understanding and using familiarity can be a powerful tool teachers can utilize in their classrooms. By knowing their students' backgrounds, curriculum and repertoire can be selected and set forth that will inspire and instill valuable musical skills in the subjects. This does not mean teachers should remain in the confines of the communities interests. This is simply a starting point and a guide where teachers can push boundaries while keeping the students engaged. Familiarity is a perspective that needs to be understood by educators if they are to engage, and expand their scope of, with students where they have the most interest.

Repertoire

The most important aspect and arguably the hardest part of a musical director's job is to select music that is both challenging yet appropriate to the level of the ensemble while being "aspiring" to the members of the ensemble. If poorly done, this task can stagnate the growth of the ensemble and demoralize its members. However if chosen correctly, the literature can be both educational to the group while motivating students to practice. This project contends that making

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the correct literature choices can have multiple effects on one's ensemble and have a beneficial cascading effect on the music program. It should be noted that research is disappointingly sparse in the area of repertoire selection. That being said, the evidence presented in this selection is strong and consistent with each other.

All research compiled for this section states that selecting repertoire is both the most difficult and yet the most important task a successful music director must complete during their tenure. Reynolds contends that the repertoire selected will be a major part of the curriculum for students. He believes "well-planned repertoire creates the framework for an excellent music curriculum that fosters the musical growth of our students" (Reynolds, 2000, p. 31). Atchison echoes a similar sentiment, stating that the music chosen for one's ensemble is the "backbone of our curriculum" and if well chosen, will encourage students to continue in their studies as musicians (2013).

Selecting the literature is a multi-faceted issue that requires intense examination of one's ensemble. Some essential questions that need to be posed include (a) will this piece encourage growth of the musicians; (b) is this piece a good "fit" for the group, or (c) is the range and technical demands appropriate to the ensemble? (Barton, 2015). These essential questions become important for every director to ponder when selecting repertoire. However, rarely does the research address how music will affect the students on an emotional level. *Teaching Music through Performance* does ask, "will my students enjoy and/or benefit from working on this piece?" To put it bluntly, the piece in question can check all the right boxes and be the perfect "fit" for the ensemble, but if no one can connect to it on some level, including the director, then those checkboxes do not matter at the end of the day. It would be clear that this hypothetical

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selection would not stimulate growth from its performers. Multiple angles need to be considered when selecting the literature.

Selecting a piece with motivation in mind, combined with high educational quality, can be a powerful tool to utilize in the selection process. By understanding the theories on motivation, the director can most assuredly instill motivation into his or her students. Theories centered about attaining goals have obvious connections to the ensemble class. As directors, if we set realistic goals during class and students achieve, motivation improves according to Achievement Theory and Goal Theory. Setting realistic goals and achieving them, like any class, would generate motivation and can often stir excitement. Having an overarching goal can be motivating also as there is a concert to prepare for each season. Other theories that are just as obvious to the students are integrative orientation and instrumental orientation. Instrumental orientation can be applied by way of improvements on technique. A technically demanding piece of music may have been selected for the group to play and students need to practice various techniques in order to perform for the next concert. Seeing the utility for a student should be fairly apparent. Integrative orientation is more about the community or atmosphere of the ensemble rehearsal. There is an innate sense of motivation towards learning the piece because the community or ensemble is progressing. By being able to play the piece correctly, the student can feel a sense of belonging. Both of these types of orientation are valid and may be happening at the same time to different students. Selecting literature based on these theories and others is completely appropriate and may lead to a more motivated ensemble.

Self-Determination Theory plays a role when students enjoy effecting change in the environment around them. For example, having a student or a group of students finally play a

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passage in the literature correctly can produce an enormous effect on them. Being able to play the passage in question fulfills all three criteria required for Self-Determination Theory. By performing the passage correctly, the students gain competence and confidence. They have improved their abilities, and because of that, improvement has affected change in the environment. In this case, the student's individual playing has improved the ensemble's performance. By being successful, there is a sense of belonging to the group. The student does not feel left out now of the community. The student gains confidence playing in the group and innately feels more connected to the ensemble. As time passes, independence is gained as the passage becomes easier to play which allows the player to focus on other passages.

Extrinsic motivation is probably one of the strongest and most obvious explanation for motivation in an ensemble setting. It is the hope of every director, the music presented to the student would be the outside force motivating the student to practice. Though it is doubtful that one piece of music would move a student across the spectrum (See Figure 4 page 6) into internalized motivation, from the time the student joins an ensemble, a consistent selection of repertoire may be able to make the journey in the long run. Geraldi (2008) states that having a set of "core repertoire" would go a long way towards planning out the curriculum for the students. He believes that educators should have a list of fifteen to twenty pieces that are of the highest quality. Having a list to choose from can only help the director when selecting literature. That being said, there is no one piece that is going to affect different ensembles in the same way.

In "Programming in the Zone", Hopkins makes an apt connection between Flow Theory and literature selection. This is the strongest connection between motivation and repertoire selection found for this project. Flow Theory searches for the most optimal experience possible

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which is a deep sense of enjoyment. This is difficult to achieve because the task presented has to be challenging enough so the student is not easily bored but not too difficult as the student may be “turned off” to the task through frustration or anxiety. This applies perfectly when selecting repertoire. The director needs to make sure that he or she balances the two components. A piece cannot be too easy as the member may be turned off towards the task. However, the music cannot be too hard either or the student will give up in a sense. If the director can select a piece that is difficult enough yet still achievable, then flow is likely to occur in practice and during rehearsal. The more flow that can be produced, the more optimal, enjoyable the experience. Students continue to be motivated while their enjoyment of the challenge or music persists and subsequently conquers.

Chapter 3: Survey Overview, Analysis, and Discussion

Method

A Google form survey was created to gather responses concerning motivation and repertoire selection. Twenty-two questions were asked in different formats including multiple choice, check-box, short answer, and one open-ended question. These inquiries were created for practicing music educators that have been in the field of teaching for a varied number of years. This study's aim was to have teachers reflect on their experiences on selecting and rehearsing repertoire while observing students' motivational levels.

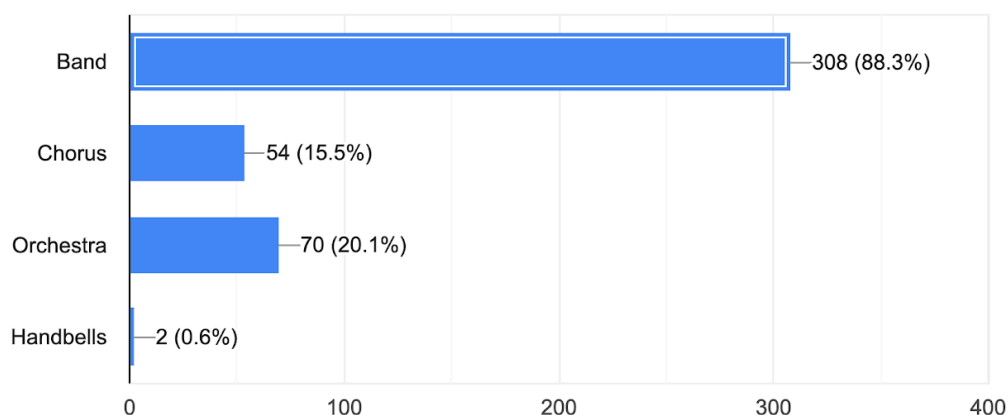
Participants

The survey was made available on Facebook and received exactly 378 responses. Of those responses, 29 were discounted, as those individuals did not teach an ensemble. Therefore, 349 submissions were analyzed for this project. Of the 349 participants, 308 of them were band educators (See Table 3.1). One note to keep in mind is that the inquiry was formatted as a check-box question where individuals could select multiple options for their response. Music educators often have to direct different types of ensembles. This possibility was reflected in the format of the inquiry.

Table 3.1

What ensemble(s) do you teach? Check all that apply.

349 responses

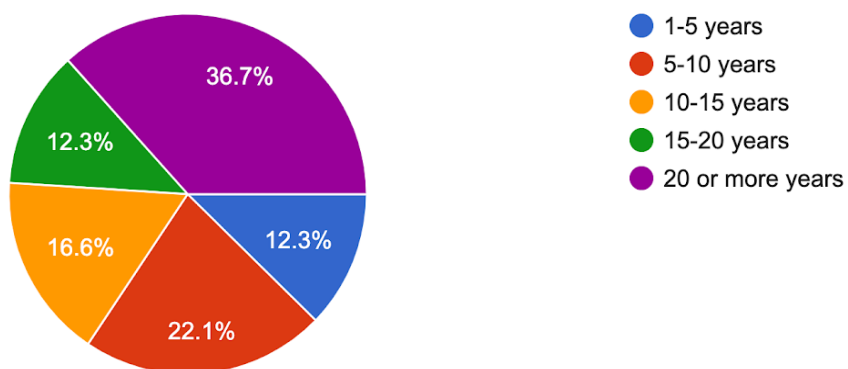


Experience in the field regarding participants yielded varied results ranging from 1 year to more than 20 years. Of the 349 participants, 37 percent taught more than 20 years. The second highest result was 5-10 years at 22 percent (See Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

How many years have you been teaching?

349 responses



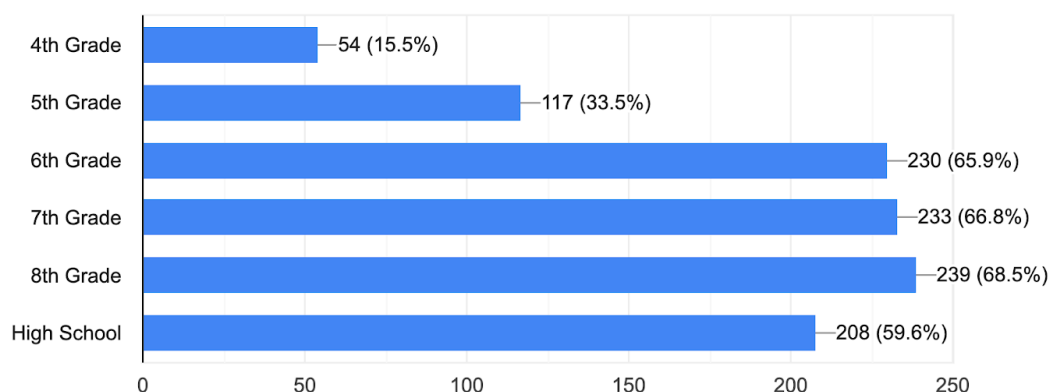
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The educators surveyed taught an array of grade levels. Most taught around the middle school level which were 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. Elementary level, 4th and 5th grades, appeared to be underrepresented here (See Table 3.3).

Table 3.3

What grade(s) do you teach? Check all that apply.

349 responses



Procedure

A link to the survey was sent out via facebook to three different groups including *Music Teachers*, *Band Directors*, and *School Orchestra and String Teachers*. Across the three Facebook groups, there were 77,000 members total. The survey was open for a total of five days and was closed on the fifth day.

Results

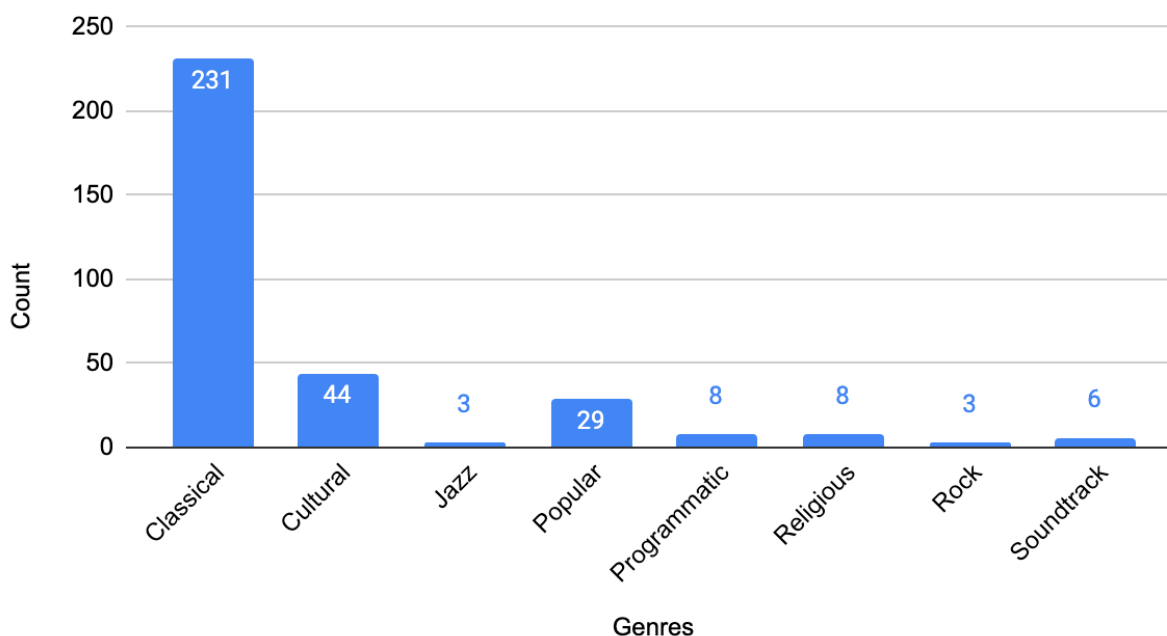
Participants were asked about their most successful piece they assigned for their programs. There was an array of differing submissions with a couple notable repeats including *American Riversongs*, *Colliding Visions*, *Dark Adventure*, *Dragon Slayer*, *Moscow 1941*, and

Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

Star Wars. However, of the 349, those repeated only three or four times. Overall, there were not any notable submissions. They were then asked to specify the genre of their selection. There were a plethora of responses. After categorizing the answers into eight of the most popular submissions (See Table 3.4), “Classical” was by far the most popular response with 231 entries. It should be noted that the classical category encompasses submissions like modern, 20th century, original, band, and overture. Cultural was second with 44 and encompassed submissions including folk and cultural references.

Table 3.4

Repertoire Genres



Directors were asked to identify the grade levels of these pieces, to see if there were commonalities in that area. Grade level pieces ranged from 0.5 to 5. There was yet again no consensus. The highest percentage was 17 percent which was 59 of the 349 participants while the rest of the choices resulted in 16 percent or lower.

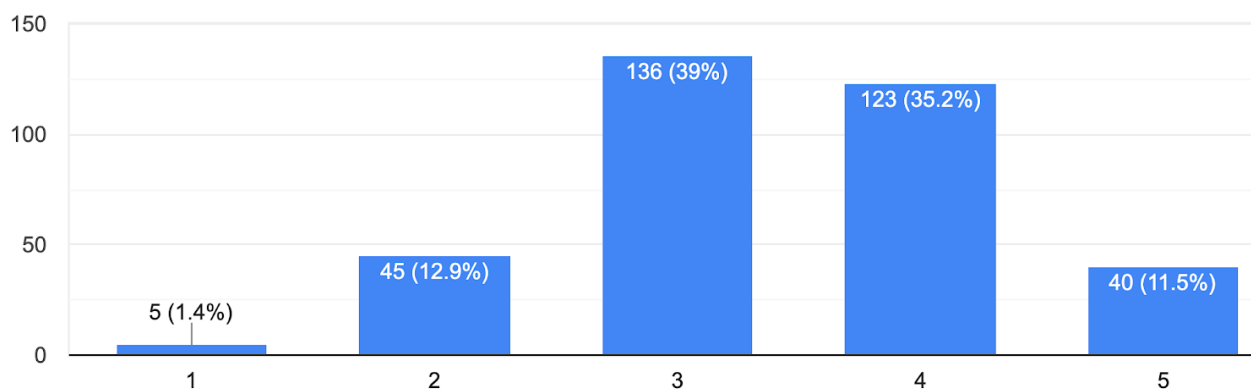
Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

Educators were then asked to rate the difficulty of those choices for their ensembles on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being the easiest and 5 being the most difficult. The most popular selection was 3 out of 5 with 136 which was 39% of the participants and 4 out of 5 being 123 at 35% (See Table 3.5 below).

Table 3.5

How easy or difficult was this piece for your ensemble?

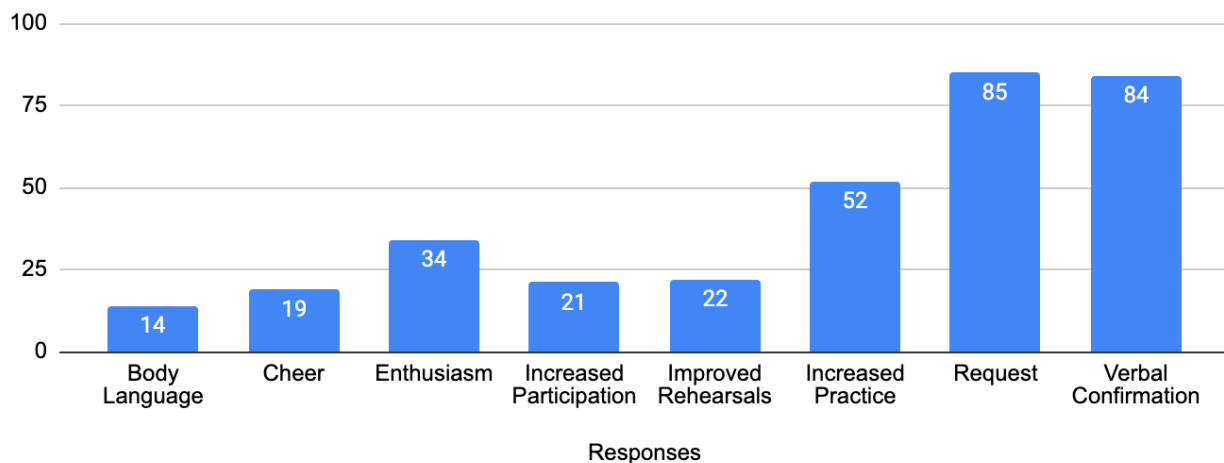
349 responses



Educators were then asked about their students' motivation in a similar fashion to the previous question on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being low and 5 being high. Results revealed that a staggering 220 participants rated their students' motivation with a 5 with 108 submitting a 4. No one submitted a response of 1 for this question. A follow up question was asked about the students' motivation as to how the teachers could tell the students were enjoying the music in the form of a short answer. There were numerous answers, both descriptive and non-descriptive. After reviewing the answers, they were reduced and categorized into eight themes. See Table 3.6.

Table 3.6

How did you know the students were enjoying this piece?

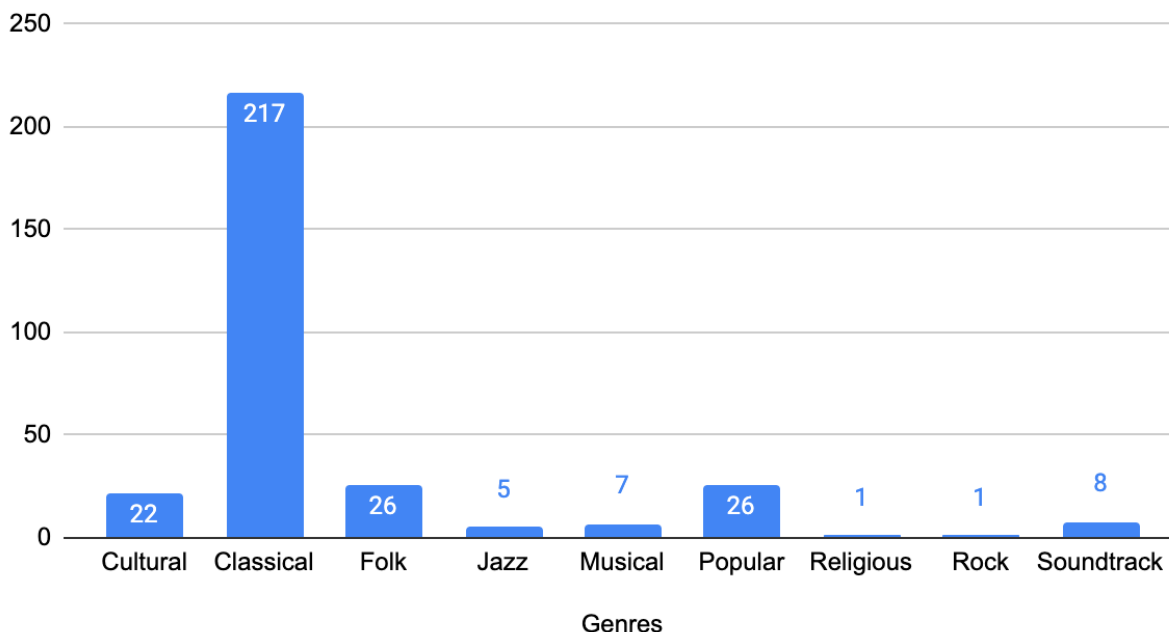


To be clear, the information provided here does not represent all the information that was expressed in the original answers. These are simply the themes and commonalities that were expressed in this section. For example, many directors said that their students cheered when their favorite piece was selected. In other circumstances, students conveyed a change in body language. Directors noticed a change in practice and attitude towards rehearsals and saw increased motivation. Two of the highest events were requests and verbal confirmations where students would ask to play their favorite piece during lessons and rehearsals and students would tell their directors how much they enjoyed working on a certain piece of music.

The survey also asked questions about teachers' least successful piece. This includes the name of the piece in question. The responses were similar to teachers' most successful piece as there were not any commonalities. The genres were also categorized and ascertained. See Table 3.7.

Table 3.7

Genres for Least Successful Piece

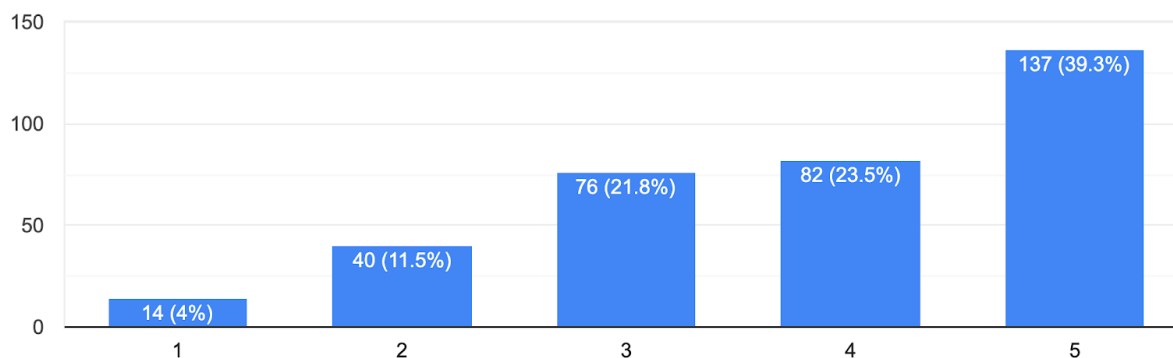


Once again the highest one was the classical genre which encompassed Modern, 21st Century, and Band answers from the directors. Popular came in second at 26 selections. Educators also submitted their corresponding grade level. The most popular grade was level 2 which was 18% of all submissions. Level 3 was the second most popular with 15%. In terms of difficulty when rated on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the easiest and 5 being the most difficult, the most popular choice was 5 out of 5 which was 39% of all submissions. See Table 3.8.

Table 3.8

How easy or difficult was this piece for your ensemble?

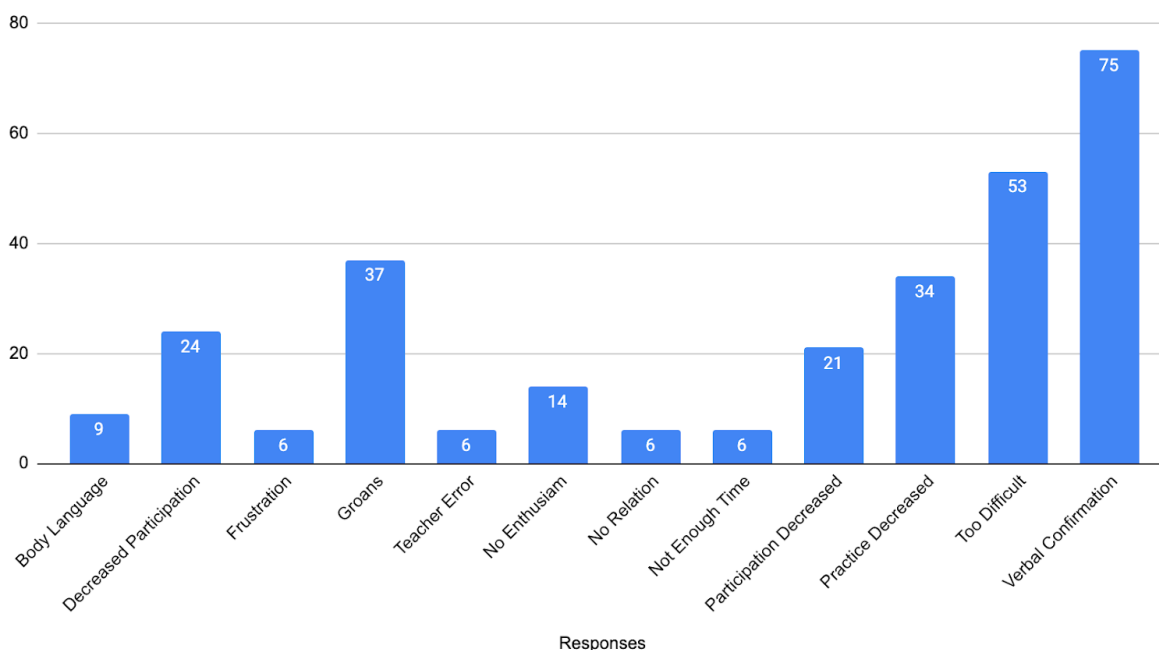
349 responses



Motivation was rated again on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being low and 5 being high. 132 Directors rated students' motivation 2 out of 5 which encompassed 38% of the survey. 102 or 29.2% subscribed to motivation at 3 which was the second highest category. Participants were then asked how they knew their students did or did not like the piece in question. Seventy-five educators said that the students told them and 37 said their students groaned when the piece was announced during rehearsal. The second highest statistic was teachers believed in retrospect the piece was too difficult for their students with 53 submissions. See Table 3.9 for more details.

Table 3.9

How did you know your students were NOT enjoying this piece?



It should be noted that these highlighted responses were the most obvious and popular points taken from the responses. There were directors that said the students did in fact enjoy the piece but believed there were mitigating issues that interfered with the success of the performance.

There was a final section asking participants if they had ever programmed a piece of music familiar to the students such as movies, musicals, music from their own cultures, and popular music. Ninety-six percent of all participants said yes to this question. When asked for names of the pieces, there were a multitude of answers from *Hamilton*, *Star Wars*, *the Incredibles*, *Christmas Carols*, *Avengers*, *Star Spangled Banner*, *Game of Thrones*, and even *video game music like Megalovania*. Participants were then asked if the selection was above or below their ensemble's skill level. With three options to choose from, above, below, and just

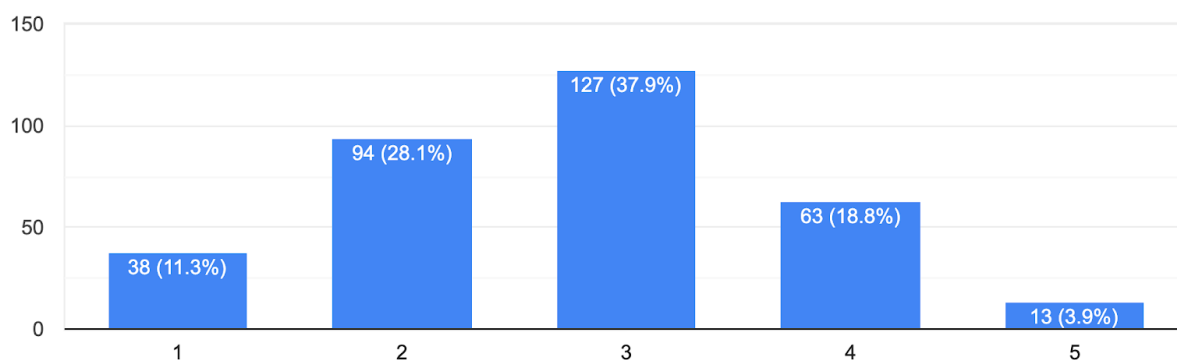
Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

about right, most answered with “Just about right” at 62 of all who answered. Directors then had to rate how difficult the piece was for their ensemble on a scale from 1 to 5, 5 being the most difficult. This resulted in 3 being the most popular encompassing 37.9% of the participants. See Table 3.10.

Table 3.10

How difficult was rehearsing this piece with your band?

335 responses

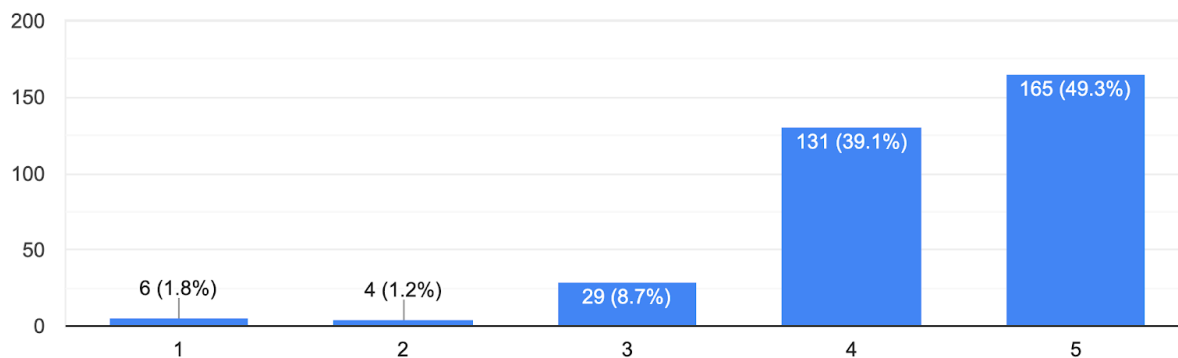


As their final question, directors were asked to rate the success of this piece in question once again on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the most difficult. 4 and 5 were easily the highest response with 131 or 39.1 % and 165 or 49.3 respectively. See Table 3.11.

Table 3.11

How successful was the execution of this piece?

335 responses



Chapter 4: Discussion, Considerations, and Takeaways

Discussion

Table 3.2 indicates that most participants have more than 20 years of experience and conversely only 12% are only 1-5 years in their careers. This indicates that the directors have much experience to draw upon when answering these questions. Over the course of their careers, the survey asked what their most successful, least successful, and most familiar selections were. In terms of the analysis, there weren't really any conclusions to draw upon here as they were designed to help teachers remember low and high points in their careers. However, much can be analyzed through the follow up questions. When asking about their most successful pieces' genre, surprisingly the most popular genre was "Classical." As mentioned before this category encompassed genres such as 21st century music, modern, band literature, and others. It seemed fitting to place them all in the classical category. One might assume that cultural or popular genres would be much higher in the chart given that familiarity does play a role according to the research done for this project. Students seemed to gravitate to these pieces regardless of the genre. Were these pieces still relatable to the students in some way? Did the teachers' strategies influence the student's appeal to the piece in question. Further research needs to be done in this area as to how students were or could be engaged in learning about pieces in this category.

The grade levels for the most successful pieces seemed to be all over the place. However, grades 2, 2.5, and 3 were definitely the most popular and made up over 36% of the submissions; whereas the upper grade levels of 4, 4.5, and 5 were much smaller and only made up less than 21%. These results are not definitive but they do subtly suggest students enjoy pieces of the music that are not too difficult to handle. Unsurprisingly, when asked about how difficult this

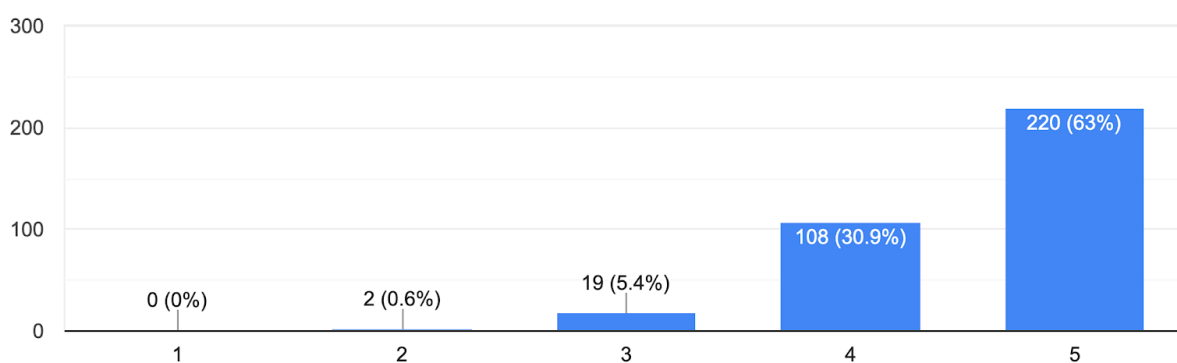
Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

piece was for the director's ensemble (Table 3.5), most said they were in the middle at 3. It should be noted that the directors were able to successfully gauge their students' skill level and select a piece of music that was the exact right “fit” for the ensemble. Motivation ratings were of course at a high, as students were enjoying the music, as seen in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12

How motivated were your students while rehearsing this piece?

349 responses



This makes sense as students were enjoying the music and the challenge without being too overwhelmed by the technical demands of the literature. Hitting this “sweet spot” has yielded a group of students who were motivated and excited to practice this selection.

Directors were able to glean much from their students and were able to analyze their reactions to selections. Many said they loved or hated a piece of music through telling the directors themselves or by cheering or groaning whenever the ensemble would move on the piece in question. There were many popular reactions that originated from these questions. Table 3.6 shows positive reactions. All of them affect the learning process in a positive way and perpetuate learning. It should be understood that though directors described a few instances of feedback, there could have been many more if not all of the events could have happened during

Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

the learning process. The same could be said for Table 3.9 where students expressed how much they did not enjoy a piece of music. These responses tell the directors how much they are not enjoying the piece. These negative aspects also affect the learning process and slow the group down in terms of progress. It's possible lessons are not progressing with the presence of negative emotions and attitudes towards the literature. This shows how students' attitudes and feelings toward a piece of music can affect rehearsal and practice time. The survey results would suggest picking repertoire is extremely important if one is concerned about motivation and making progress in the classroom.

When directors were asked to name their least successful piece, like the one that was most successful, there was nothing substantial to conclude. However, one fascinating revelation drawn from the questions on naming their most and least successful pieces was that some pieces appeared in both of the answers. This means some directors found a certain piece was their most successful while others subscribed to being their least successful. One piece of note was *The Great Locomotive Chase* by Robert W. Smith. It's amazing how one director posted that this was his most successful piece while another said it was his least. This lends credence to the notion that a director has to take stock of the students' ability and talents and find a piece that will challenge them enough without overwhelming too much.

The most popular genre selection for least successful piece was Classical as seen in Table 3.7. One would think that because a selection is in the classical genre, there is potential that it might not be relatable to the students. However when viewing both Tables 3.4 and 3.7, the classical genre was the highest by a wide margin. A theory at the start of this project was the popular, soundtrack, musical music would be the most popular genre selections since it was

Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

assumed they would have the highest chance to be relatable. This theory appears to be disproven given these results. For the most successful question, the cultural selections beat out even popular music. Further research needs to be done on how these pieces were so successful and conversely least successful.

Directors reported motivation to be very low, especially in comparison to the motivation levels of the most successful piece. The successful pieces' motivation level was reported with a rating of 4 and 5 to be the highest while the least successful selection was at 2 and 3. This comes at no surprise, as one can tell that motivation improves if students are working on literature they enjoy. The opposite holds true too in this case.

The final section in the survey asked if directors had ever assigned a popular piece of music before. An astounding 96% of directors selected yes to this question. If answered yes, participants were taken to the final section regarding that selection. Directors asked if the piece in question was above, below, or right at their skill level. 62% answered the piece was "just about right." Almost 25% thought the piece was above their skill level. Taking this information along with Tables 3.9 and 3.10, one can infer that though the piece is somewhat difficult to rehearse with ratings of 3 and 2 being the highest, over 49% of participants reported the execution of this piece at concert was 5 with a rating of 4 being 39.1%. It seems that in general, the students and directors were having an average to a somewhat difficult time working on the piece but still managed to perform it well at a concert. It's possible that the students appreciated playing a familiar piece of music because of that relatability, they were able to surmount its challenges and execute its performance well. The familiarity of a piece served as a catalyst to improve students' motivation and encourage practice. It's clear that selecting the familiar piece

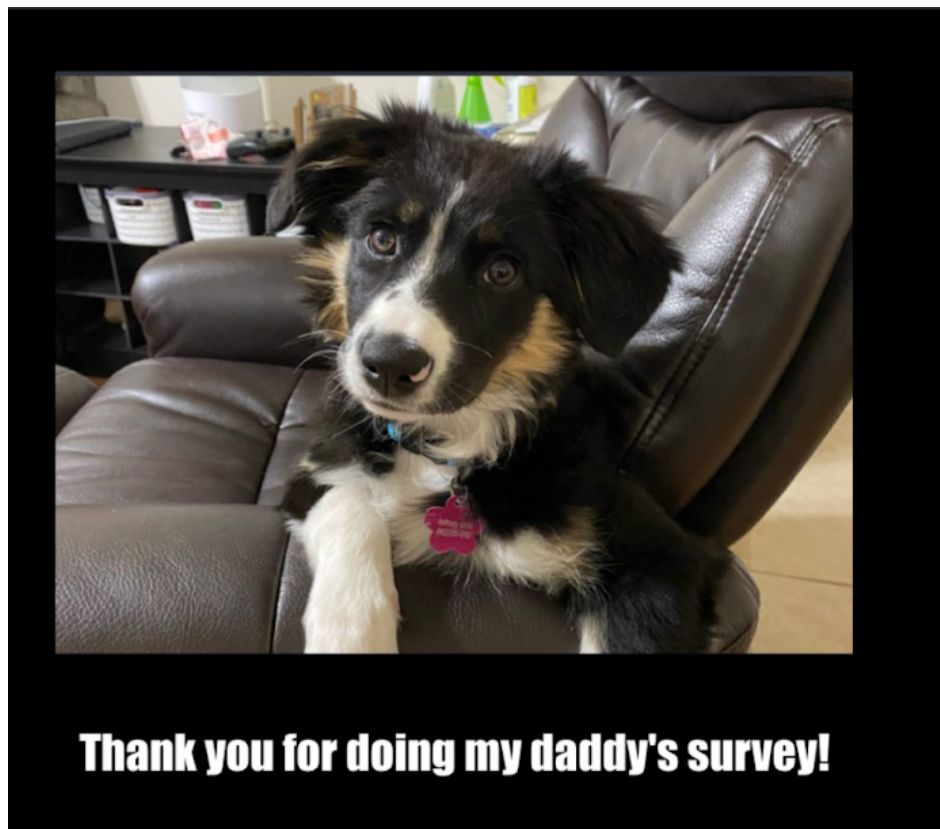
Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

may be a somewhat difficult challenge but still led to a successful execution of the music regardless of difficulty.

Considerations and Limitations

The survey was originally sent to three facebook groups. However the original post yielded only 32 submissions. Because of this, a second post was sent out to two of the groups asking for more surveys. Unfortunately, the *Music Teachers* group would not approve the second post stating it broke the group's policy and was considered spamming. The "Band Directors" group approved the new post. This second post contained the survey link and necessary information. However, the researcher used his extensive knowledge and experience of advertisements on Facebook and also attached a picture of his objectively cute puppy to attract more submissions. Two days later, the survey received over 300 more responses. Here is the picture used for the survey, purely for scholarly reference of course. See Table 3.13.

Table 3.13



Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

Because of the numerous submissions for the Band Director's group, the results were skewed towards band directors. Therefore, influence from other ensembles including chorus and orchestra were limited. Future Research should be expanded to the other ensembles for comparison and verification.

Unfortunately, this survey did not account for retired teachers when asking how long they have been teaching. A number of people posted on facebook that they were retired and no longer taught in the field. An option for retirees should have been given when asking for the tenure of the teachers.

One obvious consideration to put forward is that this survey is taking the directors' viewpoints as what really transpired. Many questions asked in the survey were asking what participants thought and how they believed their students reacted to the music selections. This is just one perspective taken from a situation. Students and observers could easily feel differently about how the pieces were asked in this survey. To gain a more complete picture, questions would have to be asked to the students and take their perspectives into account.

In Tables 3.6 and 3.9 categories are a simplified aggregate of the responses written in the survey. Though the most popular themes and ideas were reported in this project, it would only be fair to acknowledge that there were details lost in the translation of information. Often, answers fell into multiple categories leaving the researcher to select the most prevalent one as the answer. Though the categories presented in both tables were fairly common answers from directors, it is possible for another researcher to interrupt the information in a different way.

Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

The responses in general do not discuss students' motivation or lack thereof in great detail. Many of the responses were observational which is subjective and insightful to a degree. Many directors heard cheers or groans whenever the group went on to the next piece and even got students' opinions on the selections. It would have been informative if further research were done as to how the students were motivated or not. Interviews with participants and students, as well as discussion regarding teaching strategies could have yielded a more in-depth analysis.

Takeaways

Going into this project, I hypothesized that I would see a direct correlation between popular music and an increase in student motivation in the ensemble setting. Based on the results of this survey, it would seem that the most motivating pieces were not necessary pop tunes. In fact, to my surprise, the classical genre was by far the most popular category. I even posited that maybe there were certain pieces of music that would instantly motivate students through their "catchy" melodies and intelligent design and structure. However, when asking for titles for directors' most and least successful pieces, there were a number of pieces that appeared in both responses. Though there were only a small number of them, I found this realization to be staggering. Even one of my favorite pieces for middle school band literature, *The Great Locomotive Chase*, appeared on both lists. These revelations and others completely turned my understanding of repertoire selection on its head. Therefore, I can only conclude at this point that the literature selection process is a much more nuanced task than simply picking "good" music that will immediately motivate students to improve themselves. This project has shown me that music directors not only need to know how to select appropriate music amidst the vast ever growing library of music literature.

Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

After reviewing some of the responses, there are some connections that can be drawn from the results. For instance, when asking directors how easy or difficult a piece of music was for their ensembles, most responded with either 3 or 4, out of 5, in terms of difficulty (See Chapter 3, Table 3.5). This infers that the piece in question was not too difficult nor too easy to perform. This result lends credence to Flow Theory where students need to be challenged appropriately and have the most optimal experiences. Hitting that middle ground between too difficult and too easy is a challenging area to hit when selecting music. It would seem, based on the directors' selections, that they were able to hit that zone and were able to be successful with their students. Conversely, directors' least successful pieces were mostly too difficult for their ensembles. It's clear that directors, based on Table 3.8, missed the zone where students can be challenged without becoming too overwhelmed. This created an environment with suboptimal experiences.

In the final section of the study, educators were asked about programming familiar pieces of music. The results were to be expected. For the majority of the results, according to Table 3.10, most did not struggle with learning the literature. In terms of difficulty, rarely were pieces of music marked 5 out of 5. Most fell between 2 and 3. Playing something that students are already familiar with would make learning of the literature easier in general. Students can accept and digest the music even faster than other pieces. In terms of familiarity, picking familiar literature can easily motivate students, acting as a lightning rod for improved engagement and more focus on music. Though not entirely necessary given how successful classical pieces of music can be, programming a familiar piece can be done with purpose as a way to inspire

Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

members of the ensemble. Understanding interests of the students population, given age level, culture, and an understanding of trends could be a powerful tool in a teachers' arsenal.

Looking back on that conversation I had with my assistant principal years ago, I realized that event was a turning point in my career as a music educator. I found myself relating to students much better in the ensemble setting. I originally thought that by adding a pop tune piece, students would instantly be more motivated in rehearsals. However, given the results of the study and research done for this project, motivation is a far more complicated concept to consider in an educational setting. Results suggest that popular tunes are not necessarily the answer to motivating a group of students. It's more about picking literature that students can connect to which meets them from where they are in terms of skills and pushes them to work harder while enjoying the process. I would contend that selecting literature is one of the most challenging aspects in teaching music and, if done correctly, can be a powerful force for one's ensemble. The selection process requires planning, dedication of time, and above all, an understanding of your students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey used for Chapter 3

Music Survey

This survey is intended for any music teacher that directs an ensemble. The purpose of this survey is to collect information on repertoire selection for the school year. Please answer each question as accurately as possible. Thank you for your time!

* Required

Do you teach a music ensemble in a public or private school (K-12)? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

[Next](#)

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Background Information

What ensemble(s) do you teach? Check all that apply. *

- ☐ Band
- ☐ Chorus
- ☐ Orchestra
- ☐ Handbells

How many years have you been teaching? *

- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ 10-15 years
- ☐ 15-20 years
- ☐ 20 or more years

What grade(s) do you teach? Check all that apply. *

- ☐ 4th Grade
- ☐ 5th Grade
- ☐ 6th Grade
- ☐ 7th Grade
- ☐ 8th Grade
- ☐ High School

Repertoire

Name your most successful piece you have selected for your ensemble. *

Your answer _____

What genre was this piece (ex: classical, popular, folk etc.)? *

Your answer _____

What grade level was this piece? *

- ☐ 0.5
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 1.5
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 2.5
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 3.5
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 4.5
- ☐ 5
- ☐ Don't know

Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

How easy or difficult was this piece for your ensemble? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Easy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Hard

How motivated were your students while rehearsing this piece? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Bored.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Really Excited!

How did you know the students were enjoying this piece? *

Your answer _____

Name your least successful piece you've selected for your ensemble. *

Your answer _____

What genre was this piece (ex: classical, popular, folk etc.)? *

Your answer _____

Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

What grade level was this piece? *

- ☐ 0.5
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 1.5
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 2.5
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 3.5
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 4.5
- ☐ 5
- ☐ Don't know

How easy or difficult was this piece for your ensemble? *

- | | | | | | | |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Easy | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Hard |

How motivated were your students while rehearsing this piece? *

- | | | | | | | |
|--------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Bored. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Really Excited! |

How did you know your students were NOT enjoying this piece? *

Your answer

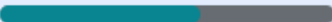
Have you ever assigned a piece of music your students were already familiar with (This could be anything from something their own cultures or from popular culture like movies, musicals, video game, or popular music)? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

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Familiar Music

What was the name of that piece? *

Your answer _____

Was this piece above or below your ensemble's skill level? *

☐ Above

☐ Below

☐ Just about right

How difficult was rehearsing this piece with your band? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very Easy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Difficult

How successful was the execution of this piece? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not very Successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Successful

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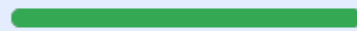
Final Question

Think of a time where your students were extremely motivated. What factors contributed to that motivation? How did you know they were motivated? What piece of music were they working on at the time? *

Your answer

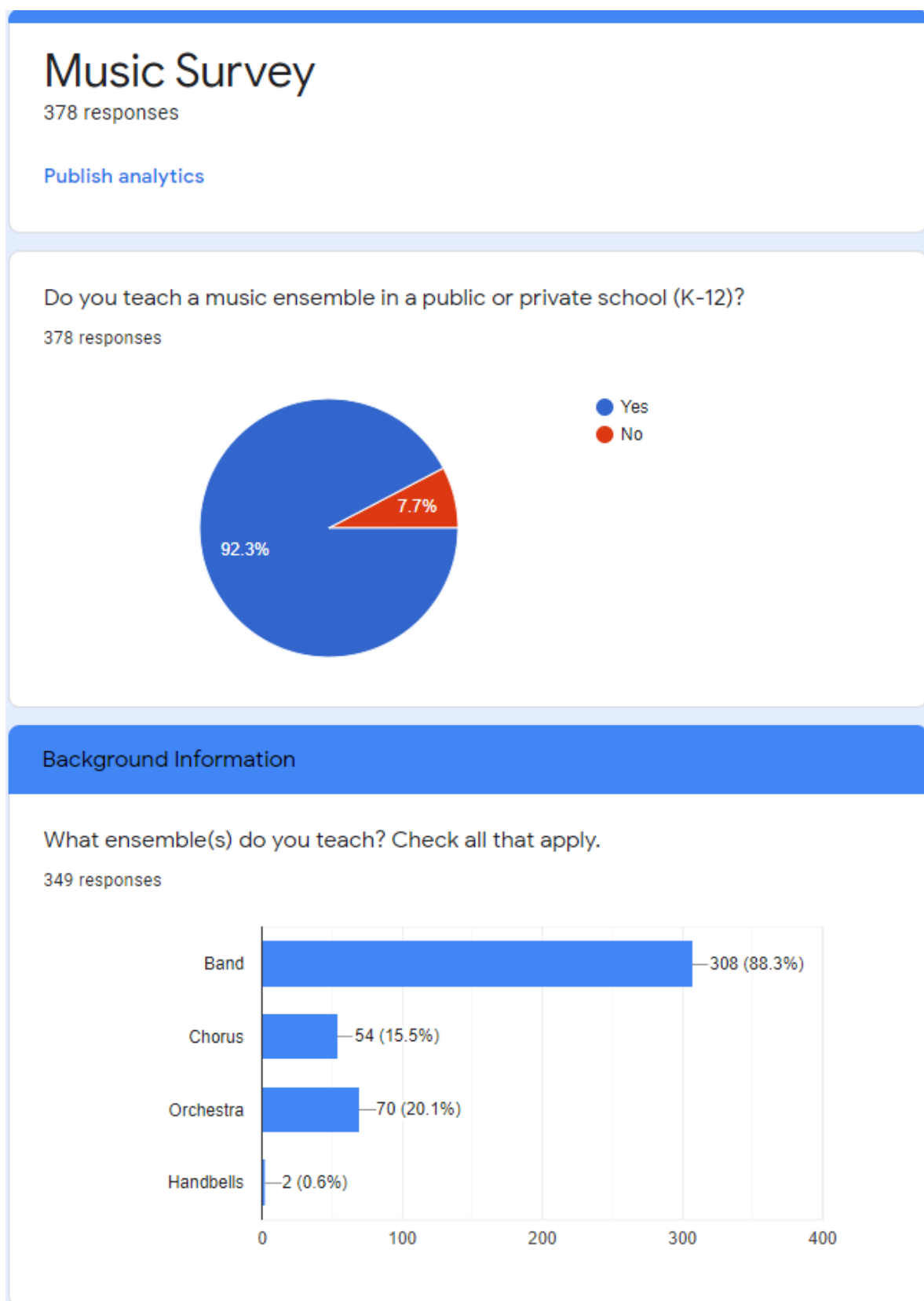
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Appendix B: Survey Results

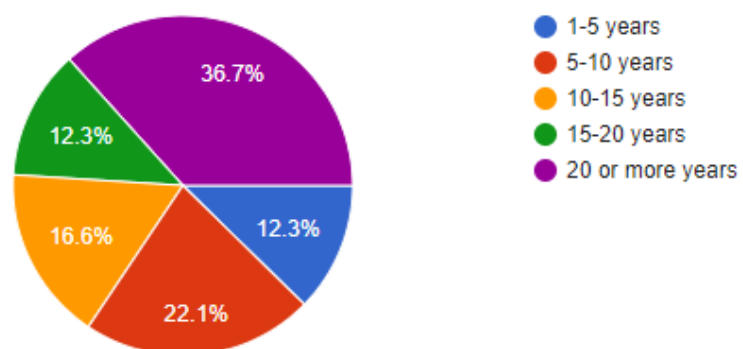


Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

How many years have you been teaching?

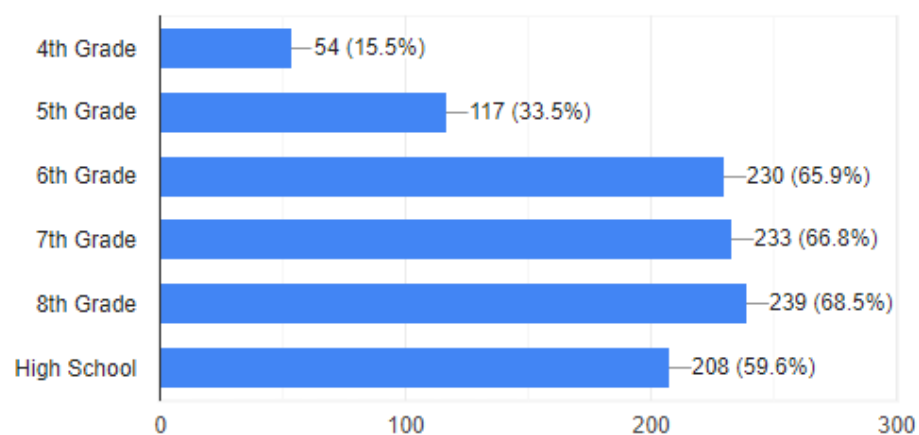


349 responses



What grade(s) do you teach? Check all that apply.

349 responses



Repertoire

Name your most successful piece you have selected for your ensemble.

349 responses

Moscow 1941

Dark Adventure

The Great Locomotive Chase

Midnight Mission

American Riversongs

Russian Christmas Music

Shenandoah

Moscow, 1941

Vesuvius

What genre was this piece (ex: classical, popular, folk etc.)?

349 responses

Classical

Folk

Classical

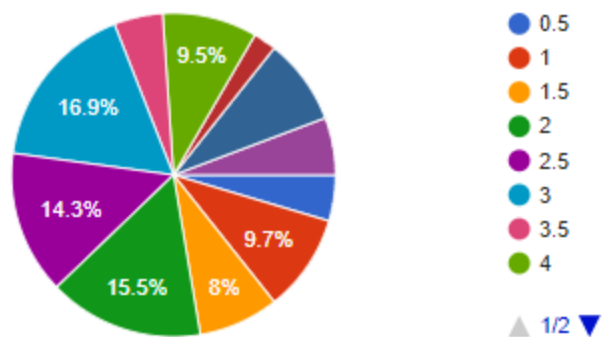
March

Popular

Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

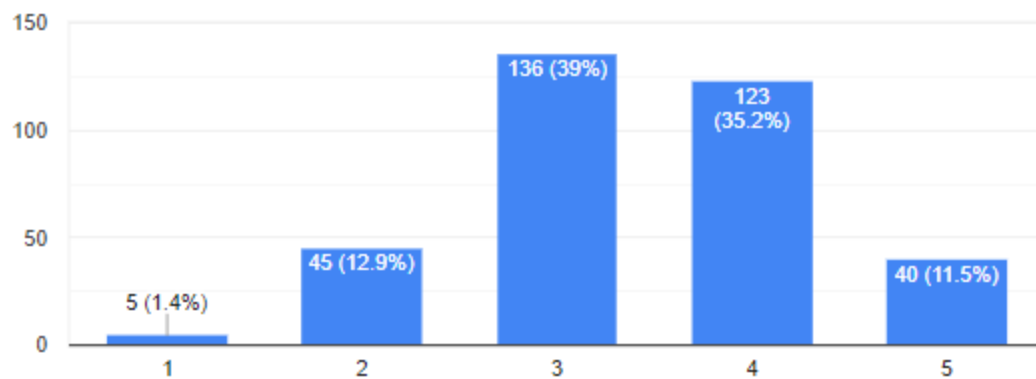
What grade level was this piece?

349 responses



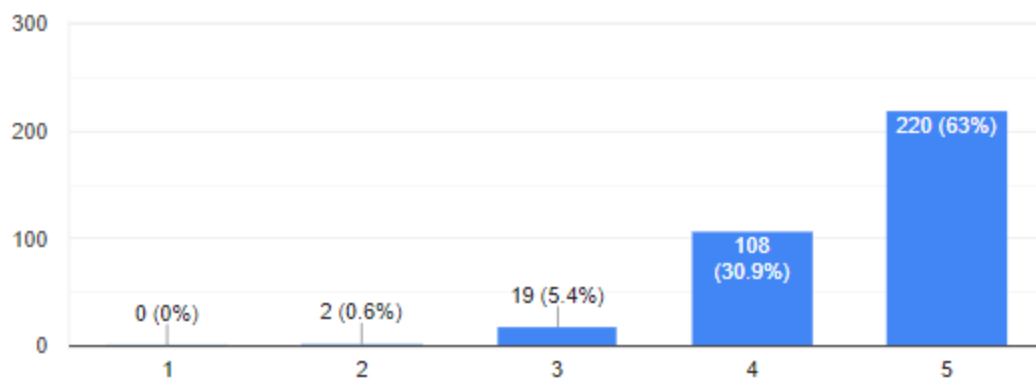
How easy or difficult was this piece for your ensemble?

349 responses



How motivated were your students while rehearsing this piece?

349 responses



Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

How did you know the students were enjoying this piece?

349 responses

unique harmonies.

Enthusiasm; agreed to choreography.; loved learning Swahili

They were excited to rehearse it and would sing the melodies outside of class

Asking to play it every day

They asked to play it all the time

They told me. And got REALLY into it.

Requested when given a choice

They asked for it! And they practiced A LOT.

Students would pull it out to practice before class.; they have a resounding "owa owa" when I told them to get it out for rehearsing

Name your least successful piece you've selected for your ensemble.

349 responses

Sleigh ride

Ancient Flower

English Folk Song Suite

Shipwrecked

Kentucky 1800

Them Basses

Pictures at an Exhibition

Colliding Visions

Four Pictures (Balazs)

Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

What genre was this piece (ex: classical, popular, folk etc.)?

349 responses

Classical

Folk

Classical

Popular

March

NA

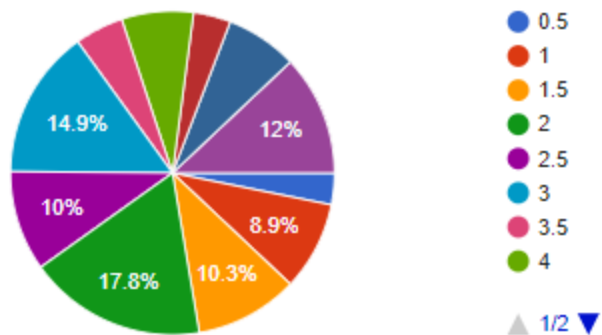
Pop

Concert Band

Jazz

What grade level was this piece?

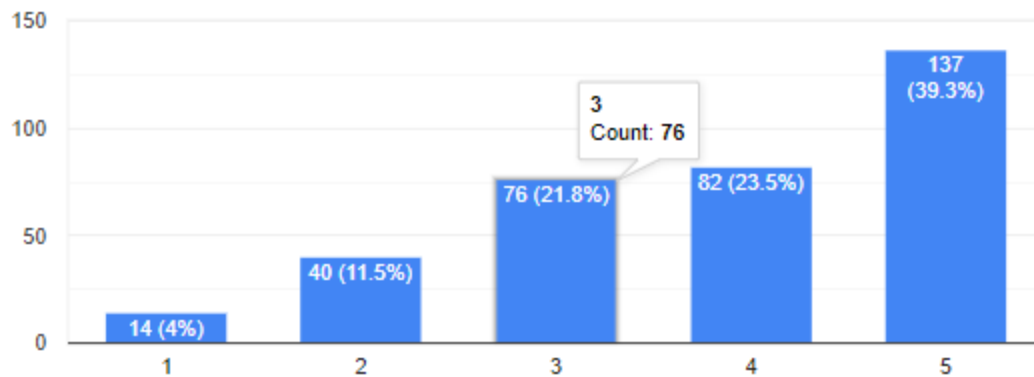
349 responses



Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

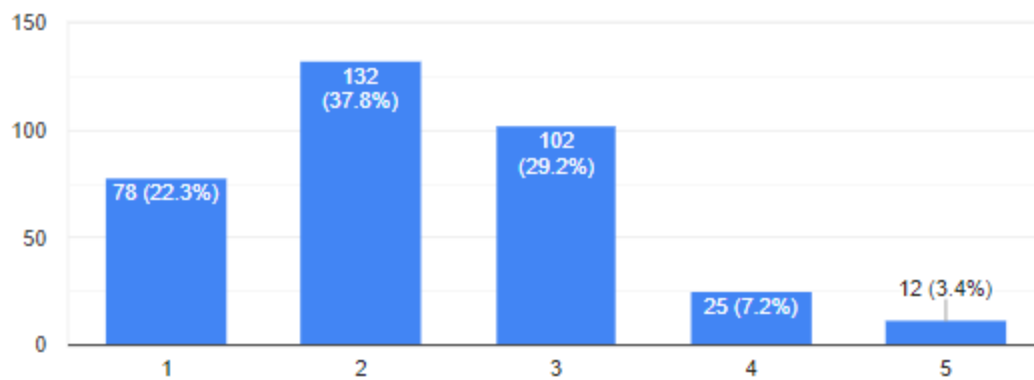
How easy or difficult was this piece for your ensemble?

349 responses



How motivated were your students while rehearsing this piece?

349 responses



Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

How did you know your students were NOT enjoying this piece?

349 responses

They told me

NA

Told me

Groans

Lack of good practice, vocalized their dislike for the work

Struggled with playing it, really wasn't a 0.5 grade piece

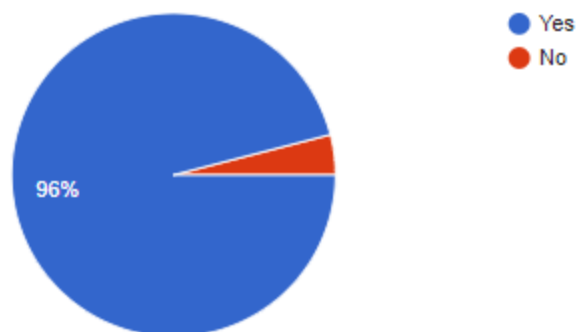
Classroom feedback, enthusiasm, inability to progress

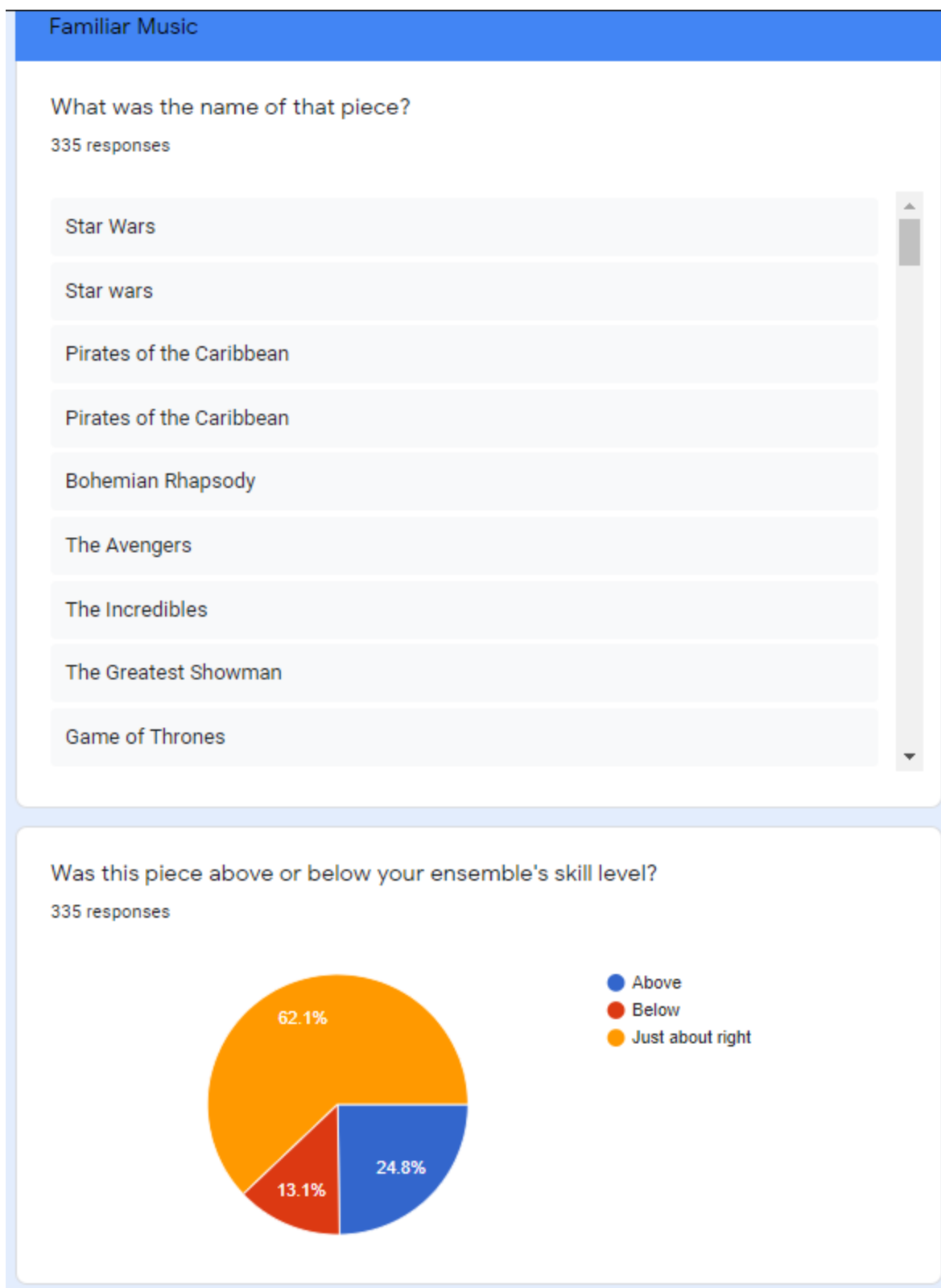
The groans, and talks with students

They barely sang it and expected to learn it by rote which is a big no-no in my program.

Have you ever assigned a piece of music your students were already familiar with (This could be anything from something their own cultures or from popular culture like movies, musicals, video game, or popular music)?

349 responses

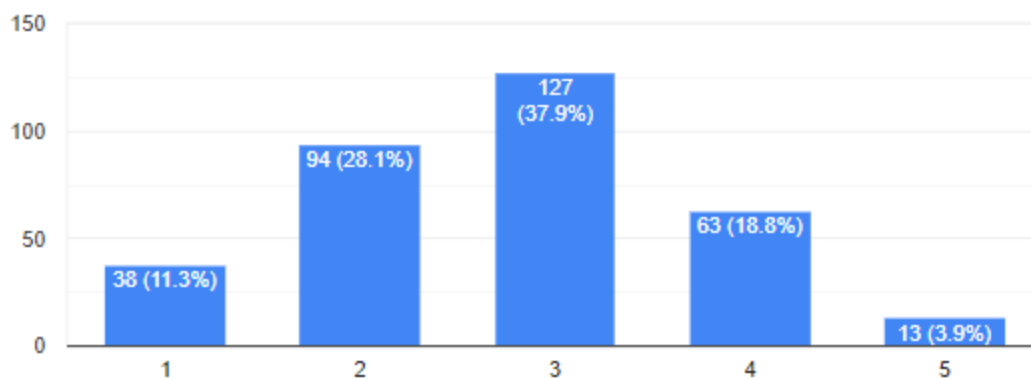




Student Motivation through Rep. Selection

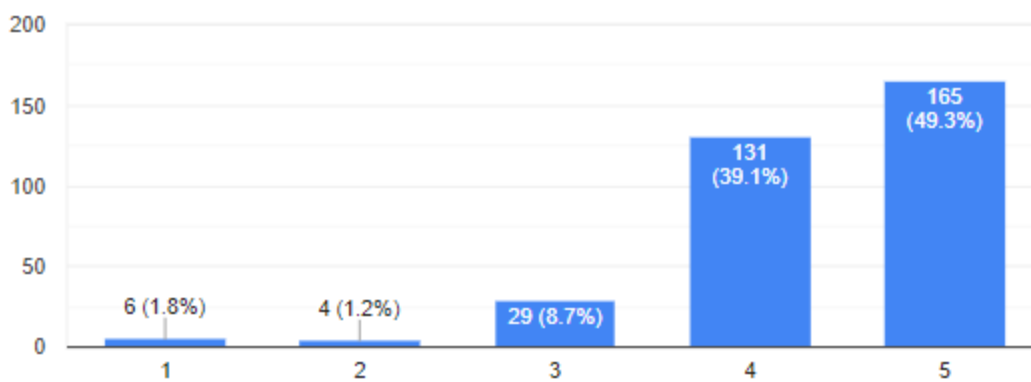
How difficult was rehearsing this piece with your band?

335 responses



How successful was the execution of this piece?

335 responses



Final Question

Think of a time where your students were extremely motivated. What factors contributed to that motivation? How did you know they were motivated? What piece of music were they working on at the time?

349 responses

The students really enjoyed the selected work and the reason for why we selected it (middle school recruiting trip). Their energy in rehearsal, their feedback, their performance energy and post-performance recap all proved their motivation. "Mars" by Holst.

It was fun. They asked to play it all the time. I don't remember which piece it was

My preparation ALWAYS factors into their motivation. If I've done my homework, I will have selected music that will be successful, almost always that will increase their motivation to work harder.

It's always clear when the students enjoy the music, they're willing and excited to work on many varying aspects of the music if it leads to a rewarding performance experience.

The time I'm thinking of is a period where the String Orchestra I teach was studying the Waltz, and I was able to show them many styles and versions of what a Waltz can be. Their favorite of the 4 pieces was probably the Shostakovich Waltz No. 2.

