COMPOSITION PEDAGOGY PRACTICES BY SECONDARY SCHOOL

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC TEACHERS IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

by

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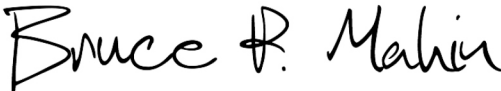

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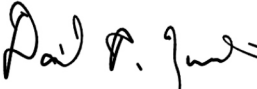
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Abstract

This study examined the pedagogical techniques of secondary school band teachers in southwest Virginia in the area of composition. The goal of this study was to provide a snapshot of current practices in composition pedagogy in secondary school instrumental ensemble classes in southwest Virginia, and to determine to what extent teachers consider and utilize aspects of the musical creative process in their instructional design and teaching methods, particularly in regards to respect for individual creative pathways and time dedicated to exploration and reflection. A preliminary survey on teaching composition was distributed to band teachers in southwest Virginia. Based on survey results, three teachers were chosen for further case study. These three teachers were observed teaching in the classroom and also participated in interviews, which were transcribed, analyzed, and codified for common themes. Results indicated that these teachers addressed the need for individualized composition instruction, but were lacking in the incorporation of exploratory time and reflection leading to revision. The teachers held many aspects of composition instruction in common, in particular a reverence for composition as a deliberate decision-making process and a sequence of instruction moving gradually from restriction to freedom, but varied widely in their tasks, goals, and understanding of the creative process. The study indicates a need for the pedagogy of composition to be addressed in music education, particularly in teacher preparation programs.

Keywords: composition, music, pedagogy, secondary schools, education, creativity, creative process, instrumental ensembles, band.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Purpose

Public school music teachers are charged by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME, 2013) with instilling a sense of comprehensive musicianship within students, teaching them to perform expressively, read music notation, and create their own musical works. This last goal of creation is one of the most important, as it synthesizes musical skills and individual creative expression. The task of composition ranks high on Bloom's taxonomy of high order thinking skills, suggesting that cultivating composition skills should be a goal of music programs. However, it is one of the most neglected areas of music education, and certainly one of the most difficult to teach.

As a former band teacher, I had the opportunity to discuss the teaching of composition with many of my colleagues. One of them, an obviously talented young teacher, showed me a new assignment she had designed for her beginning band class. Her students were going to compose their very first piece of music by following a particular sequence of steps. The students were to first draw a time signature and a treble clef, then copy a rhythmic pattern from a piece they already knew, changing the notes to their choice of pitches. Finally, they would double-check all musical markings to make sure their compositions were "correct." I found the design of this activity to be rather enigmatic. The process of composing by formulaic, teacher-directed steps seemed inauthentic and unnatural to me, and I questioned whether the assignment might be more of an assessment of musical theory knowledge or standard notation than a creative venture. My colleague, although she disagreed with my assessment, did acknowledge that her personal creative process differed remarkably from the procedure outlined in the assignment.

I found our exchange worrisome. As music teachers, why do we ask students to compose music in a way that is, for many, unnatural? Why do we often skip the essential step of

experimentation in our rush to get students notating ideas in standard, classical form? Are we consistently encouraging our students to reflect on their work and revise their compositions? When we design our composition assignments, are we truly enabling them to create their own music, or are we simply assessing their knowledge of music theory? Are we afraid to step outside our everyday roles as conductors-in-charge and just let students create freely?

Typical instrumental ensemble classes such as middle and high school band spend little time composing, improvising, or doing other activities that require students to make their own musical decisions. Much of the instructional time is spent developing physical techniques and rehearsing music for concert performances. Teachers who do make an effort to integrate creativity into their rehearsals are burdened with a lack of training in composition, a lack of knowledge about the creative process, a lack of time to give these tasks the attention they need, and general confusion about how to assess the finished products and help students improve their work.

The purpose of this study is to examine current practices in composition pedagogy, focusing on secondary level instrumental music programs. One problem with two sub-problems will be considered. The study aims primarily to explore the following problem: Are secondary school instrumental music teachers in southwest Virginia incorporating composition activities and training in their curricula? Two sub-problems will be investigated as part of the research including: (1) How are composition activities and experiences designed, e.g. are they guided by an understanding of the creative process or by other means? (2) Are composition activities and teaching practices aligned with the musical creative process as it is understood by researchers?

In an effort to provide a framework for comprehensive musicianship in our schools, the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) provides a list of nine national standards for music educators. Music teachers at every level are encouraged to teach these standards:

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture. (NAfME, 2013)

Additionally, the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs), which describe the curriculum for various educational programs in the state, include composition in their requirements for instrumental music. Middle school instrumental programs are expected to train students to "use music composition as a means of expression" by composing four- to eight-measure variations on given selections and notating their work in standard form, using technology as appropriate (Board of Education, 2013). The Virginia composition standards remain mostly static until they reach the advanced high school level, when students are suddenly required to compose and notate the mandated variation as well as improvise over a given chord progression and create original harmonies or countermelodies to accompany a melody. The high school "artist" level requires students to create their variation for multiple instruments, the first time a multi-voice requirement appears for students in what is typically a 7-year course of instruction. The implied message to instrumental teachers is that composition skills gained in sixth grade are sufficient until eleventh grade, despite the developmental and musical gains students will undoubtedly make during this time period. The 2013 Virginia instrumental music SOLs are focused almost exclusively on performance and music theory skills, in stark contrast to the more inclusive

National Standards. However, composition is still required, and teachers in Virginia must take care to teach it in a way that is both meaningful and effective from a creative standpoint.

College preparatory programs frequently make use of the national and state standards as a focus for music education majors. However, most college music programs in Virginia do not require coursework in all nine areas, and there exists an overall lack of training in composition and improvisation in particular. A brief survey of the check sheets for undergraduate music education majors at Radford University (2013), Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (2013), James Madison University (2013), Virginia Commonwealth University (2006), and George Mason University (2013) revealed that there appear to be no specific composition course requirements for pre-service music teachers in Virginia. Although composition may be addressed in other courses, it is unclear whether or not it is ever being taught within in the context of music education. Music educators are trained to perform, conduct, and teach, but perhaps not to create. The result of this gap in training is teachers who are potentially unsure how to lead composition, improvisation, and other creative activities effectively in their classrooms.

Research is alarmingly lacking in the field of music composition in public schools. Indeed, the most notable feature of the research on composition pedagogy at the secondary school level is its absence. There are very few studies examining what secondary school music teachers are doing with their instructional time, so it is difficult to know with any certainty whether or not composition is actually happening in typical classes.   There are studies suggesting methods of composition, and there are also studies on the creative process and how individual students approach composing; however, research evaluating how the structure and

design of composition assignments affect the creative process is rare, as is research examining the integration of composition work in secondary school band programs.

This study provides a snapshot of current practices in music composition in southwest Virginia secondary schools. Through detailed analysis of surveys, interviews, and classroom observations, it helps fill the aforementioned research gaps and provides teachers with a better understanding of how they might teach composition in a manner that appropriately utilizes the musical creative process as it has been defined by Burnard (2000, 2001), Hickey (1999, 2001, 2002, 2003), and Webster (1990, 2004). Most significantly, the study highlights the lack of a standardized composition pedagogy in southwest Virginia, indicating a great need for the pedagogy of composition to be addressed in teacher preparation programs.

Chapter 2 - Review of the Literature

The Status Quo: Are School Ensembles Dying?

One of a teacher's primary concerns when evaluating a classroom activity should be whether or not it is educationally and culturally valuable to students. In his examination of the "aims" of music education, Westbury (2002) described the classroom as a "place that presents its students with an *image* of the world" (p. 110) and asserted that "*It is the task of pedagogy to make the world that is being mirrored in the classroom compelling and accessible*" (p. 110). Unfortunately, most secondary school music programs in southwest Virginia (the location of this study), disregard many very compelling musical activities and instead limit the scope of their instrumental curriculum to one main course: band. The element of tradition surrounding most secondary school band programs is strong enough to combat any dissenting thought about the purpose and direction of instrumental performance programs in schools. Allsup and Benedict (2008) pointed out that the mythology school bands have inherited might now actually be hurting them. Bands in America, having been modeled after military groups and centuries-old European orchestras, are tightly bound to tradition and disciplined in the extreme, representing "belief in strong leadership, belief in commitment to a larger collective, and belief in meritocracy" (Allsup & Benedict, 2008, p. 157). Students in band programs are often "conditioned" to repeat skills and behaviors until they are perfected (Allsup & Benedict, 2008, p. 158). While popular culture commonly heralds music classrooms as centers of collaboration and creativity, the typical high school band room is more likely a realm of conformity and control. Students' roles in the classroom may involve very little creative or critical thinking and minimal opportunities for individual expression, instead placing them at the subjugation of a conductor who makes all

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musical decisions. The pressure to perform frequently and at a high level leads teachers to direct their classes in the most efficient way possible, leaving little time for experiments in composition or other creative work. The educational implications of this type of system are dismal: How can students truly create their own work in an atmosphere that is so dramatically teacher-centered? Does the regimented structure of the traditional band class hinder all students' freedom to think creatively?

The lack of creativity of the typical band room may indeed threaten the future of instrumental ensembles in public schools. Williams (2007) questioned the fact that large ensembles are continually offered as the sole musical focus of American high schools, even though most public school students choose not to enroll in these classes. Students who do not take band or orchestra may be participating in music at home or at church, perhaps in more individualized, creative capacities or in more culturally relevant ways. The danger to music education is that if educators do not adjust the curriculum so that it provides relevant, stimulating tasks for all students, instrumental ensemble programs will become increasingly archaic and superfluous, possibly even disappearing from public schools entirely. As Westbury (2012) reminds us, instrumental music courses must be made "compelling and accessible" (p. 110) to survive.

Considering the potential drawbacks of a performance-only approach to music education, it is discouraging to find that teachers have difficulty integrating more creative activities in their classes. Williams (2007) observed that although music teachers are responsible for teaching all nine varied national standards, most classroom time is spent on performance skills and notation (para. 8). A study by Orman (2002) found that elementary general music teachers spent less than five percent of their instructional time on composition, improvisation, artistic decision making,

and other tasks involving creativity and critical thinking (para. 22). An earlier study of elementary music educators in England investigated teachers' comfort levels with the nine standards and found that improvising and composing were the most difficult to implement, mostly due to limited time and resources (Byo, 2000). It is difficult to get a firm baseline for the number and quality of composition exercises taking place in public school ensemble classes. Little research has been done in this area, particularly at the secondary level. One can assume that secondary school educators face many of the same challenges in regard to time and resources as their elementary counterparts.

Despite these challenges, including a composition component in the traditional ensemble performance curriculum does appear to be a worthwhile venture. A 2006 study compared the attitudes and performance skills of two middle school band groups, one being taught only through performance-oriented activities, and the other through a mixed curriculum of performance skills and composition assignments (Riley, 2006). The composition group achieved the same amount of musical knowledge and technical gains as the control group, despite spending only half the amount of time on technical performance skills (Riley, 2006). More significantly, they also showed increased enthusiasm for and engagement in their music classes (Riley, 2006). This study reveals that although teachers must sometimes decide to take instructional time away from performance content in order to teach composition, this sacrifice can invigorate student interest in the music program. If we are to fight the feared antiquation of secondary school bands and orchestras, such a sacrifice may indeed be necessary, and it is at the very least worthy of further research.

Music Composition in the Typical Ensemble Classroom

One hurdle in teaching composition in way that allows students maximum creative expression is that teachers may naturally assume that all composition is creative in nature. As Barrett (2003) wrote, "The conflation of the terms *composition* and *creativity* suggests that all composition is creative and that all creative experience in music education involves composition; both assumptions are profoundly misleading" (p. 4). Teachers may intentionally design assignments that both address specific learning objectives and allow students room for creative expression, but it takes effort to do so. The design of assignments is critical. An assignment that is too rigidly structured limits creative options; an assignment that is too unstructured can risk overwhelming students with choices or producing irrelevant, unplayable work. Barrett (2003), argued:

> The notion that all composition experience is creative fails to recognize the potential influence of context and task on the compositional process and its emergent products. The completion of a composition exercise that is designed to demonstrate the learner's understanding of a specific technique may result in a work that is technically proficient but lacking evidence of creativity, however it is defined. (p. 4)

Hickey (2003) recommends designing tasks that allow students a maximum amount of creative freedom, asserting, "Researchers have suggested that open-ended and heuristic (exploratory) tasks are more conducive to creative thinking than contrived and algorhythmic tasks and that the successful manipulation of open-ended tasks is indicative of creative thinking" (p. 34). These heuristic tasks may be a departure from the more structured lessons teachers often design.

Although teaching music composition in secondary school ensembles can be a challenge, there are certainly teachers willing to try it. Moore (2010) outlined a lesson by Alaska music educator Heather Seidler that guided students through composition by using a familiar melody as

a basis for creative excursion (para. 5). Seidler's students wrote and performed variations on "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," working collaboratively to follow a strict sequence of steps (Moore, 2010, para. 5-6). Seidler can be lauded for devoting part of her instructional time to composition; however, this particular assignment contains creative issues and elements of bias that merit further consideration. In structuring her assignment so rigidly, Seidler limited her students' artistic options, making the task not so much a creative experience as a utilitarian exercise in music theory, notation, and performance skills. Additionally, the decision to base the assignment on a Western folk song likely biased the students towards writing in a particular style. The tonality, rhythm, and cadences of this melody are decidedly Western in nature, and it is unlikely that beginning music students possess the technical knowledge to notate a variation that differs greatly from the original in style. Moore's article, which mentions only the positive aspects of the assignment, also makes no mention of assessment. It is unclear if Seidler's goals were to test students' notation and performance skills or simply to allow them to create new musical ideas in a group environment.

Another music educator, Norris (2010), presented a similar route to teaching music composition in ensemble courses. Rather than isolating composition as a separate lesson or unit, he posited that composition can be integrated into the performance curriculum by following a four-pronged method: (1) focus on separate musical elements independently, (2) develop and demonstrate an understanding of these musical elements, (3) include improvising, composing, and arranging in class activities, and (4) deliberately select a performance repertoire that introduces musical elements sequentially (Norris, 2010, para. 7). A typical lesson might include students isolating a pitch or rhythm sequence from a piece they are performing, then using it as a basis for their own compositions. This type of lesson design is easy to integrate in ensemble

classes, even when preparing for a performance, and it provides a solid starting point for students and teachers who are uncomfortable composing or improvising freely; however, it is not without weakness. Using passages from performance repertoire is an efficient way for a teacher to address multiple standards at once, but it also limits students' creative choices to a style of music that may not flow from them intuitively. Widening the scope of the lesson so that students could use motifs from any familiar music would allow them to work within a more comfortable context.

A 2011 Norwegian study further investigated composition assignments through a "didaktik" lens, analyzing how the teacher, students, and subject matter influence one another (Sætre, 2011, p. 30). In the study, three music classrooms were observed as they completed separate composition assignments. In each instance, students were given strict regulations about how to create their music: they were told what to compose, with whom to work, and exactly what instruments to use (Sætre, 2011). The teachers, even when attempting to support an environment of freedom and creativity, insisted on always maintaining some element of control. The resulting compositions were fraught with issues of power and ownership. The students, having been forced to collaborate with one another and work within strict teacher guidelines, seemed unsure of "whose" music they had actually created (Sætre, 2011, p. 46). The researcher concluded that the "context in which music composition is learned, as a creative endeavor, is fragile" and urges teachers to think critically about issues of power, collaboration, and control as they design their assignments (Sætre, 2011, p. 48).

The available research literature on secondary school composition, while not vast in scope or quantity, contains many well-meaning examples of how teachers might efficiently integrate composition into their ensemble performance courses. What is lacking from these

examples, however, is a discussion of whether or not the students are composing in a natural, organic way. It is important to consider how teacher behavior and instructional design can bias or limit the creative process, and how allowing a natural unfolding of the individual creative process affects the resulting compositions.

Teaching with the Creative Process in Mind

In order to teach composition effectively, teachers must cultivate a classroom environment that allows creative thinking to flourish. They must understand exactly how students create new ideas and consider this process in their instructional design. Unfortunately, there exists no widely accepted system for teaching composition in public schools, and certainly not one that focuses on composition from a purely creative standpoint. Hickey (2003) wrote:

> It is interesting to note that these two growing bodies of research—one on creative thinking in general, the other on music composition of children—have rarely met in the research literature or in the classroom. While there is a push for, and subsequent growth of, music composition and improvisation in music education, few of the pedagogical methods are informed by research on creative thinking. (p. 31)

This is not to say that researchers have not attempted to define pedagogical methods for composition; only that these models have not been readily adopted in secondary school music education. Hickey (2003) designed a conceptual scheme for teaching composition that is spiral in nature, circling through five major tenets: (1) listening, exploring, and defining, (2) form, (3) musical elements such as melody, harmony, texture, rhythm, and timbre, (4) big elements such as unity/variety, tension/release, and balance, and (5) putting it back together (p. 47). Her system allows teachers to address both specific musical objectives and creativity simultaneously, and

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has the benefit being adaptable to many levels of instruction. Hickey (2003) described the process as follows:

> The progression through this cycle could take one semester or four years, depending upon the amount and depth of time devoted to music composition in the classroom. This cycle is spiral: upon completion of the entire sequence at one skill level, one begins again and moves through the sequence at a deeper level, and so on…The sequence for music composition provides one way of integrating not only musical skills but also creative and compositional skills.   (p. 48)

She also suggests starting instruction with more open-ended tasks, arguing that "offering few parameters and more open assignments, in order to give students the chance to explore and create something within their own boundaries, will stimulate creative thinking" (p. 42).

Stephens (2003) examined the history of composition instruction and developed his own pedagogical model, in which the elements of composition are compared to the building of a house. He envisioned an understanding of sound and silence as the foundation, the exploration of pitch, duration, tempo, dynamics, articulation, and timbre as the ground floor, and the manipulation of melody, harmony, counterpoint, rhythm, texture, and orchestration as the first floor level (Stephens, 2003, p. 122). The parts of the "house" are connected, and he explained, "Compositional activities at the first-floor level would be far richer and more satisfying if there were more work in the initial stages of teaching and learning at the foundation and ground-floor levels" (Stephens, 2003, p. 122). Stephens's model has the advantage of being applicable to music of all cultures and, like Hickey's model, can be applied to many different levels of music instruction. Stephens encouraged teachers to use his model from a constructivist standpoint, allowing students to discover their own learning needs as they work. He argued:

When students perceive a need, they are motivated to learn. Effective teaching consists of both encouraging and recognizing such need in students. Musical understanding should develop hand in hand with skill, technique, and knowledge. As an individual progresses in one area, further possibilities open up in other areas. (Stephens, 2003, p. 121)

In the absence of a clearly defined pedagogical method, teachers must evaluate their lessons critically and take steps to ensure that they are encouraging the natural creative process to take place. In particular, composition lessons should address three aspects of the creative process generally held in common by composers, teachers, and researchers: respect for individual processes, time for musical exploration, and purposeful reflection.

In approaching any creative task, one must first recognize that individuals may have differing processes for creating their own work. Burnard and Younker (2002), who studied the compositional methods of unassisted students in four different countries, found three major patterns in pathways for creative thought: linear (horizontally conceived), recursive (spirally conceived), and regulated (holistically conceived) (Burnard & Younker, p. 251). The secondary school ensemble classroom is likely to be similarly varied in the makeup of its students' creative processes, and it is critical that the teacher "proceed sensitively" in the beginning stages of composition to allow for this variation (Burnard & Younkers, 2002, p. 259). Burnard and Younkers (2002) encouraged teachers to develop a compositional pedagogy that focuses on the individual learner.

This focus on the processes of the individual is an oft-repeated strain in composition pedagogy research, especially by successful composers themselves. In a study comparing the compositional processes of well-known twentieth century composers, Lapidaki (2007) found that

all composers expressed a desire for individuality and pointed to the role of the subconscious mind as a guiding force in their work. She concluded that teachers must be respectful guardians of students' individual creative processes, creating a "learning community" in the classroom and providing ample time to work and revise compositions as needed (Lapidaki, 2007).

Wiggins (2003) echoed the importance of cultivating a supportive learning community, stating that "In order to work productively, students need to be able to operate in a *rich, safe, supportive environment* in which they are given *sufficient uninterrupted time.* These aspects of the context are created and mediated by the teacher and the school" (p. 157). He argued that even when students are not collaborating, the social dynamics of their classroom can influence their work, because they are eager to create music that is accepted by their peers (Wiggins, 2003, p. 161). Teachers must consider the social fabric of the classroom and its role in influencing compositions.

However, they must also be aware of their own role in the classroom and how it might influence students' work. In a study of six leading British composers and teachers, the musicians interviewed all agreed that it is important that teachers not impose their views on students (Mateos-Moreno, 2011). In the secondary school instrumental ensemble, this insistence that the teacher "step back" from the forefront of instruction is likely to be met with some resistance and confusion. Band and orchestra classes are historically focused on the artistry and precision of the group as a whole; divergent individual behaviors are considered an unnecessary distraction in the ensemble environment. The hierarchical culture of large musical ensembles does not traditionally support a classroom full of students working independently while their teacher coaches from a distance. Such a class is likely to seem unorganized, chaotic, and inefficient. And yet, this type of free musical environment may be necessary for composition instruction to work. Confirming

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the need for freedom, even when "messy", Hickey (2003) wrote, "It is clear that the process of creative thinking takes time and is messy, yet our controlled and hurry-up classroom culture is often the antithesis of this" (p. 34). Teachers who wish to teach composition in a manner that encourages creativity must set up a classroom culture that encourages individuals to work and think freely.

A second study by Burnard (2000) again confirmed the importance of respecting individual processes in composition lessons. In this study, Burnard (2000) examined differences in how middle school students experienced composition and improvisation lessons over a six-month period. She concluded that teachers must not impose their own viewpoints on students, that students need to be cognizant of their own creative processes, and, perhaps most interestingly, that teachers should prioritize time for reflection as part of the composition process (Burnard, 2000).

Not surprisingly, the process of leading students through the steps of reflection and revision is exactly where many music educators, untrained in composition themselves, begin to founder. In a 2004 conference keynote paper, Peter Webster noted this deficiency in both teachers and their students, stating, "The initial [musical] gesture is often quick to find, but it is the working out and expansion of the idea that requires real effort" (Webster, 2004, 245). Young students may initially resist the reflection and revision process, even viewing a teacher's comments as an imposition on their creative freedom. Teachers indeed must straddle a fine line between guiding students and imposing their own opinions on student work. Webster (2004) encouraged teachers to include reflection and revision exercises as a common, expected aspect of their pedagogical practice so that students learn to welcome this part of the composition process.

Lindroth (2012), examining composition pedagogy at the collegiate level, agreed that reflection is a vital step in teaching composition. As students advance, he recommends teachers approach them with carefully formulated "confrontations" to build their skill level and confidence in their work (Lindroth, 2012, p.299). He also points to workshop-style seminars as valuable tools for allowing students to both share their work and receive feedback on it (Lindroth, 2012, p. 302). Writing instructors frequently use workshops in their classes to hone similar creative skills, and music teachers might learn from their experience. Many music composition lessons in the research literature already provide for class or public performances; the next logical step is for students to consider audience feedback as they begin to revise their works.

One of the foremost writers on composition in public schools, Maud Hickey (1999), suggested using rubrics to aid in the reflection process (para. 19). Although some teachers may hesitate to influence students with a presentation of the assessment scale in advance, having some guidelines for compositional goals may help student composers structure and complete their pieces more effectively. The use of a rubric certainly provides a practical way for teachers to fit composition assignments into the reality of school grading requirements. Hickey (1999) is careful to suggest sensitive language for evaluation, substituting words like "rookie" and "pro" for more judgmental language such as "poor" and "excellent" (para. 12).

Hickey encourages teachers to allow "think time," or incubation periods away from the project, before asking students to turn in completed work (Hickey, 2003), arguing that "completing several brief music-composition exercises is simply not as conducive to the creative-thinking process as spending longer periods of time probing one musical project" (p. 33). As part of the incubation stage, she also urged teachers to give students time to experiment

and "doodle" before they create their finished work (Hickey, 1999, para. 3). Hickey's "doodling" is essentially a form of improvisation, a process for testing out ideas and exploring possibilities before committing to a final musical gesture. She argued, "If the value of music composition lies, at least partly, in the idea that it may promote creative musical thinking, then time needs to be given to problem-finding and exploratory activities" (Hickey, 2003, p. 34).

This improvisatory step is an important one, much like brainstorming before writing a piece of fiction, or sketching before attempting to paint. Don Freund (2011) asserts that composition is learned "by discovery" and includes exploration as one of the main steps in his composition pedagogy (p.67). The "Creative Music Strategy" espoused by Robinson, Bell, and Lenore (2011) similarly focused on the importance of improvising and experimenting as part of the creative process (para. 23-26). Their strategy consists of seven steps, beginning with a prompt for discussion, moving into brainstorming and musical exploration, and ending with reflection (Robinson et al., 2011, para. 20-31). Students are permitted to explore music freely, working both independently and in groups, while the teacher helps direct them towards meeting specific goals and answering reflective questions.

The triad of improvising, composing, and reflecting is present also in the pedagogy of David Ward-Steinman (2011), a contemporary composition professor and protégé of Nadia Boulanger. Ward-Steinman (2011) wrote that all musicians should attempt to compose, and that a thorough grounding in both compositional technique and performance skills could lead to a goal of "comprehensive musicianship" (p. 17). He continued that there are only three essential musical activities: performing, composing, and listening (Ward-Steinman, 2011, p. 17). These three activities can easily be transferred to a pedagogy of composition that includes correlating steps: improvising/exploring/performing, composing/notating/recording, and

listening/reflecting/revising. If the goal of the national standards for school music programs is similarly to produce "comprehensive" musicians, then it would be wise for teachers to adopt this type of approach as part of their composition instruction.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Data Collection

This study qualitatively examines whether or not secondary school instrumental ensemble teachers utilize and consider the creative process in their composition lessons. It consists of multiple methods for gathering data on composition instruction in southwest Virginia secondary schools, including an online survey, classroom observations, and interviews with teachers.

To begin, secondary music teachers who are members of the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors' Association (VBODA) were presented with a voluntary, anonymous survey, to be completed online. The survey included brief questions about teachers' training in composition instruction, whether or not teachers are regularly including composition instruction in their instrumental courses, how these lessons are designed and implemented, and what factors might serve as impediments to composition instruction. The survey's main purpose was to prequalify three teachers for further research as case studies.

The case studies made up the second portion of the research, and consisted of a classroom observation of a composition lesson as well as pre-observation and post-observation interviews to examine teacher goals, methods, and reflection on the composition process. The surveys, observations, and interviews work together to address the main problem of whether or not composition is incorporated in secondary school instrumental classes in southwest Virginia. Additionally, they explore the following questions:

- Do teachers face common impediments to teaching composition? If so, what are these impediments?
- Have teachers undergone any training to increase their understanding of creativity, the creative process, or pedagogical approaches to music composition?

• During composition lessons, how much time is spent on each of the following: improvisation or exploratory exercises, listening and analysis, music theory, performance skills, reflection, revision, non-composition content, and general classroom management?

• Are composition lessons aligned with the creative process as it is described by Hickey, Webster, and Burnard? Is there respect for individual processes, time for exploration, and time for reflection?

• How are the composition lessons designed? Are differing creative pathways allowed and encouraged, or do students follow a provided script or sequence?

• How do teachers go about planning their composition lessons? Are they guided by consideration of the creative process or by other factors?

• What do teachers identify as their primary goals in composition instruction?

• What suggestions can be made to improve composition instruction in secondary instrumental programs?

• What are some specific characteristics of effective composition instruction?

For the purposes of this study, student observations and work were not examined. This research focused exclusively on the actions and communications of the teachers. Teacher identities were kept anonymous and participation in the project was entirely voluntary. All participants signed forms indicating their consent before proceeding with the study. The scope of this research was limited to secondary school band teachers in southwest Virginia, with the knowledge that general music teachers, chorus and orchestra teachers, and elementary general music teachers might approach composition in an entirely different manner.

It is my hope that this research will help illuminate the problems involved in teaching composition in secondary schools, as well as highlight the strengths of teachers who are teaching

composition successfully. College music education instructors will be able to use the research to better plan their curricula, so that music teachers are better prepared to address all aspects of the NAfME National Standards for Music (2013). Teachers will be able to use the research to reflect on their own current practices and revise them as appropriate to give students a more effective experience in music composition. The study as a whole will contribute to a generally lacking body of research on music composition in secondary schools.

Related Definitions

The presentation and discussion of results from this project will use a number of musical terms that are prone to differences in interpretation, based on context or on the reader's personal experience. To avoid confusion or misinterpretation of study results, the following terms will be defined in this section: composition, improvisation, performance skills, music theory and notation, reflection, revision, and creativity.

Composition and Improvisation

Azzara (2002) briefly described improvisation as "an ability to make music spontaneously within specified musical parameters" (p. 171). He also pointed to the importance of improvisation as a means of interaction between musicians (Azzara, 2002). In perhaps the most succinct definition, Azzara (1992) simply called improvisation "a manifestation of musical thought" (as cited in Azzara, 2002, p. 172). Although improvisation may range from simple individual exploration to complex interactions within genre-specific traditions (such as jazz or soundpainting), the most important aspect of improvisation is perhaps that it occurs spontaneously. It is not planned in advance, and is therefore a pure, if transient, expression of a musicians' creative thought.

In contrast, composition is generally considered an expression of original musical thought that is planned (and often notated or recorded) prior to performance. Research on the influence of time on improvisation and composition tells us that "the improviser experiences time in an inner-directed, or 'vertical,' manner, where the present is heightened and the past and future are perceptually subordinated" (Sarah, 1996, as cited in Azzara, 2002, p. 172). Improvisation is based purely in the present, although musicians may choose to echo previous passages or hint at future ones as they perform. Composition, because it is a deliberately planned activity, situates musical ideas logically in time. In a composition, the present musical moment works in combination with past and future gestures to create a holistic, finished piece. It is important to note that notation is *not* a main component of this definition. The definition of composition in this study rests solely on the ideas that compositions are original and planned. One's method of recording or notating a composition has no impact on whether or not these two qualifications are met.

The NAfME teaching standards (2013) separate composition and improvisation into two different directives. However, many musicians would argue that the two fields are inextricably linked. The relationship between the two activities, and the influence of each upon the other in the music classroom, is beyond the scope of this study. However, it should be noted that in related discussions of the creative process in music education, improvisation is recommended as an essential exploratory step, allowing students to elaborate on many diverging ideas before choosing a deliberate course of action. This study will focus mainly on composition activities as they occur in secondary school (grades 6-12) music ensemble courses, but will also note when improvisation, also referred to as exploration, plays a significant and related role in the lessons.

Performance Skills

Within the discipline of music, composition, notation, reflection, and performance skills are deeply intertwined. However, it is important for teachers to be able to separate these skills for the purposes of assessment and task design. Composition tasks often will incorporate one or more of these aspects of music, and this study will attempt to record which aspects are the primary focus of composition activities. For the purposes of this study, performance skills are defined as a student's individual ability to play his or her instrument, including proficiency with technical skills and artistic expression.

Music Theory and Notation

This study examines composition tasks from a Western musical standpoint; that is, with the understanding that the music involved will likely follow in the traditions established during the Baroque and Classical stylistic periods. Music theory in this study refers to these established traditions, particularly in regard to music notation, or the transcription of ideas using musical symbols. Brenneis (1990), in his anthropological study of musical creativity, noted:

Only in relatively restricted locales and in relatively restricted periods has music been notated or recorded…

In Europe there was a critical transition from hand-notated and expensive manuscripts with very limited circulation to mass market, large scale, fairly inexpensive systems of making printed music available in relatively full notation that did not draw on much in the way of improvisatory ability on the part of the performer…This transformation was linked in complex ways with changes in those societies in which it occurred: an increasingly uniform system of musical representation, a fairly high degree of musical literacy, and the financial and industrial wherewithal for producing and purchasing instruments…The development of a kind of connoisseurship and aesthetic

criticism…informed such training. Such connoisseurship was previously absent, at least on this scale; I would argue that it underlies much of what we mean when nowadays we talk about musical creativity.

A critical dimension, in fact, is the relationship between the nature of notation and recording and notions of creativity. (p. 172-173)

The NAfME standards separate notation into its own directive, combining it with music reading (NAfME, 2013). Music theory also encompasses students' understanding of rhythmic and tonal relationships, becoming particularly important when students attempt to compose for multiple performers. Clearly, the depth of a student's grounding in music theory influences their compositional choices and ability to manipulate and communicate through these variables. Finding out whether a teacher chooses to design composition assignments with the reinforcement of music theory skills in mind, and whether or not teachers prioritize music theory over creativity, is a vital part of this study.

Reflection

The National Standards list "listening and analyzing music" as a separate goal as well (NAfME, 2013). Interestingly, the standards separate analysis from evaluation. In this study, however, listening, analysis, and evaluation are linked as one step in the creative process, termed "reflection." Although the creative process will be discussed more in depth shortly, for now it is important to note that one of its most important components is reflection. In this step, students examine and analyze their work, reflect upon it, and make appropriate revisions.

Revision

Revision is often included alongside reflection in my discussions. For the purposes of this research, "revision" indicates changes made to compositions following a period of reflection.

These changes might include correcting technical errors, altering compositional choices, or expanding or condensing the work. If "reflection" is the thought, "revision" is the action. In terms of the creative process and how it functions in the classroom, reflection and revision are considered two portions of the same step.

Creativity

Creativity is a complex field, with years of research across multiple disciplines. In this study, I will focus on a definition of creativity as it has been developed through research specific to music.

In what is perhaps the most basic and accessible approach to creativity, Sawyer (2012) offered an individualist definition: "*Creativity is a new mental combination that is expressed in the world*" (p. 7). This definition encompasses three main points. First, a creative thought must be something new. It is not a repetition of a previously learned pattern, but a novel thought or action. Second, creativity is a combination of existing thoughts and concepts that the individual has never before combined. Third, creative thoughts must be expressed. Thoughts that remain internal cannot be studied or understood, and thus do not meet the definition of "creative" for research purposes.

Creativity is also commonly defined as the process of moving between convergent and divergent patterns of thought. Convergent thinking centers on finding one solution to a given problem, while divergent thinking focuses on finding multiple solutions. Convergent thinking is typically considered a measure of general intelligence, while divergent thinking is considered a main aspect of creativity. In the mid-twentieth century, Guilford (1959, 1967) developed tests to measure divergent thinking by identifying four specific abilities: Fluency, Flexibility, Originality, and Elaboration (as cited in Sawyer, 2012, p 47). These tests help analyze the

number and types of ideas people have, as well as how descriptive or detailed their ideas are, and may be helpful aspects for teachers to consider when designing composition tasks and assessments.

When designing and assessing creative tasks, teachers must be careful of ecological influences on creativity. Brenneis (1990) reminds us that "to a great extent our own social aesthetics shape and constrain what scholars recognize as, for example, musicality, talent, and musical creativity. Certainly, these views reflect our positions as members of academic elites within American society" (p. 187). In music education, in particular, the manner in which teachers design composition tasks may influence students' work. In a 2002 article, Hickey cited a Burnard study comparing student responses to "prescriptive" versus "free" tasks (as cited in Hickey, 2002, p. 405). Prescriptive tasks included specific directions for composing, while free tasks gave students a maximum of creative liberty. Burnard found that students who held more advanced technical music knowledge preferred the prescriptive tasks, but the free tasks led to more varied, expressive individual responses (as cited in Hickey, 2002). Another study (Brinkman, 1999) found that high school instrumentalists showed a strong preference for "open-style" problems in composition assignments (as cited in Hickey, 2002, p. 406). Several other researchers (Amabile, 1996; Getzels, 1964; Sternberg, 1999) demonstrated that "open-ended and intrinsically motivating tasks are optimal for creativity" (cited in Hickey, 2002, p. 405). All this research suggests that if a teacher's goal is to develop creativity in music composition, the teacher should consider designing assignments that allow students a significant amount of artistic freedom. Assignments that limit this freedom may also limit creativity.

Theoretical Framework: The Creative Process

As described above, this study examines the ways in which southwest Virginia music teachers integrate composition assignments into secondary school instrumental ensemble classes, with a goal of determining whether or not composition lessons are being designed with the musical creative process in mind. To this end, the results of this study are viewed through a theoretical framework focused on theories of musical creativity.

This particular framework is essential to the interpretation of my research because it provides a lens for viewing the validity of composition lessons. Many assignments may be designed with the intention of allowing students free creative reign, but this idyllic realm of creativity and freedom is quickly hindered by assignment regulations, the limitations of prior student learning, and even classroom power structures and time. Composition assignments may quickly become exercises in music theory or demonstrations of relevant content knowledge rather than purely creative activities. Particularly when it comes time for a teacher to assess students' work, it is important to recognize exactly what skills are being evaluated. As Sawyer (2000) might ask, is the assignment problem-solving or problem-finding? A thorough understanding of the nature of the creative process as it is currently understood in music research is necessary in order to accurately interpret the findings of my study.

Webster (1990) questioned the nature of creativity as product, process, or a combination of the two. One of his contributions to the field of music education, in particular, was shifting the research vocabulary from a focus on "creativity" to "creative thinking" (Webster, 1990, New Thinking section, para. 1). This shift moved the discussion away from the idea of creativity as some divine, magical force and toward an emphasis on understanding the actual process of creative work and its role in music education (Webster, 1990). Elaborating largely on the works of Graham Wallas, an early 20th century theorist, Webster (1990) posited that creative thinking

involves movement between convergent (choosing one solution) and divergent thought (considering multiple solutions) through four stages of work: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. In more concrete terms, these stages may be demonstrated in the classroom through time spent defining assignment tasks (preparation), improvising and experimenting (incubation), developing ideas (illumination), and reflection/revision (verification). Music teachers intent on allowing the creative process to take place in their classrooms must allow students the opportunity to work fully through each stage; additionally, they must respect students' individual processes for working through these steps. Some students may proceed linearly, while others may work in a more circular or holistic manner.

In a later article, Hickey and Webster (2001) contended that "rather than focusing on training children to be creative, it might be better for music teachers to nurture children's inherent ability to think creatively in music" (para. 1). The researchers discussed common traits of creative individuals, including an engagement in risk-taking behaviors. According to Hickey and Webster (2001), children can be taught creativity by encouraging such traits and allowing time for the creative process, including the four steps previously described, to take place.

Although this research focuses mainly on evaluating whether or not the musical creative process, particularly as Hickey, Burnard, and Webster describe it, takes place during performance ensemble composition exercises, there are other aspects of the research that also impact results. The hierarchical social structure of many ensemble classrooms is certainly a central factor influencing teaching methods, for example. Student age and instrumental experience are another factor impacting research results. The Western classical system of musical notation itself can serve as both an aid and a hindrance to student composition, depending upon the musical experience and theoretical understanding of the composer. Each of

these factors would be worthy of their own study, and it might eventually become necessary to reevaluate my research through one of these differing lenses, as well.

Relevance

Although the National Association for Music Education (2013) and the Virginia Standards of Learning for instrumental music (2013) both call for all music teachers to address composition in their classes, the standard remains a difficult one to implement. Music teachers are not trained to teach composition in the same manner they are trained to teach performance skills, and thus their composition lessons are often more focused on assessing musical concepts and improving technical prowess than on providing students a true creative experience.

Additionally, the historically performance-based culture of instrumental ensembles prevents many teachers from venturing into the realm of creativity in their classrooms. Ensembles such as band and orchestra are traditionally almost entirely teacher-driven, with little time for questioning or critical reflection. In many cases, composition instruction may require the teacher to take on a secondary or guiding role in the classroom, empowering students to make their own artistic decisions.

This study examines how secondary instrumental music teachers are currently teaching composition in their classrooms, including their training, methods, goals, and lesson designs. It also explores whether or not their practices work within the context of the musical creative process as defined by Burnard, Webster, and Hickey. According to these researchers, teachers who wish to teach composition in a manner that promotes maximum creative engagement must understand and make use of three main tenets of the creative process as it applies to musical composition: the existence of varying individual pathways of creative thought, the need for exploration and experimentation, and the importance of reflection and revision. Effective

composition assignments, whether in the large ensemble classroom or elsewhere, should be designed with all three of these tenets in mind.

Chapter 4 - Results

Survey Results

Overview of Study Results

The purpose of this study was to provide a snapshot of current practices in composition pedagogy within performance ensemble classrooms, focusing particularly on whether or not teachers consider the components of the creative process as elements in their instructional design. The results are presented as follows, with each portion of the study presented and discussed within its own chapter:

1. Survey responses

2. Classroom observations of composition lessons, including general information as well as time spent on exploration, listening and analysis, music theory, performance skills, reflection, revision, non-composition content, and general classroom management.

3. Interviews with participating teachers, completed in conjunction with the classroom observations and used as supporting material for discussion. The interviews have been transcribed and coded for frequently occurring major themes, including: instructional design, composition instruction and the creative process, social considerations for teaching composition, and benefits and impediments of composition instruction. Twenty sub-themes of these four major areas will also be identified and discussed.

Introduction to Survey Results

A link to the online survey, designed using Qualtrics software, was sent to 141 band teachers in southwest Virginia, using the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors Association District VI email list and District VII directory. Periodic reminder emails were also sent to teachers who had not yet completed the survey. These districts cover 29 counties and at least

seven cities, ranging from the western-most corner of Virginia northward to Alleghany County, and southward to the North Carolina border. Forty-three teachers completed the online survey, for a return rate of 30%. Out of the 43 surveys returned, two were deemed unusable because of the respondents' failure to agree to the terms of consent. These responses were subsequently excluded from the study. The remaining 41 responses represented a return rate of 29%.

The survey contained items designed to gather demographic information and items to determine attitudes towards issues in composition instruction as well as respondents' current practices in composition instruction. Respondents completed the survey over a period of about one month in Fall 2013, at which point they were analyzed for significant numerical data and notable correlations. Four teachers were then contacted to participate in a possible case study, based on a willingness to volunteer and survey responses indicating a strong interest and prior experience in teaching composition. Of these four teachers, three scheduled a classroom observation and interview session with the researcher. The remaining teacher was interested in participating in the study, but did not return contact within the requested time frame.

The three participating teachers represented different locations within the designated demographic area, as well as varying degrees of teaching experience, education, and band program sizes. All three teachers taught in a high school setting (151-200 students enrolled in one program, 51-100 in another, and 1-50 in the last), and two of the three taught middle school students as well (150-200 students enrolled in one program, 51-100 in the other). Two teachers described their school's setting as "city," and one described his as "rural." One teacher had only a bachelor's degree, and two had completed master's degrees. Their teaching experience included one teacher with 1-5 years' experience, another with 6-10 years' experience, and another with over 20 years' experience.

Demographic Information

The first portion of the survey gathered demographic information from each respondent, including grades taught, school setting, personal training in composition, years of teaching experience, and highest degree attained.

Thirty-eight participants responded to the question of grade levels taught (Table 1), with significant overlap for teachers working with more than one grade level set. Of the 38 responses, 27 teachers (71%) reported teaching grades 6-8 (middle school), and 26 (68%) of teachers reported teaching grades 9-12 (high school). Three teachers said they worked with elementary students in kindergarten through fifth grade, and four teachers selected "other," describing their positions as follows: 6, 6-12, college, and 5-12.

Table 1: Grade levels taught by survey respondents
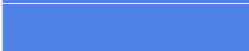
Grade levels taught		Number of responses	Percentage of responses
K-5		3	8%
6-8		27	71%
9-12		26	68%
other		4	11%

Table 2 illustrates the responses to the question of school setting. Thirty-eight respondents answered this question indicating whether their school(s) would be described as city, rural, or suburban. Of the 38 responses, 18% described their school setting as city and an equal number described their setting as suburban. The majority of responses (63%) indicated that they taught in rural schools, a finding consistent with the largely rural setting of southwest Virginia.

Table 2: School setting as described by survey respondents

School setting		Number of responses	Percentage of responses
City		7	18%
Rural		24	63%
Suburban		7	18%

Respondents were also asked to indicate their personal training in composition by selecting either required courses in college (58%), elective courses in college (32%), private study (21%), some professional development (8%), or no formal training (29%). The results of this question are shown in Table 3. It is worth noting that while a majority of respondents reported taking required composition courses in college, a brief look at the course schedules for music education majors in large Virginia universities does not indicate that composition is a requirement. This survey did not examine respondents' college experiences in more detail, but further studies might want to consider whether or not music education majors are taking courses devoted to composition or are studying composition within the confines of a related college course, such as orchestration, arranging, counterpoint, or music theory.

Table 3: Composition training of band teachers

Training		Number of responses	Percentage of responses
Required courses in college.		22	58%
Elective courses in college.		12	32%
No formal training.		11	29%
Private study.		8	21%
Some professional development.		3	8%

Respondents were also asked to report their years of teaching experience, as illustrated in Table 4. These results were evenly distributed. Of the 38 respondents, 11 (29%) were new teachers,

having taught only 1-5 years at the time of the survey. Eight respondents (21%) had taught 6-10 years. Nine of the respondents (24%) reported having taught 11-20 years, and ten (26%) reported over 20 years of teaching experience.

Table 4: Years of teaching experience

Teaching experience		Number of responses	Percentage of responses
1-5 years		11	29%
6-10 years		8	21%
11-20 years		9	24%
over 20 years		10	26%

Finally, the survey asked respondents to identify their highest level of degree attained. Because the target population was certified public school teachers, all respondents had at least a Bachelor's degree. Thirty-eight respondents answered the question, and of these, thirteen (39%) also held a Master's degree, as shown in Table 5. None of the respondents had achieved a doctoral degree, although later interviews indicated that at least one respondent had completed coursework towards a doctorate in education.

Table 5: Highest degree attained by teacher

Degree		Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Bachelors		25	66%
Masters		13	34%
Doctorate		0	0%

Composition Instruction

The survey also contained questions aimed at providing a general idea of composition instruction within ensemble environments. This portion of the survey asked respondents to identify the number of students in their band programs, other school music courses offered, the

frequency of composition instruction in band, types of composition activities used, performance

opportunities for student compositions, and impediments to teaching composition in band.

Figure 1 presents the approximate number of students enrolled in the respondents'

band programs, both at the middle school and high school levels. Band programs of all sizes

were represented in this study, with the majority of programs in the 51-100 student range. At the

middle school level, programs ranged from very small (1-50 students, 11% of responses) to very

large (over 200 students, 11% of responses), with most respondents reporting 51-100 students

enrolled (37%). At the high school level, programs were notably smaller overall, with 76% of

respondents reporting their enrollment at 100 students or fewer. Future research might wish to

correlate band enrollment numbers with overall school population in order to better determine

the popularity of the course.
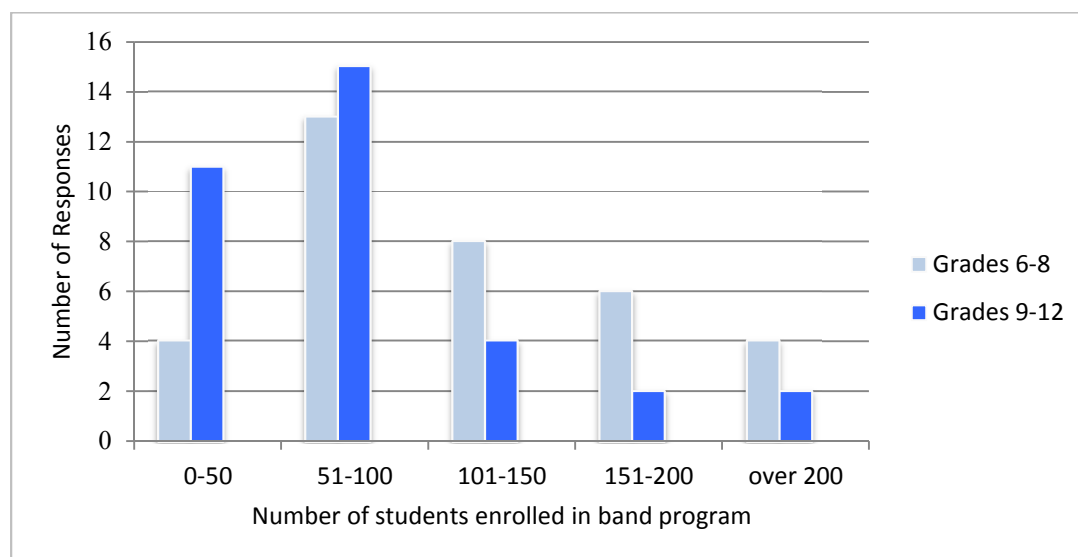
Figure 1: Student enrollment in band programs

This section of the survey also asked teachers to name other music courses offered at

their school, apart from band. The intent of this question was to examine whether or not

composition might be occurring in another class, as well as whether or not students had an

opportunity to enroll in non-performance-based music classes. Thirty-four participants

responded to this question. By far, the most commonly offered course apart from band was

chorus, with 27 respondents reporting its availability to students. Other commonly offered

courses were music theory (10), middle school general music (9), and music appreciation (9).

Eight respondents selected the "other" option and listed their alternative courses as follows: jazz

band, percussion ensemble, marching band, instrumental ensemble, string band, school of rock,

music exploratory, jazz ensemble, and band ensemble. Table 6 presents the results of this survey

item, including courses with five or fewer responses. Interestingly, none of the respondents'

schools offered music composition as a separate course. It may be worth investigating to see if

most composition instruction is linked to ensemble courses, to music theory courses, or to

general music or music appreciation courses, and how pedagogical methods for composition

differ depending up on the context of the course.

Table 6: Other school music courses offered (non-band)

Courses offered		Responses
Chorus		27
Music theory		10
General music, middle school level		9
Music appreciation		9
Other		8
Orchestra		5
Guitar		4
Piano		3
Digital music		2
General music, high school level		1
Music composition		0
Music history		0

The next questions were aimed at providing an overall view of composition activities

within band classrooms, focusing on lesson frequency, impediments to instruction, commonly

utilized instructional methods, and student performance opportunities. For the purposes of this survey, composition was defined as "any activity in which students create original music, planned out prior to its performance," without a notation requirement. Thirty-eight teachers responded to a survey item examining the frequency of composition instruction (Table 7), indicating that they include composition exercises in their band classes: less than once a month (50%), once a month (16%), 2-3 times per month (11%), weekly (3%), and 2-3 times per week (3%). None of the respondents claim to include composition on a daily basis, and 18% admit to never including it in their lessons.

Table 7: Frequency of composition instruction within band classes

Frequency of composition activities		Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Never		7	18%
Less than Once a Month		19	50%
Once a Month		6	16%
2-3 Times a Month		4	11%
Once a Week		1	3%
2-3 Times a Week		1	3%
Daily		0	0%

Thirty-five teachers responded to the question, "If you do typically teach composition in band, how do you fit it into your curriculum?" Respondents were given a list of commonly used activities from which to select their answer(s), as well as a space to write in activities not provided as answer choices. Written-in activities included Q&A games or "Simon Says," composition opportunities in *Master Theory Method* for beginners and advanced books for advanced students, and individual instruction described as follows: "If a student wishes to work on composition, I normally meet with them after school to discuss what they want to do and to assign short assignments each week (like an applied setting)."

Table 8 presents the results of this survey item. Notably, the largest number of respondents (17) indicated that they do not teach composition regularly in band. However, when results were sorted with this answer as a prioritized filter, it was clear that some of these respondents had previously claimed to teach composition more often (one as much as once a week). Only five of these respondents maintained that they "never" teach composition in band. Although this particular item appears to be at least somewhat inaccurate in respect to the number of respondents teaching composition, it is nonetheless valuable in illuminating which types of activities teachers commonly choose as their instructional strategies. Results were varied, with every option represented at least once in the final results.

Table 8: Types of composition activities used in band classes

Activities		Responses
I do not regularly teach composition in band.		17
Composition exercises included in the method book.		8
Short warm-up or exit activities.		6
Individual compositions.		6
Composition using traditional (standard) notation.		5
Composition using technology or computer notation.		5
Small group composition.		4
Assign composition for homework.		4
Other		3
Dedicated composition lessons.		3
Composition without a notation requirement.		2
Provide time for students to work independently on compositions while others rehearse.		2
Full-class composition.		2
Composition using non-standard notation.		1

As a follow-up to question about the inclusion of composition instruction, respondents were also asked whether or not their students were given the opportunity to perform their original works. All but one of the thirty-two respondents found opportunities for their students

to perform their works, either in a class or another setting (Table 9). Two respondents choosing the "other" option wrote that they have students perform at a special solo/ensemble concert and include "performance/exhibition/discussion" in a small setting after class. Fifteen respondents indicated that they do not regularly teach composition, rendering the performance question inapplicable to them.

Table 9: Opportunities for students to perform their compositions

Performance opportunities		Responses
Students perform their works in class.		13
Students perform their works in a concert setting.		2
Students do not perform their works.		1
I do not regularly teach composition in band.		15
Other		4

Again, there was some discrepancy in this item regarding the number of respondents selecting the "I do not regularly teach composition in band option." Some of these respondents did previously answer questions as if they indeed included composition in their band courses. Without personally contacting these respondents, it is difficult to ascertain what they might have meant in selecting these conflicting answers. For this reason, it is important to utilize these survey results as starting points for qualitative discussion rather than statistical facts.

Finally, respondents were asked why -- if they are not teaching composition regularly -- they are not including composition in their curricula more often. This item read as follows: "If you do not typically teach composition in your band classes, or do not teach it as often as you'd like, what is the reason?" The item was addressed by 38 of the 41 respondents, with only two declining to select an impediment and indicating that they do typically teach composition. The data for this item (Table 10) suggests that 36 teachers (88% of survey participants) are not teaching composition, or are unsatisfied with the frequency of their composition instruction. A

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clear majority of these respondents (79%) indicated that "lack of time" is a reason for lack of instruction. Other commonly chosen impediments included lack of equipment and resources (45%), too many students in the class (42%), and composition not being a priority in ensemble classes (32%). Respondents who selected "other" wrote that behavior problems were prohibitive and that being on a rotating block schedule prioritized time spent on performance skills.

Table 10: Common impediments to composition instruction

Impediments		Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Lack of time.		30	79%
Lack of equipment or resources.		17	45%
Too many students in the class.		16	42%
Composition is not a priority in my ensemble classes.		12	32%
Lack of training.		9	24%
Composition is covered in another course.		4	11%
I do typically teach composition in my band classes.		2	5%
Other: click to write.		2	5%

Teacher Attitudes

  The third section of the survey featured a series of attitudinal questions to gauge teachers' attitudes about composition pedagogy. The questions spanned a variety of pedagogical issues, including (a) the importance of teaching composition, (b) fitting composition instruction within the performance ensemble classroom, (c) impediments to teaching composition in band, (d) understanding aspects of the creative process, and (e) personal experience with composition. Respondents were presented with statements related to the aforementioned topics and asked to select their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The results of this section of the survey are presented in Table 11.

While each attitudinal statement is interesting in its own right, there are several I would like to call attention to for the purposes of this research. While it seems that most respondents (60%, or 23) do believe that composition instruction is "essential," only 47% (18)

Table 11: Attitudinal statements related to teaching composition in band classes

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I believe the study of composition is essential to the developing musician.	2	21	14	1	0
I believe composition belongs in instrumental ensemble courses.	0	18	15	5	0
Performance requirements often interfere with my ability to teach composition in ensemble classes.	7	22	5	3	1
I feel I have a strong understanding of the musical creative process as it applies to composition in young people.	4	24	2	7	1
I enjoy composing on my own.	7	14	7	8	2
I often combine improvisation and composition in the same activity, or in related activities with my students.	3	11	11	11	1
I separate improvisation and composition as two different activities with my students.	0	11	16	9	1
I address the Virginia SOL requirements for composition in my yearly curriculum.	2	13	13	8	2
I believe students compose most effectively when they are presented with limited choices, or with a "script" or sequence to follow.	4	18	12	3	0
I believe students compose most effectively when they are given maximum freedom to create what they wish.	0	6	15	14	2
I can recall participating in composition activities as a middle or high school band student.	1	6	2	18	11

believe that composition instruction belongs in band classes. An alarming 76% (29) of respondents reported that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "I can recall

participating in composition activities as a middle or high school band student." Still, 21 respondents (a 55% majority) indicate that they do, indeed, enjoy composing. There is clearly a disconnect between the value that teachers personally place on musical composition and the frequency with which it is addressed in the classroom.

Also at odds are teachers' perceived understanding of the creative process and their reported methods of composition instruction. Webster's examination of creativity (1990) tells us that exploration is critical in providing students with a pathway to the "incubation" stage of creative thinking. That is, students need to be able to experiment with various music ideas before converging on a final decision. In the field of music, exploration often takes the form of listening exercises or improvisation, and thus, improvisation should theoretically be included as an important step in a teacher's composition pedagogy. A vast majority of respondents (74%) indicated that they felt they had "a strong understanding of the musical creative process as it applies to composition in young people." However, respondents were split fairly evenly on whether or not they combine improvisation and composition or separate them into two different disciplines. Figure 2 is a cross tabulation of respondents' reported understanding of the creative
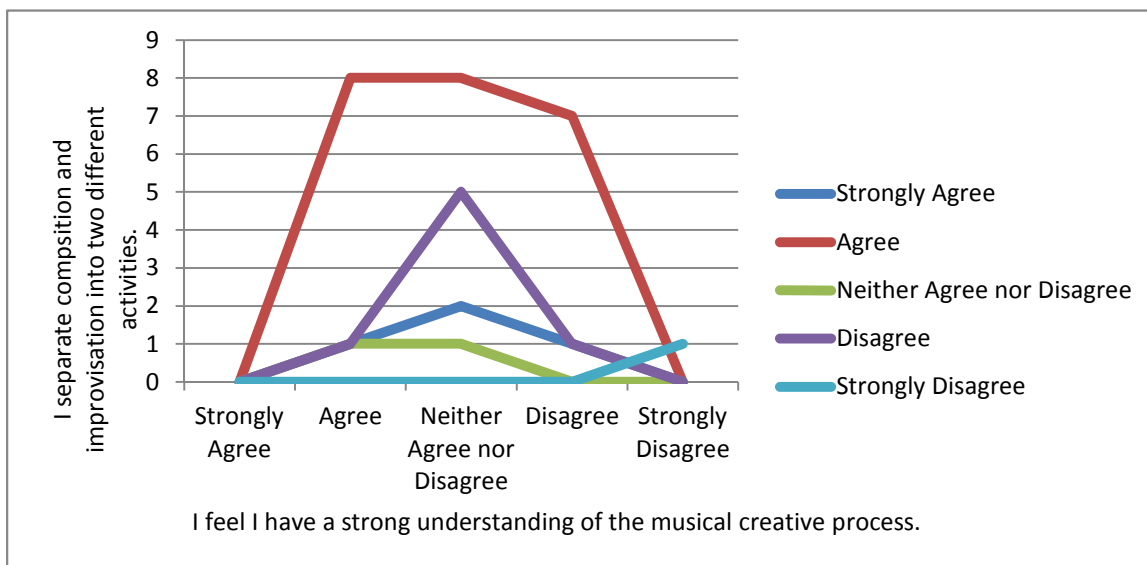
Figure 2: Composition-improvisation separation vs. perceived understanding of the creative process

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process and their treatment of improvisation and composition. Remarkably, it shows a near symmetry between those respondents who separate improvisation and composition and those who keep them more intertwined. Based on this data, we gather that teachers are at somewhat of a disagreement about what pedagogical methods work best within the field of creativity. Such a conflict could be attributed to many things: a lack of consistent training in composition and improvisation, a difference in compositional goals during composition and improvisation lessons, or confusion as to specifics of the creative process.

Also interesting were responses to questions about composing with restrictions as opposed to composing with more freedom. Twenty-two of the 38 respondents (a 60% majority) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I believe students compose most effectively when they are presented with limited choices, or with a 'script' or sequence to follow" (Figure 3). Parallel to this, respondents also largely disagreed with the statement: "I believe students compose most effectively when they are given maximum freedom to create what they wish." The survey results suggest a clear preference for composition instruction that is more guided and less free, despite research suggesting that more student freedom might be beneficial. Webster's
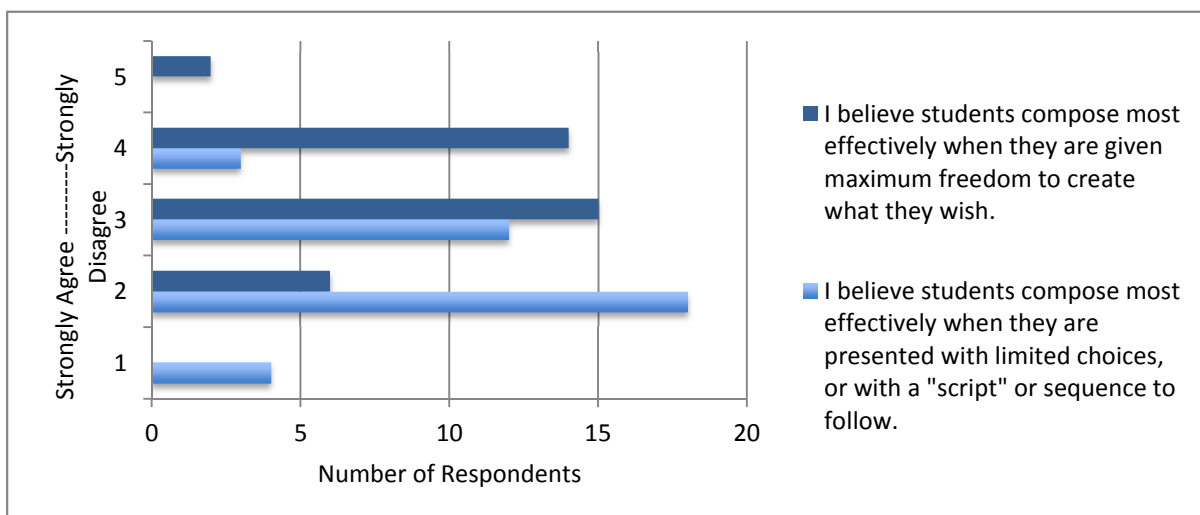
Figure 3: Perceived effectiveness of freedom vs. restrictions in composition instruction

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research (1990) holds that students need freedom to move between convergent and divergent modes of thought as they work, and Pamela Burnard and Betty Anne Younker (2002), found three differing pathways for creative thinking in students. Hickey (2003) found that more open-ended tasks are beneficial for beginning composers. If more freedom, not less, seems to be what students need in order to be creative, why are teachers insistent on presenting their classes with restraints?

Typical Lessons

The final composition pedagogy question asked teachers to briefly describe a composition lesson as it might regularly occur in their band classroom. Of the 36 teachers who responded to this question, 81% (29 responses) stated that they do not regularly teach composition in band. The remaining 7 responses (19%) described their lessons as follows:

• "Write a two measure rhythmic composition using only quarter notes, eighth notes, quarter rests, or eighth rests. Once finished, write the counts underneath your rhythm. Prepare your rhythm for an in-class performance."

• "Only really do it with the middle school because their performance requirements are less. We take time to do the activity in the method book and then the next day if anyone performs their composition for the class they receive extra credit for that week's participation grade."

• "The students will compose a song and I will have them perform it for me for a grade in class."

• "Varies. Simple solos to chamber works. Currently working with 7th & 8th grade students in helping them compose an entire band work."

• "We do a theme and variation lesson where the students write a variation."

• "In MUSIC THEORY (not in band class, sorry!), once students have learned chords, scale degree names, and the structure of (what I call) an "inside the box" melody (8 bar parallel period), then I have the students improvise on our keyboards and begin to notate when they hear something they like. They have restrictions on length, mode, start/end chord tones. Eventually, we gradually go outside the box and do exercises in melodic sequence or melodies with repeated notes, predominantly ascending or descending etc. (we have a rubric for this). During the 4th nine weeks, we will either arrange those previous melodies or new melodies (with harmony) for various ensembles (brass, woodwind, strings, mallets)."

• "Method book assignments, jazz and band method books."

Case Study Identification

The survey concluded by asking teachers whether or not they would be willing to participate in a voluntary case study examining composition instruction in their classroom. Respondents were also asked to identify any colleagues who might be interested in the project. Names, school systems, and contact information were collected for the purposes of contacting interested parties, but were otherwise kept confidential.

Classroom Observations

Introduction

Following the completion of the survey, four respondents were identified as possible candidates for further case study. Of these four teachers, three participated in a one-lesson classroom observation, a brief pre-observation interview, and an extended post-observation interview. The fourth candidate, although willing to participate, did not respond to initial contact attempts until after this portion of the research had been completed, and thus was not used in the

study. The three chosen teachers represented varying locations, school populations, program sizes, educational backgrounds, and years of teaching experience, as described previously.

All participating teachers signed consent forms acknowledging any risk and indicating their willingness to participate in the research, and were permitted to choose the date and class period of their observation. Observations were approved by their individual school systems and principals prior to taking place. Classes were recorded using computer software, with recordings saved as a reference. The bulk of the data presented here was extracted from field notes made during the observation period. For the purposes of this study, teacher identities and schools have been kept confidential, and participants will be referred to as teachers A, B, and C. Any information that could identify individual students has been removed from this report. Quotations from teachers have been denaturalized and adjusted for ease of reading, where necessary.

Teacher A

I arrived at Teacher A's school to observe a group of seventh grade band students. The observation date happened to take place after a string of cancellations and delays due to winter weather, and Teacher A indicated in his pre-observation interview that the main goal throughout the lesson was to build consistency in their playing after so much time away. The composition lesson was to take place as a part of the warm-up, beginning with a student improvisation and leading to the collaborative building of a melody. The class would then proceed to the rehearsal of concert selections.

The students entered the band room cheerfully, with some stopping to talk to Teacher A before they unpacked their instruments. Teacher A calmly managed small disruptions ("Remind you, no playing") as students prepared for class. The teacher spoke to a few students about

books they were currently enjoying. A student spent several minutes on the teacher's podium, then was gently nudged to encourage her to take her seat. Students continued quietly unpacking, then listened to morning announcements on the school-wide intercom system. The classroom as a whole appeared to be a positive environment with a healthy rapport between Teacher A and the students.

After the announcements, Teacher A stepped onto the podium to begin class. The first minute and a half was spent on breathing exercises and a brief foray into classroom management in order to quell some student chatter. The composition lesson then commenced, making up the first playing exercise of the day. Teacher A selected a student and asked for a four-beat rhythm, saying, "____, can you give me a rhythm?" The student experienced some difficulty with the rhythmic parameters, so Teacher A reminded him, "You need two more beats." After another attempt, the teacher tried helping the student again, saying, "Do one more beat...remember, four counts." The student repeated his rhythm, but again, only played three counts. Teacher A instructed him to add one more beat, but then counted the rhythm aloud, "So, 1, 2 and 3 and 4" and asked the class to count it as well. The class repeated the counting, then performed the rhythm on a concert B-flat and on the first five notes of the concert B-flat major scale.

Following the introduction to the rhythm using the concert B-flat scale, Teacher A selected a student to choose a new second note. This student chose concert E-flat, and the teacher solicited the class for the next note, saying, "Count 3? Count 3?" The students did not answer. Teacher A then selected a concert F as the designated pitch for count 3 and directed the class to play a concert B-flat for the final count in the rhythm. The teacher then reviewed the sequence of notes and counts, including scale degrees, saying, for example, "Count 3 is going to

be a concert F, fifth note of the scale." The class then rehearsed each note separately, without the rhythm, to ensure their transpositions of each pitch were correct.

Finally, Teacher A sang the rhythm and note sequence and the class echoed on their instruments. After this initial attempt, Teacher A told the class, "I sing it better" and counted off again for a second attempt. Immediately following this second attempt, Teacher A divided the class into two groups: saxophones, clarinets, and low brass playing the rhythm on a concert B-flat, and trumpets, flutes, and percussion playing "the melody we created" as rehearsed. The class then performed the rhythm as instructed. Teacher A replied, "Cool, cool." The class then went on to rehearse scale exercises and concert music. Although I continued to take field notes for the duration of the class, the composition lesson was clearly finished at this point in the lesson and was not referred to again.

Teacher A's class period was recorded from the beginning announcements until the end of the rehearsal. The class was shortened somewhat this particular day due to a late bus delaying announcements, but Teacher A indicated that the announcements were still earlier than they sometimes are, and that this class period does tend to be particularly short. The composition lesson made up approximately 15% of the total class period.

Throughout the lesson, Teacher A retained a very calm, business-like demeanor. Classroom disruptions were small, consisting mostly of student chatter and dealing with a missing piece of music. Teacher A's feedback tended to be very concise overall. The teacher concluded the composition lesson by saying, "Cool, cool," and described the performance of the last piece of the day to the students as simply, "Nice." Teacher A, although he did not smile or joke much, did appear to have a positive rapport with the students, who seemed to very much enjoy playing their instruments in the class. Teacher A was most passionate when describing the

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original "1812 Overture" (they were rehearsing a transcription) and telling students about the lengthy introduction to the piece. The class had a very controlled, composed air and was clearly organized toward the goal of performing the selections they had rehearsed, as well as building breath support and scale knowledge. Very little time was spent on classroom management or discipline issues, and the students were engaged in musical instruction throughout the class period.

Teacher B

Teacher B's observation took place during a class made up mostly of 9th and 10th grade students. In our pre-observation interview, Teacher B described the lesson to follow and identified sixteenth note practice as the main objective, stating that the lesson goals were to make sure students understood and could play sixteenth notes correctly. The lesson was designed to allow students to work independently, composing rhythms on a teacher-designed worksheet. They would then form small groups to play their compositions and experiment with timbre combinations.

At the start of the lesson, Teacher B prepared a countdown timer, set at two and a half minutes. The teacher then proceeded to set up a sixteenth note rhythm exercise on a "Counting Music" website. As the timer expired, students took their seats with instruments and materials ready, then played through warm-up exercises. Teacher B worked with the class on tone and particularly on resonance, which was clearly a key objective for the day. The teacher worked with an individual student on tone quality, asking others to assess what they heard, and then asked all the students to play with resonance, clarifying that resonance means a sounds that is "clear and open." The class practiced a singing exercise, repeating once to achieve a more resonant singing sound. The teacher entertained the class with a quick joke, then returned to

work on resonance and articulation with some practice on mouthpieces alone. All feedback was quick and focused, often done during the count-offs between exercises, with very little time for student socializing or disruption between activities. The class as a whole was extremely fast-paced and appeared to be quite a bit of fun; the students reflected the energy of their teacher.

Next, Teacher B instructed the class to look at the SMART Board, where a four-measure sequence of sixteenth note patterns was projected. The class counted each measure "with resonance" and Teacher B reminded them, "Everything you do, get better at." To close this activity, the teacher had his computer count the rhythms aloud in a funny robotic voice, dancing a bit while the students listened, amused. The sixteenth note patterns remained projected for use as a reference in the next activity.

Teacher B then announced, "Let me see your pencil. Hold it up." After a quick check for supplies, the teacher introduced me as the researcher, telling the students, "I need you to focus on [this next activity] really hard... I need you to really pay attention to this." Teacher B then began explaining the day's composition lesson. The students were to write a two-measure rhythm in time signatures of 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 on the provided half-sheet of manuscript paper. Two additional parameters were given: students could only use one note, and every measure had to contain at least one sixteenth note pattern. Teacher B asked the students to work silently, telling them, "What I'm going to ask you to do, in absolute silence, using your brain power, is to write two-measure compositions." The teacher told the students to select one note, "whatever your favorite note is," and then clarified how many total beats would be in each composition.

The students initially seemed a bit unsure of this activity, asking whether or not they would have to play their compositions and, upon learning that they would indeed be performing their work, reacting somewhat nervously. Students began asking questions about the parameters,

including whether or not they could use chords, and whether they'd have to perform alone in front of everyone. The teacher reassured the class, saying, "If you need help, put your hand up, I'll come help you." Students continued to chatter and some appeared worried. Before distributing the worksheets, Teacher B stopped and told the students:

> Hey, look at me real quick. Look at me, look at me, look at me. For some of us, this will be super easy, for some of us this will be super hard, for some of us in the middle it'll be like -- it'll take a little bit... You're better at this than you think you are. You just have to think about it. You're better at this than you think you are. You just have to focus.

After some review of the directions and reminders to put their names on their papers, Teacher B told the class, "One thing I don't want you to do right now is talk. You'll be able to talk about these in just a second, but I want you to put as much brain power into this as you possibly can. If you need help, if you're stuck, throw up your hand and I'll come help you."

The class then began working quietly, with each student composing independently on their worksheet. As students worked, Teacher B circulated around the room, checking in with students and helping them with their rhythms as needed. The teacher presented options for rhythms, reminded students about the number of beams on sixteenth notes and eighth notes, and told students to write counts in under the notes. The room was very quiet overall, with no one playing their instrument and everyone working as directed.

Teacher B's feedback to individuals about their work was neutral or positive in nature and included a lot of questions and reinforcement of their compositional decisions. Examples of Teacher B's comments to students are as follows: "That's great... you need one more beat, so look up there [at the reference rhythms on the SMART Board] and see what you can fill in"; "How would you count that?" [then repeating counts]; "Are you sure? That's a quarter note,

right?"; "Try something a little bit different"; "Be creative, see what you can do"; "Oh, we got some rests in there, I like that, getting crazy with the rests"; "Keep it on the same note. That will make it easier when we play these together"; "What can you add?" The atmosphere in the room remained very positive and energetic throughout this step. All students were engaged in the task; when chatter began happening, Teacher B mostly let it go, only asking one student to put away her cell phone (and this direction, although done swiftly and authoritatively, was treated with humor).

After about twelve minutes had passed, Teacher B began moving towards the next step in the assignment, telling students "I hate to put a time limit on your creative process," at which point a few students protested that they'd like more time to work. Teacher B explained the next step, which was to find a partner in another section. With this partner, students would choose a time signature and practice each rhythm separately, then combine the two rhythms and play them simultaneously. Teacher B pointed the students toward timbre exploration, telling them, "Think, what would sound cool with your instrument." Students then assembled themselves into pairs and retreated to separate rooms and spaces to rehearse together. Teacher B reminded them, in a sing-song, non-threatening manner, that "This will be a grade," then continued to circulate amongst the students, checking in with each group to assist in rhythm counting and performance issues.

This section of the lesson was very performance-focused, as students—with Teacher B's assistance—worked on skills such as counting off and beginning together, ending their pieces together, and listening for each other's parts. Although student work is not the focus of this research, I did observe several interesting occurrences during this portion of this lesson. One student chose to alter her pattern after hearing it combined with her partner's, indicating a degree

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of reflection and revision was taking place even though it was not specifically encouraged by the teacher. Other students chose to venture outside the parameters of the assignment and use more than one pitch. One pair experimented with transposition, altering the pitch of one student's composition so that it would match the other's. Another student helped her partner correct his mistakes in counting. Once students had rehearsed their pieces to their satisfaction, they began talking, often off-topic, as they waited for the other groups to finish their work and return to the band room.

Teacher B returned to the front of the band room and instructed students, "Have a seat next to your other performer." The teacher then asked for volunteers to begin their recital of "mini performances." Each group performed, with the teacher offering to count off so that they could begin together, and sitting nearby to comment on each pair as they played. Teacher B's feedback during the performances served to highlight compositional choices ("Cool, a little syncopation" and "Interesting, different pitches"), describe how two parts work together ("Your quarter notes cover her sixteenths, right?"), correct performance errors ("Hold your quarter notes out" and "you're rushing when you have 1-ee-and-ah"), and offer general opinions on the work, always positive or neutral in nature ("Cool," "Interesting," "I love the sound of...").

Towards the end of the performance, a few students began talking in the back of the room. Teacher B seemed annoyed by this disruption, and asked them to stop. When they reconvened their conversation, the teacher appeared frustrated, telling them, "Stop talking. That's the rudest thing you can do." This moment is interesting from a research perspective because it was the only instance I observed of Teacher B halting instruction to address a discipline or management issue. All other disruptions were handled quickly, without stopping instruction altogether. This moment was also the only time Teacher B's classroom atmosphere

appeared even minutely negative. After this correction, the students did indeed stop talking and returned their attention to the performances.

Once the performances were complete, Teacher B collected the compositions. Students rehearsed concert repertoire while we began a post-observation interview. As we talked, teacher B pointed out that the follow-up to the lesson was a sixteenth note passage in the rehearsal music. The composition lesson, excluding the related sixteenth note warm-up activity, lasted approximately 49% of the class period.

Teacher C

Teacher C invited me to observe an 8th grade band class, which was currently embroiled in an extended composition project with a goal of collaboratively creating and performing a full band piece. The observed lesson was one step in the process of building that composition. The students had previously written and selected major melodic motifs, and were now focusing on expanding the first motif into a longer phrase and deciding between a programmatic or "pure" format for their work.

Teacher C was clearly excited about teaching composition and had much to say about the topic in both our pre-observation and post-observation interviews. This teacher repeatedly emphasized a broad scope of composition instruction, providing examples of both middle and high school composition projects. Unlike Teachers A and B, Teacher C favored fewer restrictions in composition instruction and allowed the students quite a bit of freedom in their work. The compositions themselves were done at home, in fact, necessitating that students worked exclusively in an independent environment without input from the teacher. The work was also done voluntarily. Students came to class already prepared with their compositions,

which were handwritten on manuscript paper, and ready to begin the process of selecting the next material for their piece.

Particularly notable in this class was a lack of management or discipline issues. Students entered the room quietly, got out their instruments and supplies, and began warming up in their seats. As soon as Teacher C walked to the front of the room to begin class, students stopped playing and were ready to listen. Nothing was said in order to begin class and ensure their engagement; they were simply ready to begin. This close engagement in instruction continued throughout the class period. The only management cue that took place in this lesson occurred at the very end of the class period, during the rehearsal of a concert selection, and was merely the instruction, "Look up here" when a few students seemed distracted.

Teacher C began the lesson by introducing me as the researcher, then going through a brief review of what had happened the day before, reminding students that they had each received a printed copy of the chosen motif and were supposed to take it home and write more. The goal of the day was stated (moving from a 4-measure motif to a longer phrase) and written on the board.

Teacher C referred to the printed sheet and asked students, "Did this help you?" and, "Who did extra and has stuff?" Students handed in their work and Teacher C began reviewing the motif that had been previously selected, explaining that the final note had been changed ("made one little edit") in order to keep the key centered in concert B-flat, but ensuring students, "I might guide you a little, but I'm going to keep it really loose and let you make it your own." The teacher's demeanor was energetic but not silly or funny. Teacher C was reassuring and positive throughout the lesson, reminding students that they were doing good work and

demonstrating a personal interest in the project as well, for example: "I am really excited about this and you're just doing a great job." The students, in response, seemed engaged and curious.

At this point in the lesson, the bulk of the composition instruction began. Before playing the new phrases, Teacher C told the students, "I bet I'm going to like a lot of this and it's just going to be like eating at a buffet, going, what do we pick out?" Teacher C then played each student's work on the piano, beginning with the previously written motif and continuing into the newly composed phrases. The phrases were announced by number rather than by student names, and Teacher C commented on each after playing it. Comments were either positive or neutral in nature, with the teacher choosing words such as "interesting" and "hmm" and encouraging students by saying, "I'm liking..." or "Good job." At one point, Teacher C validated the challenge of listening to so many choices by telling students, "It's really hard because we're really saturating the mind with a lot, right?" After playing each motif, Teacher C questioned students about what they'd heard, pointing out similarities and differences in phrases. For example, the teacher asked the class, "You know what I've noticed? We've had two people now, not knowing each other, but did you hear how they both did -- they both ended very similar with a big jump in the octaves? Huh."

After playing four phrases, Teacher C asked the class to vote on their favorites, but reminded them, "It's not about who. Everyone's going to have thoughts in this," emphasizing the collaborative nature of the project. Students voted on the first set of phrases by show of hands, with the teacher recording vote counts on the board. After the first vote, Teacher C told students:

I think this is a very good way for us to draw our ears to what we're liking. And that's what it's all about because, guess what, if you like the melody as a group of folks your

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age and then we send it in and we get it published, then guess who's going to like it when they play it? Other kids your age. You have shared your creativity with them.

Teacher C then continued to play the remaining compositions in small groups of two or three at a time, stopping to count votes after each group of phrases was performed. Students were allowed to vote more than once. After playing all the phrases, teacher C summarized by saying, "We can see that our ears like certain things more than others. What drives that?" Students offered suggestions for reasons of preference, including differing personalities, different musical occurrences happening in each phrase, or a preference for one style of music over another. Teacher C then commented:

Here's what I would say about all of these, okay: I like them all. There are lots of great things. What is interesting to me, as listening analytically as your teacher, and what I'm hearing, is the approach. We've got ten different approaches to that melody. Is there a right one? Yes and no. Yes, in that we have to stay in the key. Yes, that we have to stay within the time signature and those elements. But in the creative part, is there anything that was wrong? No. You make it what you want.

Teacher C reminded students that in the creative component of the project, "You can be very free with that, and I'm trying to let you be very free." The teacher then led a brief discussion of individual musical "pathways" for each section or student, saying, "Everyone has a different path." This discussion served to emphasize the idea of allowing individuals to follow their own "pathway" within the larger group.

Teacher C then summarized what would happen next in the composition project. One student would be taking home the chosen phrases to notate on Finale, and the class would listen to the phrases again before working on the next section. The teacher offered an opportunity for

students to turn in their compositions if they hadn't done so yet, assuring them that they might be used later on in the composition even if not chosen that day. Teacher C again reminded students of the collaborative nature of the assignment, saying, "Everyone think, everyone listen, everyone contribute... because this is a group project."

Teacher C then transitioned into the next portion of the lesson, a discussion of programmatic music versus "pure" (absolute) music. Using examples of pieces in the school's music library, the teacher defined programmatic music as music that is built "around something" and pure music as music that is not attempting to "emulate something." The teacher also used an example from personal experience, describing a piece written by the teacher in college. The students were instructed to think about which direction they'd like to go for homework, with the promise that they'd make the decision the following day. They were also encouraged again to finish writing their phrases if they had not already done so. Teacher C then told the story of Beethoven composing despite his deafness, telling students, "Don't hold back. You create. You contribute."

The class then shifted to the rehearsal of a concert selection. After a few minutes of student chatter, Teacher C said, "Here we go," snapped, and began a fast-paced rehearsal. Most interesting for the purposes of this research was that the composition instruction did not stop at the composition lesson. Throughout the rehearsal, Teacher C pointed out compositional elements in the piece they were playing, listening to a line of music and asking students, "It's not melody is it? It's accompaniment," and identifying "a little fragment maybe of a motif." After reminding students of the "character" of the piece, including accents, the teacher referred back to the composition project, asking them to think about adding accents and slurs. Teacher C continued to frequently relate the concert material to composition, saying, "Interesting thing here

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he [the composer] does. He uses flute and he uses baritone, two extremes of the range." As the group rehearsed, the teacher pointed out a "layering" section and asked the students to listen for others' parts amidst the layers. This focus on compositional vocabulary was unique to Teacher C and allowed the composition lesson to serve as an integral part of the music rehearsal as well as a creative exercise.

The composition component of Teacher C's lesson, from the introduction to the beginning of the music rehearsal, was approximately 80% of the class period. It should be noted that while students played their instruments much less than in the other two lessons, they never appeared bored or uninvested in the composition. On the contrary, they remained engaged in the lesson and listened attentively throughout. The classroom maintained a calm but positive energy throughout the period, with minimal disciplinary actions or other direct classroom management needed.

Differences in Observed Lessons

Given that all observed teachers work in the same geographic area and participate in very similar instructional and performance activities throughout the year, it is interesting that the three composition lessons were so different in nature. The three classes observed used entirely different techniques of composition instruction, to varying purposes and degrees of success.

The first and most evident difference in the three lessons was the use of musical notation as a means of recording compositions. Teacher B and C instructed their students to compose on manuscript paper, by hand, using traditional, standard notation. These compositions were planned in advance, with Teacher C's students even writing theirs at home prior to the class period. Teacher A's lesson, on the other hand, stemmed from an individual improvisation that was communicated aurally and not notated. The composition was then quickly built from the

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original improvised phrase. While all three methods are valid means of addressing composition within the context of the band classroom, each has unique challenges and advantages. The notation-based lessons were especially susceptible to becoming exercises in music theory and notation, with teachers B and C both relying on students to correctly notate their ideas in order to play them as imagined. In both cases, small changes to compositions had to be made, i.e. corrections in note drawing, rhythm counting, and transpositions. In Teacher A's improvisation-based lesson, students were able to echo what they had heard and build a short melody without diverging into too much theoretical discussion. The melody was thus constructed much more quickly. On the other hand, the created melody was also lost at the conclusion of the lesson. Without a notation requirement, students had no way of saving their work for future revision and reflection, two main components of the creative process. Teachers B and C, by working within the confines of standard notation, allowed students a means of saving and editing their work in the future.

It is important to understand, however, that designing lessons within the confines of Western standard notation can work against a student's creative impulses. In many cases, especially with young composers, students may be able to play phrases that they cannot yet notate. In this situation, an aurally focused model of composition may be appropriate, i.e. digitally recording students' ideas for playback instead of requiring them to be written down. Access to technology would be of great assistance in this model, as students can use computers to easily record new ideas. Teachers must weigh the importance of reinforcing traditional music notation and, with it, music theory skills against the feasibility of allowing maximum creative freedom in a more aurally-based model.

With the amount of technology available to teachers and students, it is curious that none of the lessons used computer notation programs. Each teacher demonstrated a clear awareness of this technology in their interviews, but declined to use it as part of their lessons, preferring instead to have students write their compositions manually or perform without the aid of written notation.

Related to the issue of whether or not to include notation is the issue of time in composition instruction. The three lessons observed as part of this project illustrated stark contrasts in lesson and project length. Teacher A finished the composition portion of the class in approximately five minutes, whereas Teacher B's lesson took about 50 minutes, and Teacher C's lesson took just over half an hour but did not include the actual composing step of the process (which was done at home, beforehand) and was part of a much longer, extended series of lessons. The effect of lesson time on composition is not surprising: the compositions grew longer and more complex as lesson time increased. Teacher A's full class composition was only one measure (four beats) in length. Teacher B's partner compositions were two measures for each of two parts, or four measures total. Teacher C's full class composition was 8 measures long at the end of the observed class period, but was aimed at being a full band piece once all the related lessons were complete.

Another variable related to time spent on composition exercises was the degree to which each was completed within the class period. The improvisation was accomplished quickly and then, we presume, finished. The rhythmic paired compositions took the longest in-class time to complete, but were also considered complete at the conclusion of the composition lesson. The phrases composed for Teacher C's work, however, were envisioned as parts of a whole work, the

finished product of which was not scheduled to be completed for several more months. The

compositions in this class, by default, were very much works in progress.

Teacher C's lesson, while the largest and most collaborative in overall scope, also

allowed for the greatest variety in individual approaches. Because the students composed their

melodies at home and with the least number of teacher-given restraints, they were presumably

able to work on their compositions in whatever fashion they found most comfortable. The

results varied widely. It is impossible to know how the students approached the act of

composing and whether they began their work by focusing on rhythm, melody, harmony, or

some combination. In contrast, Teacher B had a clear structure for the students: write a two-

measure composition, in each of three given time signatures, on one note only, using sixteenth

note patterns in each measure. Because of the structure of the assignment, students were led to

focus on rhythm as the primary element in their work. One wonders, if given the opportunity to

work under fewer constraints, if some of these students might prioritize another musical element,

such as melody, harmony, or timbre. The same question applies to Teacher A's students. Under

the given lesson constraints, the selected student improvised on one note, prioritizing rhythm as

the foremost means of creative expression. Perhaps, given more freedom, the student might

improvise in another manner, by exploring different musical elements such as melody or form.

Each lesson functioned differently within the context of the class period as a whole, as

well. Teacher A's lesson served as a warm-up exercise. As a compositional tool, it was perhaps

useful as a means of introducing students to specific melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic ideas, but

the composition instruction did not explore how these might be used in a longer piece. Once the

lesson was finished, the class simply moved on, beginning their regular concert rehearsal.

Teacher B's lesson served to reinforce counting skills that would be later addressed in the

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rehearsal of concert repertoire. The sixteenth note focus of the assignment helped clarify rhythmic issues so that when the students encountered sixteenth notes in the rehearsal portion of their class, they were able to perform them with greater accuracy. For the teacher, the composition assignment served as a valuable assessment tool, both of music theory knowledge (counting and notating rhythms) and performance skills (playing the rhythms alone and with a partner). Teacher C's lesson, similarly to the others, included both composition and rehearsal components, but tied them together by weaving analytical and compositional vocabulary words into each aspect of the class. The rehearsal music was therefore viewed through the lens of composition and approached rather holistically, with the teacher identifying and rehearsing sections by compositional function rather than by technical issues.

In short, Teacher C's lesson emphasized the more aesthetic elements of composition. Teacher C's students did the technical composition work at home, and during the lesson they were focused on choosing melodic phrases that appealed to them. There was no mention of the "correctness" of the phrases in terms of rhythm, notes, or other musical elements. The phrases were simply played, considered, and put to a vote based on what students' ears were most "drawn" to. The other two lessons, in direct contrast, were more utilitarian, allowing the students a chance to deliberately manipulate their rhythmic knowledge as a route to improving playing techniques and music theory understanding.

While all three teachers clearly tried to serve more as "guides" than "directors" during these lessons, and all three classrooms certainly benefitted from a relaxed, positive atmosphere, there were marked differences in approaches to instruction. Teacher A acted as an involved guide, leading students to discover their own compositional ideas as much as possible, but not being afraid to take control of musical choices when necessary. Although the lesson was

intended to begin with a purely student-created rhythm, Teacher A finished the fourth beat of the phrase after the student's third unsuccessful attempt to complete it on his own. Another student chose a second note for the composition, but Teacher A then took over the melodic aspect of the process as well, picking the remaining two notes in order to keep the melody at a certain difficulty level. The teacher also designated which pitch the harmony part would use, and which instruments would play it. Given that so many choices were handled by the teacher instead of the student, it is unclear exactly who could be called the composer. By the end of the lesson, the compositional guide had turned into more of a compositional director, despite attempts to the contrary. Teacher A offered very little feedback during the compositional process and only a short "Cool, cool" at the end, giving the students very little to reflect upon should they attempt a similar warm-up on another day.

Teacher B acted as a guiding leader. This teacher did not label choices right or wrong, but certainly helped guide students towards rhythmically correct options.   When students had questions, Teacher B made himself readily available to answer them, without directly influencing their compositional decisions. By keeping feedback positive, Teacher B was able to encourage and bolster those students who seemed unsure. Frequent, specific questions helped students reflect on their own compositional choices. The students appeared to flourish under this style of leadership and all completed the assignment and performed their pieces. Although they were given quite a bit of freedom to work independently, the restrictions of the assignment and the teacher's role in directing the class activities suggested that even when serving as a guide, Teacher B's position as the authority in his class is perfectly clear.

Teacher C was the least hands-on of the three participants. Although this teacher exhibited many of the same guiding qualities of Teacher B -- positive feedback, frequent

questioning, and a role in directing the class activities -- Teacher C gave students the most

freedom by far, and acted very much as a fellow learner in the process. Teacher C kept the

elements of the assignment open to student input, leaving the final form and details of the task

unknown. The collaborative composition was presented very much as a work in progress, with

Teacher C describing it in interviews as "unchartered waters." Teacher C noted that what was

most interesting from an educator's standpoint was not the specific notes and rhythms chosen by

the students, but rather their approach to the work, and this teacher frequently mentioned the

many possibilities their piece might encounter: countermelodies, layering, style, programmatic or

pure music, possible publication, etc. Teacher C's lesson, while structured enough for effective

instruction, was the most open-ended of the three, and it was taught with an air of willing

experimentation. Teacher C did not have all the "answers" to this assignment and seemed

anxious to discover what the students might create.

Similarities in Observed Lessons

Despite their differences, the three composition lessons were also similar in many ways.

All three teachers were each active in trying to engage as many students as possible in the

assignments. Teacher A selected students for direct input in the composition. Teacher B was

masterful at helping individuals within a group environment, constantly circulating and attending

to those who requested his feedback. Teacher C repeatedly emphasized the group nature of the

class's composition project, encouraging students to contribute and even to turn in compositions

late, in case they could be used elsewhere in the work.

These teachers each took particular care to cater their feedback to the unique situation of

composition instruction, as opposed to regular band rehearsal. They kept their comments very

neutral in nature: for example, calling students' choices "interesting" and pointing out similarities

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and differences in compositions without labeling any one as "better" than another. Their instruction also consisted often of questions, rather than directives. For example, instead of correcting a student's choice of rhythm, Teacher B asked, "How would you count that?" Teacher A even began his lesson with a question, asking "Can you give me a rhythm?" instead of instructing a student to "Give me a rhythm."

Additionally, Teachers B and C in particular often communicated a personal investment in the lesson, using the pronouns "I" and "we" liberally as they spoke to their students. Teacher C told the class, "*I* am really excited about this" and "*I* bet *I'm* going to like a lot of this" and, after the compositions were played, "I like them all." The frequent use of "we" often evoked a sense of teacher and student collaboration, saying, "*W*e can see that *our* ears like certain things more than others" and "*We've* got ten different approaches to that melody," indicating that the project truly belonged to all of them. Teacher B spoke in a similar manner, communicating a sense of personal interest in the students' work. Teacher B told students, "*I* love the sound of [two instruments]" and made quick comments like "*I* like that." Even directives were imbued with a sense of personal investment: "What *I'm* going to *ask* you to do" and "*I* need you to focus... *I* need you to really pay attention" and "One thing *I* don't want you to do right now," for example. When students seemed perplexed by the assignment, Teacher B assured them, "For some of *us*, this will be super easy, for some of *us* this will be super hard, for some of *us* in the middle it'll be like -- it'll take a little bit." Teacher A, while more taciturn overall, similarly called the composition built during the warm-up exercise "the melody *we* created." Such language insinuated a spirit of community within each classroom.

Indeed, this sense of community carried over into the classroom culture of all three band classes. Each of these three teachers, while differing in their personalities and classroom

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demeanor, had evidently developed a strong rapport with their students. They maintained an air of positivity and acceptance, rewarding all students' efforts with the teacher's attention, including kind words, assistance, or questions. As a result, there was a high level of student engagement in the lessons and a very low number of disruptions and classroom management issues.

From an instructional design perspective, it is interesting that all three lessons were so goal-oriented in nature. The goal of each lesson was a finished composition, whether it was to be performed as a warm-up, as a "mini performance," or as an extended piece on a concert. The final goal of an ensemble performance is a variable that might affect how students approach their compositions. If they are aware their composition will be performed, will they subsequently limit themselves to more "playable" choices? If they know their composition is to be performed by a specific ensemble, will they be more likely to write in a particular style, or in a particular range? While goal-oriented composition need not necessarily be viewed as a bad thing in itself, teachers would be wise to consider how an awareness of the end goal affects student choices throughout the process of composing. These lessons were clearly focused toward an end point of instrumental performance, making even the "freest" of them (Teacher C) somewhat less "free."

The Creative Process in Observed Lessons

A major goal of this study was to analyze the extent to which teachers utilize commonly accepted elements of the musical creative process in their instructional design; namely, time for exploration, respect for individual processes, and the inclusion of reflection and revision. This section of the report examines the lessons more specifically from this vantage point, in hopes of gleaning a deeper understanding of why some lessons might have been more effective than others. Table 12 charts the elements of the creative process that were observed taking place, as well as other aspects of classroom instruction that were addressed during the composition lesson.

Table 12: Elements of composition instruction observed in composition portion of band class, by teacher

Element of composition instruction		Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C
Creative Process Steps	Exploration	none	none	n/a
	Supporting individual processes	minimal	yes	yes
	Reflection/revision	none	none	none
Listening (to examples or performances of student work)		minimal	yes	yes
Analysis (of student work)		none	minimal	minimal
Music theory		yes	yes	none
Performance skills		minimal	yes	none
Classroom management (issues occurring, discipline corrections)		minimal	minimal	none
Non-composition content		minimal	minimal	minimal

First, it is curious that none of the three lessons provided a distinct time for exploration. In Teacher A's improvisation-based lesson, the improvisation belonged to one student only, and he was asked to perform it immediately. The student was not given the opportunity to explore multiple rhythmic ideas before settling on one. While this type of immediate creativity is a valuable tenet in improvisation, where players must respond to one another without explicit prior planning, it does not function the same way in composition, which features music that has been pre-thought, pre-planned, and often practiced prior to performance. The students choosing the notes for the improvised rhythm were placed in an identical predicament of being asked to make a musical choice before exploring the musical options. In essence, they simply named a note, and called it composing. There was very little prior thought involved. This absence of planning does not, of course, negate any positive effects of Teacher A's lesson. The lesson itself was a sort of macro-level exercise in sound exploration: students heard a rhythm, then heard the rhythm played melodically, and then heard the melody played with harmony (a pedal tone). The hope is that those students will retain those musical ideas for inspiration later on, when they are able to compose more freely.

Teacher B's lesson was lacking in exploration time, as well. The students were asked to begin the exercise by writing in total silence, without playing their instruments. By the time they were permitted to play, they had already completed the composition aspects of the lesson (rhythm, notation, timbre choices) and were focusing only on performance skills. The observation that some students chose to change their rhythm or pitches after playing their composition for the first time suggests that some time for exploration prior to notation might have been valuable.

Teacher C's lesson does not fall under the same exploratory scrutiny, because the students composed their work at home, before the class period commenced. It is impossible to know how they approached their work at home, an in particular whether or not they made time for their own exploration before writing.

The second main element of the creative process is respect for individual processes. That is to say, two students may not necessarily compose the same way. Composition teachers are urged by researchers to highly individualize their instruction and allow students the freedom to follow their own "pathways" of creative thought. There is a strong sense among researchers that teachers should take careful measures not to push their own ideas or opinions onto their students. Teacher A's lesson was most challenged by this aspect, partially due to the very limited scope of the assignment. There were only two creative opportunities available to students: the creation of the rhythm and the selection of the notes. When the first student had difficulty fitting his rhythm into the given parameters, Teacher A finished the rhythm for him. Later, Teacher A also chose the final two pitches of the finished composition. As a result, the teacher's compositional choices were prioritized over the students'. In our post-observation interview, Teacher B clarified that the student who was improvising the rhythm was having trouble and stalling the lesson

somewhat; the teacher also explained that the final two notes were chosen specifically to keep the piece from becoming difficult for students to perform. Although Teacher A likely had the best of intentions, this educator did not demonstrate a respect for individual processes and choices when they potentially endangered the performance quality or productivity of the group. The assignment itself did not lend itself to encouraging individual pathways, either. Students were asked to improvise a rhythm, start to finish, as a basis for melody-building, even though any particular student may have a different way of composing if left to their own devices. The lesson was inherently biased towards students with more linear creative pathways, who are most comfortable working from start to finish, and to students who think more rhythmically.

Teacher B's lesson did a more thorough job of addressing this need for respect of individual processes. Students were asked to work independently, and although the design and restrictions of the assignment likely led most students to approach their work in a similar manner, there absolutely was opportunity to work in either a linear, recursive, or holistic manner. The assignment was structured, but not scripted. The teacher addressed each student individually as they worked, helping as needed but never forcing outside opinions on students. Even during the performances, Teacher B kept most comments neutral overall, encouraging students to identify similarities and differences rather than judge compositions as better or worse. Students were thus left free to make their own compositional choices without fear of evaluation.

Teacher C worked in a similar manner, attempting to find something interesting but neutral to say about each student's work. Teacher C was careful not to show which compositions were favored, even taking care to perform them on the piano in a very rigid, unaffected manner so that they would sound "the same." The teacher then let the students vote for their favorites. The result was a real lack of teacher influence on the students' work.

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The real strength of Teacher C's lesson as an example of respect for individual processes is the decision to keep the active composing components situated in the students' homes. The students were free to compose in whatever way was most effective and natural for them, because they were not writing within the confines of a class. We do not know how the students in Teacher C's class approached their work, but it is very likely that their processes were varied in nature. The resulting compositions exhibited a wide variety of rhythmic and melodic choices, presumably because the students were permitted to approach them in a wide variety of ways.

Finally, the musical creative process is understood to need a final step of reflection, leading to revision. This step, while important, can be difficult for teachers to facilitate while also maintaining the neutrality demanded by the respect for individual processes requirement. If teachers cannot give an honest opinion about what they like and dislike in a work, how can they help students to improve it? What constitutes an improved work? How will students and teachers know when their work is finished?

It is this final step that was most lacking in the observed lessons. Although teachers B and C took care to ask reflective questions, none of the three teachers led a revision activity during my time observing them. Teacher A assisted a student in developing a rhythmic idea, but once the student had made his decisions, they were not questioned or revised any further. Teacher B's lesson suffered from the same limitation: students composed, performed, and then turned in their papers with no further commitment required. A few students revised on their own as they worked, but this was not something explicitly encouraged by the lesson design or addressed by the teacher. Teacher B conceded that while revision was not included in the lesson plan, it might be a valuable skill for young composers.

In the case of Teacher C, we might assume some students engaged in their own reflection and revision at home. Listening to the new phrases and considering each one before voting could very well be labeled "reflection." The students had heard the original motif, then heard it played with each phrase, and they were asked to actively consider which compositions they liked best. Revision of their own work was still absent from the lesson, however. The phrases that were not chosen were kept for possible later use, and were not given back to students for revision. It is worth considering what might happen, were students given the opportunity to revise their work and revote the following day. From Teacher C's post-observation interview, we can gather that this teacher intends for reflection and revision to be something of an ongoing step in the process of creating their full band piece, but it is unclear how exactly this step will take place.

Interviews

Introduction

The participating teachers were interviewed both prior to and following their composition lessons. Interviews were semi-structured in nature, with conversation allowed to flow freely from the starting points of a few common questions, including:

1. What is your personal experience with composition, and with teaching composition?

2. What do you have planned for today's composition lesson?

3. What are your primary goals for the lesson?

4. How did you decide on the procedures for this lesson?

5. What are your general reflections on today's lesson? What do you feel went well or could have been improved?

6. Do you feel today's lesson was successful in reaching your primary goals? Why or why not?

7. Was today's lesson typical for your composition instruction?

8. My study will focus particularly on analyzing composition lessons to see how creativity is encouraged or discouraged by the lesson structure. How do you feel your lesson structure encourages or discourages creativity in students?

Interviews took place in February 2014 and were not limited in terms of content or time, except to avoid interfering with teachers' scheduled classes. The interviews took place in the participants' band rooms and offices.

Interviews were initially transcribed verbatim, then denaturalized for the purpose of creating increased fluidity and ease of reading. Selected involuntary vocalizations, response and non-response tokens, stuttering, interrupted or repeated phrases, and filler words such as "like," were removed and some grammatical elements corrected. Potentially identifying information and remarks concerning specific students or professional colleagues were also removed. Following transcription, material was reread and coded for central themes. These themes appear in all three interviews and will be discussed at length in this chapter. They serve as common threads in our discussion of composition pedagogy and are as follows:

1. Instructional design

    a. Pedagogy based on personal experience

    b. Building a foundation of musical mechanics

    c. Scope and sequence: composition instruction over time

    d. Freedom vs. restriction

    e. Lesson procedures and other elements

    f. Performance concerns

g. Technology in composition instruction

2. Composition instruction and the creative process

    a. Composition as an outlet for creative expression

    b. Creative cognition: musical decision making

    c. Exploration

    d. Independent work and individualized instruction

    e. Reflection and revision

3. Social considerations of teaching composition

    a. Awareness of students' emotional responses

    b. Classroom culture: building a positive rapport

    c. Classroom culture: fostering collaboration

4. Composition instruction: benefits and impediments

    a. Composition as reinforcement of music skills

    b. Composition and student motivation

    c. Other benefits of composition instruction

    d. Lack of time as an impediment to composition instruction

    e. Other impediments to composition instruction

Once interviews were fully coded, material was selected for the purposes of length and relevancy and charted along with the applicable theme codes. A separate chart was created for each teacher and sent to them for verification of content and intent (Kvale, 1996, p. 88). All teachers were given the opportunity to read the material and contact the researcher with any concerns, clarifications, or requests for omission. All requests were honored.

The interviews in this study serve as additional commentary on the observed lessons and survey results as well as a window into the instructional design processes and intentions of the participating teachers. In the next section, I will present each common theme, along with selected quotes and discussion. Full coded charts of the interviews are included for reference in Appendix A.

Instructional Design

Pedagogy based on personal experience

Interestingly, all three interviewees in this study sought out composition experience of their own accord, taking courses in college and experimenting on their own. The survey results suggest that their personal experience in seeking out composition experience is not uncommon in educators; 71% of teachers taking the survey responded that they had some amount of training or experience in composition (Figure 4.3), despite 76% indicating they were not taught composition in middle or high school band. Teachers are evidently finding ways to learn composition on their own. Given the noticeable absence of a standard pedagogy, music teachers must rely on these personal experiences as a basis for their composition instruction.

In this study, participants' individual composition experiences were certainly reflected in their differing instructional designs. Teacher A, whose lesson was improvisation-based and aimed at creating a melody through the alteration of a rhythm, stated that in planning the lesson, "I just looked at, just the basics on creating a melody, because that's the first thing you do when you write a piece of music is you want to have a melody." The scope of Teacher A's composition program, from middle school to high school, seemed focused on individual experimentation rather than on learning a sequence of formal rules, with students eventually working on their own using a computer program rather than completing teacher-designed

exercises in class. This kind of independent, constructivist learning stems from Teacher A's own experience as a student. Teacher A explained, "a lot of it, really was my own exploration, starting all the way when I was in middle school, just writing, just exploring music and what works, what doesn't." Teacher A's lesson reflected these experiences. It was indeed more exploratory in nature, stemming from an improvised rhythm with the intent of "exploring" a few rhythms and then purposefully changing the notes.

Teacher B's instructional design was markedly different. This educator provided a warm-up counting exercise, a formatted worksheet, and instructions for a lesson clearly centered on the goal of improving students' understanding of sixteenth notes. Although the students were free to choose their own sixteenth note patterns and encouraged to seek out interesting timbre combinations, the lesson as a whole was built around carefully constructed restrictions. Teacher B emphasized repeatedly the idea of building a foundation of theoretical knowledge before giving students maximum freedom to create, commenting that the observed lesson goals were "for them to be confident performing sixteenth notes and writing sixteenth notes and being able to manipulate the theory in a creative way, I guess." Teacher B spoke about the process of manipulating the elements of music as a primary part of composing, saying, "There's a puzzle piece aspect of fitting pieces together to make something new…whether it was the rhythm or the puzzle piece of two instruments creating a new color" and explaining that his students "had never gotten the chance to manipulate the puzzle pieces of rhythm."

This concept of composition as a "puzzle" in which musical pieces are combined and manipulated is mirrored in Teacher B's description of "the fundamentals of composition" and one might use these elements to compose:

The fundamentals of composition, to me, are the things that make music sound

interesting, which is setting up an expectation for the listener, and then flipping it. . .

When I write, that's one of the things that I try and go for. Set an expectation and then

don't meet it. And that's an abstract thing that is difficult to teach unless you are super

solid on how to create an expectation in the first place, with rhythm, with pitch set, with

key signature, with cadences, you know?

Teacher B went on to say, "No one ever said, 'This is how you teach composition,' so it's just

been me fitting little composition exercises into what I already do with my band students." This

teacher's lesson was more utilitarian and analytical in nature possibly because the teacher's own

approach to composition is more analytical in nature. Teacher B spoke not of exploration or

inspiration, but of the conscious manipulation of musical elements. Teacher B's lesson, in direct

correlation, was more utilitarian in nature and aimed more at achieving an increased theoretical

understanding than personal creative expression.

The third lesson in this study also reflected the teacher's personal experiences in

composition. Teacher C admitted, "I'm drawing from my own experiences, both in the music

theory sequences that I took in college, plus then what I have had in my private study" and

described his college composition experience by saying, "My professor never said, 'This is what

you need to write.' . . . He would tell me form, he might tell me how to structure, the rest of it

was up to me. And so, I think, if they get to do that, then it's more 'I own this.' " Teacher C's

lesson was very much in this vein, with teacher direction remaining at a minimum and the

students permitted maximum creative freedom within specified form guidelines. No limitations

were placed on rhythm, pitches, or other elements except in regard to purpose and length (in this

case, a 4-8 measure motif and then an 8-bar phrase). In discussing composition instruction,

Teacher C focused not on pitch or rhythmic elements, but on more form-related vocabulary, such as countermelody, motif, secondary phrase, and layering. While students in Teacher A and B's classes worked from the micro-level outward, focusing on the details of melody and rhythm without connection to a larger musical framework, Teacher C instead presented students with broad, macro-level guidelines and allowed them to work freely on the project's smaller sections.

These lessons, although small in number, showed a remarkable variety in terms of goals, structure, and design. If all band teachers in southwest Virginia are similarly using their personal experience as a pedagogical guide, then we can expect to find continued variety in their lesson objectives, methods, and finished creative products.

Building a Foundation of Musical Mechanics

Despite differences in instructional design, all three teachers indicated a desire to build a strong foundation of musical skills to support students in their efforts to compose. Most of these skills were focused on theoretical understanding of notes, rhythms, form, and other technical elements of music. Teachers did not mention expression, innovation, or other more "creative" aspects as part of the necessary foundation.

Teacher C described the foundational support found in a new theory method book, saying, "We want to make sure that every child understands the key signatures, every child understands the mechanics they're looking at, because . . . as we do the composition stuff, then that becomes easier because they've got the mechanics down." Teacher A communicated some frustration with a student who entered a school-sponsored contest with an inadequately constructed composition, saying, "It was almost a little bit of pride, like, well, if I have a student who enters something—If this young lady wants to enter a flute composition for [school contest], it better make sense." For Teacher A, educated, intentional melody-building was tantamount to

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creating a piece of music that "makes sense," and he described an early composition lesson as follows:

> The first time we go on Noteflight [computer notation program] the kids will just put whatever, just randomly put stuff, like, "oh, this sounds good." I talk about, well, what makes a good melody? Does it have to start on a certain note? Does it have to end on a certain note? What makes a good melody? Can it skip around a whole lot? Does it need to be more stepwise? So the first thing was just learning how to create a melody that made sense. Why does a melody have to end on this note? Well, why can't a melody end on the sixth of the scale? Well, for one thing, it doesn't sound very good. Does it have to end on this note or does it have to end on this note?

Teacher B was perhaps the most focused on foundation building as a means of improving composition, speaking several times about musical "puzzle pieces" and their manipulation. However, these foundational pieces were viewed as not purely utilitarian, but as a means to a more artistic, expressive end. Teacher B went on to explain, "To me, composition is about building a musical expectation and then messing it up for the listener, and the more ways you have to create an expectation, the more colors you have in your palette to paint with as a composer, you know?"

It is important to note that for these three educators, the teaching of these musical elements was not seen as a restriction, but as a means of eventually liberating the students so that they could explore their creative ideas with as many tools as possible. When asked whether or not they agreed that they begin with fundamentals and work towards more freedom, all three teachers answered yes.

Scope and Sequence: Composition Instruction Over Time

The three teachers described a similar scope and sequence in their overall composition programs, beginning with the foundational elements described previously. In each case, their instruction began as more guided and focused on smaller-scale projects, such as exercises in the method books. As students progressed, they worked toward more freedom and independence.

Teacher A stated that at the middle school level, composition lessons deal "mostly with melody creation, and creating a melody that sounds good, that makes sense." Instruction begins with improvisatory rhythm exercises similar to what I observed. Teacher A explained, "What I'm doing now, the creation of a rhythm, that's strictly a group thing at first. And then, usually what I do for seventh grade and I do it for eighth grade too, is we'll actually get into composing." Students at the high school level have "the opportunity to do actually some different chords. Very, very basic. Very basic level harmony." Teacher A's high school students also compose an 8-measure melody and perform it on their instruments.

Teacher B described an end-of-year project that includes a composition option for interested students, saying, "We do little exercises like this [observed lesson] throughout the year. And if they're interested in it, at the end of the year, they can write out [a composition] for three voices, and they can write it and perform it in class. We've actually had some really good ones. . . The hope is as they get older, they're able to take on more of those higher concepts." The project includes a lot of freedom for the students, but the teacher does "check back and see how it's going," helping them move from the creation of a melody to the addition of two more voices in harmony.

The progression from structure to freedom in Teacher C's program mirrors that of Teacher A and B. Typical instruction begins with method book exercises at the sixth grade level, concentrating on the internalization of basic musicianship skills and performance techniques.

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The observed large-scale composition lesson occurred with a group of eighth graders. With high school students, composition projects range from independent recording projects to student arrangements for pep band to drum line cadences and small ensemble compositions. Teacher C described his sequence of instruction by saying, "It gets a little freer as it progresses" and noting, "Providing limited structure at the middle school really helps," while at the high school, there is "some light guiding, but it's not restricting the creativeness."

The presence of a naturally occurring, common scope and sequence between these educators suggests three things. First, even when personal experiences and lesson goals vary widely, major commonalities in composition instruction exist. Second, these commonalities work within the context of band performance programs. Indeed, it may be that the nature of traditional band performance classes informs pedagogy along with personal experience, composition training, and other factors. Third, it is possible, even amongst widely divergent teachers and programs, to form a standard outline of composition pedagogy; that is, a pedagogical sequence that moves from the practice of basic skills to their application in simple, structured composition assignments, and from these structured assignments to projects with fewer restrictions and more creative freedom.

Freedom Versus Restriction

The question of freedom versus restriction is applicable not only to the scope and sequence of composition instruction over the course of years, but to individual lessons themselves. This study observed lessons with many restrictions (Teacher A: compose a rhythm with four beats, choose one note to change), to fewer restrictions (Teacher B: write two measures, include sixteenth note patterns), to almost no restrictions (Teacher C: expand the motif into a longer phrase). The accompanying survey found that most respondents (22 out of 37)

believed students compose best with restrictions, and only a handful (6 out of 37) agreed that students compose most effectively when given maximum freedom. The conflict over freedom and restriction is at the heart of composition pedagogy and is a driving factor in instructional design. Teachers must consider whether their assignment is to be "utilitarian" and theory-driven or more focused on expression and innovation, and then must decide how to structure activities to support these end goals.

The participating teachers, although they each moved from restriction to freedom in the larger scheme of their composition teaching, voiced concern over these conflicting aspects in their interviews, particularly in regard to students feeling overwhelmed by compositional choices. According to Teacher B, "Composing is kind of like Alice in Wonderland. You can dive in and you can not come out for a while. . . I think if you give parameters it becomes a less scary proposition." Teacher B went on to explain:

> The way that I view it is like, if we're building a building, you know, I'll just try and provide the steel framework and say there's got to be a door there, and you've got to have windows here, and it's got to be five stories tall. But you decide what kind of building it's going to be. You decide everything else. And I just think that's more effective and makes it more accessible to more students.

Teacher A echoed these concerns, saying, "I ask the student, 'Alright, play me a 4-count melody, and put a different note on it,' I mean, you do too much with—you ask, especially a seventh grader that, most of them are not going to be able to comprehend that, they're going to have a really hard time with that. So, it's, alright, let's start with a rhythm." Even Teacher C, who appeared to favor the most freedom of the three teachers, mentioned during the observation that students had felt "saturated" with choices during the previous day's motif performances. The

teachers are clearly alert to the fear of overwhelming students with creative options. The restrictions are not meant to hinder creativity so much as to bolster accessibility and confidence, however indirectly, or to target composition exercises towards specific instructional goals.

Still, two of the teachers professed a general preference towards more freedom when possible. Teacher A agreed that students seem to do better work when they have "more freedom to create what they want to" and elaborated, "I've gotten a lot more positive feedback from students doing that [composing with more freedom] than when I was asking them to write out a specific thing, giving them specific instructions on what to write." Teacher A later reflected, "I've learned that the more I let the students create, the better." Teacher C agreed that freedom can be beneficial in composition instruction, particularly in the upper grades, explaining, "I think the kids like the freedom, at the high school level it's all the—you know, their creativeness and I think sometimes they surprise themselves."

Teacher C was unique in allowing instrumental playing ability to naturally limit compositional freedom. Teacher C explained, "They're going to write where they're comfortable and not 'I can't play it,' " and continued, "They understand rhythms and how the rhythms fit in time, so their limitation was, you know, what rhythms that you've had thus far in your own musical experience, there are your limits. And it works. They're not trying to write running 16th notes because most of them have never played a bunch of that." Allowing musical skill level to limit students rather than constraining them with teacher-directed guidelines helps ensure that students can follow their individual creative processes while still remaining within the confines of their abilities. Teacher-imposed restrictions may be helpful in achieving specific educational goals, but they run the risk of limiting students' creative potential.

Instructional Design: Lesson Procedures and Other Elements

From an instructional design perspective, the teacher with the most compelling lesson was Teacher B, whose sixteenth note composition lesson included a warm-up activity, independent work, collaborative work, a performance, and assessment based on notation and performance skills. When asked how the lesson was designed, Teacher B said, "I come up with the activity based on what I want the student to know," and later elaborated, "I was focused on what I wanted at the end and then I kind of worked backwards and tried to incorporate as many elements of music in the process as I could." The lesson was successful in including a variety of activities to target different learning styles and giving students a chance to practice counting, notating, rehearsing, and performing.

The specificity of Teacher B's learning objectives, i.e. reading and playing sixteenth note rhythm patterns, certainly aided in the instructional design of the lesson. Clear objectives led to efficient activities and concise assessment. In this case, Teacher B's assessment included making sure students completed the assignment, making sure the rhythm patterns were notated and counted correctly, and listening for quality and accuracy of performance. However, in discussing an assessment strategy, Teacher B conceded, "The bottom line is that this is much more a utilitarian composition exercise than a creative exercise. There's a creative component to it, but I guess I view it more as a utility to make them better musicians."

In discussing other aspects of instructional design, Teacher A mentioned including composition in the warm-up as an interesting way to pace the class period and keep students engaged throughout instruction. This teacher explained, "I try to keep it within the warm-up, so that it's not like, 'Okay, now we're going to do composition, now we're going do music theory.' It's, 'Let's create a melody.' It makes it a little more fun. You're kind of tricking them into learning." Teacher A echoed this sentiment later on, saying, "It makes the beginning of class a

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little more fun. You're throwing different things at them," and going on to note, "Adding the composition elements to the lesson, especially the warm-up -- it creates a neat little element to the class. I don't really notice a big difference when I do it and when I don't do it. I do notice a big difference in the class when we're very successful." Student motivation and classroom culture will be discussed at length later; it is important to note that adding composition to band lessons, even as a quick warm-up activity, appears to be effective in immediately engaging students in the day's work.

Other instructional design issues that were mentioned by interviewees included the challenge of assessing student compositions without imposing teachers' opinions on the work (Teacher C), finding ways to blend computer notation with exploration on instruments (Teacher A), and creating "tiered" assignments to address varying ability levels within the same classroom.

Performance Concerns

One issue of instructional design unique to teaching composition in a playing ensemble is the consideration of performance concerns. Particularly in developing bands, keeping compositions within the playing abilities of students may be an important goal. In a previous section, I discussed how Teacher C allowed performance limitations to naturally restrict creative options. Teachers also do the reverse, using creative restrictions to allow for higher quality performances.

For example, Teacher A chose to take over the choice of notes instead of allowing students to choose all their own pitches. In our post-observation interview, Teacher A explained, "I went ahead and took over and chose F because that one student chose E-flat so we're going up a fourth -- you're starting to get into a little bit of dangerous. . . when you're leaping that far,

when you're getting that far away from the concert B-flat. I was like, alright, I'm going to put F there, so we can easily come back down." Similarly, Teacher A sometimes limits melodic choices to make playing harmony easier, saying, " A lot of times, when we try to create a rhythm I try to create something that's more stepwise, so that we can very easily have some people playing a third above." By limiting composition options—or in some cases, taking control of them—teachers can help ensure that their group actually plays the exercise better, typically a major priority in performance ensembles. Teacher C described an encounter with a group of high school students who had arranged a favorite song for pep band performance:

> They were doing a thing for the marching band and stuff, whatever, and I said, "You're probably getting out of range here. You need to either change key so that as you're writing this it stays within the key you need it to be but it brings everyone down a step, especially the trumpet part, because not everybody's going to scream that C up there for you, you know". . . and they go, "Oh yeah," you know. So, they're learning, "Okay, I was creative. Oh, now my creativity has to be played by everybody. So how do I make that happen, without changing my creativity?

In this case, the students (guided by the teacher) had to consider performance limitations and apply them to the work.

All three teachers noted that the pressure of performing their work on an instrument is an additional challenge for young composers. Teacher A commented that some high school students are "terrified" to perform their works on their instruments. Teacher C confirmed, "A lot of times when they play, then even though they wrote it and they worked through it, they haven't worked it up…I've learned this through some of the stuff in their books that they've done, where they're guided composition ideas, they get so nervous." Although Teacher B's students were all

happily engaged in their composition lesson and seemed to perform confidently in the closing assessment, the teacher noted that many students had trouble keeping a consistent pulse, saying, "When I went around individually to talk to each little group of two, they all were able to identify the counts and count it through with the right pulse. . . Just adding that one extra thing [playing on instruments] just blows their mind a little bit."

The participating teachers also discussed changing their approach to instruction based on the performance level of the class. Teacher C considered the full band composition project to be a bit of a work in progress, and explained, "This is all new. But that group is the right group to try it. They're very fine playing." In essence, the high playing level of the group made them more qualified to attempt a large collaborative composition project. Of course, it's possible that a high playing level simply equates to more available time for composition, but Teacher C also pointed out a correlation between playing level and compositional skill, saying, "The number one consistent thing that I am seeing is that correlation. . . The better the player, they're a better writer." Teacher B similarly awards more compositional freedom to higher performing classes, explaining:

> In my beginners' class there's a lot of variation…so I have to kind of adjust my approach to a more per student basis, I think. In my class that you came in on, wind symphony, it's a much bigger class and more—higher performing, musically. They're more aware of the cognitive part of music, so I'd probably—I'd definitely let them alter pitch if they wanted to, I would definitely put the idea of key signature…I would change my approach based on what class it was.

Performance skill thus becomes a factor in instructional design, with teachers either modifying assignments to match students' playing ability, or discovering that playing ability can affect the performance of composition assignments.

Technology in Composition Instruction

Somewhat surprisingly, the three observed lessons utilized a minimal amount of computer technology. Only Teacher B used a projection system and web browser to display rhythms to the class, and this teacher did not choose to utilize technology as part of the actual composition project at all. All three teachers mentioned using notation software for independent projects, but chose not to incorporate in the lesson I observed, which they each described as typical. Teacher B argued that standard, handwritten notation is part of being a well-rounded composer, claiming, "Composing at a computer can be a little bit limiting. It's real easy to copy paste, and I know my best stuff was always when I would write it out." Teacher B's lesson, as well as Teacher C's, was based on traditional, handwritten notation being performed live on an instrument. Teacher A's lesson was not computer-based either, but lacked a notation requirement entirely.

Given this apparent absence of technology in typical composition lessons, one might conclude that music teachers are not aware of the benefits of using technology in composition instruction. On the contrary, all three teachers had clear ideas of how to use technology in their lessons and seemed very comfortable with the idea of including it when necessary. Teacher C commented, "If I really had my druthers, I think it would be really good to have that web-based format, so that we could use a projector, so they can visualize what everyone is doing." Teacher A echoed this sentiment, explaining that having a SMART Board and notation software readily available "would also give them an opportunity to see, 'Oh, that's how these are related.'…And

then for those students who have a hard time comprehending doing that stuff just off the top of their head, they would have a visual."

Teachers also expressed a desire for students to be able to use technology to compose on their own. Teacher C asserted, **"**I want them to be able to use ProTools [recording software] and know what that's like, so it's like a recording studio and they can record things here and put it together for their own pleasure." Many of Teacher C's students use the free program Notepad, and their interest in composition has reportedly increased since the program became available to them. Teacher C commented, "The other thing that I've noticed the most to help propel it [composition], is technology…You know, when Finale started offering Notepad, free, then I was able to say, 'Go and get this, and try that.' And then it was, 'Oh, I like that.' So there was that draw, technology-wise." Teacher A experienced the same "draw" and remarked that students who had notation software at home were more likely to experiment and bring new compositions to school. For this teacher, using notation software at home serves as a means of advocating music:

> I'll give them a couple days to work on it by themselves, either on their own class time -- like if they find sometime between classes, or even if they do it at home, and that's to encourage them to work on it outside of the band class. Not so much that I want them to do it at home, it's just to encourage them to open up that Noteflight account at home or outside of the band class, so it becomes something that they don't just associate with the band class, it's something—It's mine, it's something I can do outside of band. It's another way of advocating music outside of the band class.

Noteflight, a free online website that allows users to notate and subsequently share music in a social format, has been in use at Teacher A's school for a number of years. Teacher A

encourages students to write on Noteflight, saying, "I'll encourage them to keep up with their account at home, like over the summer. I've been using Noteflight for about three or four years now, and I have some students up at the high school who have a whole portfolio of music that they've created or they've arranged, that's on that website." Technology served as a means for students to work independently and compose for their own pleasure as well as for band-related coursework, but did not appear as an essential part of the observed "typical" lesson.

Composition Instruction and the Creative Process

The following section examines how teachers addressed aspects of the creative process, including exploration, individual processes, and reflection, in their interviews. It also includes discussion of related subjects, including teachers' concept of composition as a means of personal expression and their understanding of composition as a series of deliberate musical choices.

Composition: Expression, Innovation, and Enrichment

Although the teachers observed in this study varied in their approach to composition instruction, they all commented on the use of composition as a route to personal creative expression in their interviews. Teacher A described his students' compositions as "another way for them to express themselves, instead of just playing their instrument." Teacher B, in describing the day's lesson objectives, clarified that although the intended focus was sixteenth notes, the ultimate goal was "not just writing out 1-and-a, like trying to be clever about it, I guess, to really understand it." The inclusion of the word "clever" suggests that the exercise, although firmly rooted in music theory knowledge, could also be used to express a certain mood. Teacher B did not simply want to hear sixteenth note patterns; rather, this teacher hoped to hear sixteenth note patterns combined in a way that was surprising and fresh. Teacher C

acknowledged the idea of composition as a creative, expressive outlet as well, noting that it is helpful for students who need "a consistent outlet. Not just playing."

Creativity is partially defined as the creation of something innovative or new, and this portion of the definition did not escape the teachers' understanding. Teacher B described the "biggest creative aspect" of composition as "fitting pieces together to make something new." Teacher C spoke similarly, saying that once students have learned basic music skills, they can "use it in this construct and create things of [their] own." In a moment of excitement, Teacher A described a previous day's composition-based warm-up activity that quickly evolved into a three-part harmonized melody: "It was just like all this creativity, all this music that had never been created before and now we're hearing it for the very first time." There is an understanding of creativity not just as a means of personal expression, but as a means of innovating and synthesizing new musical material.

Perhaps most importantly, teachers emphasized a distinct need for creativity, signifying that it is missing from the traditional band rehearsal. Teacher A lamented, "Sometimes, especially when we get into the crunch time for concerts, I feel like it's no longer—like the expression and creativity's no longer there. It's just, we're here to get this done." Teacher B very clearly stated an understanding of band classes as "performance classes first" and suggested that other band teachers might avoid teaching composition because "a lot of people just don't see it as important…a goal for them is not to be a composer. A goal for them is to create a good band." For Teacher C, composition was admittedly not "the end-all tell-all," and was not necessarily a requirement for building "a good music program." However, Teacher C also spoke passionately on the need for composition "for some of those students who desperately need another level," saying that composition "opens the windows of opportunity for those students. They need to be

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creative." A common theme in Teacher C's interviews was composition as a means of "completing the circle" of learning for these students who "need to be creative." Teacher C argued:

> There are some people that this is missing, that composition, and seeing those creative juices come out and then it's performed, completes the circle for them. If they don't ever—if they never had that, then they would not know any different and they would just go through but there'd be something that would be missing.

Teacher C later clarified, "I talked about that was the dimension missing because I think that fills in the gap for them, okay, of, alright I've learned how to play my instrument, I've got the rhythms, got everything else and I've done performance, and some folks, that's enough." Composition instruction in this sense is also a means of enrichment, of providing students with musical opportunities that do not commonly occur in the ensemble classroom.

Creative Cognition: Musical Decision Making

A common strain in the interviews was the concept of composition as a sequence of decisions. Teachers did not describe composition ideas as being divinely inspired or derived from instrumental exploration, but rather as deliberate musical choices. They were notably interested in encouraging students to make intentional choices through questioning and metacognition practices in which students might reflect on their own decision-making. It is this process which I have termed "creative cognition": the process of thinking about how one makes compositional decisions.

Creative cognition was repeatedly referred to in the interviews as a means of training students to think creatively. Teacher C said most clearly, "I hadn't planned on having the discussion about why did you like this better? But I think that's a valid question. And it gets

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them thinking of how and why they're listening to things in a certain way." Teacher C's goals are not only for students to compose their own music, but to understand why they compose and hear music in the ways that they do. Teacher B also tried to encourage creative cognition in his students, leading them "to think about the process and whether they like something or not." In a discussion of the warm-up composition lesson, Teacher A argued that in the process of "hearing the warm-ups, the creative process is starting a little bit. They're starting to think in that way." The end-goal of these teachers is thus not necessarily the compositions themselves, but the ability to think from a compositional standpoint. Teacher C elaborated:

> They were young listeners, so what are they listening for? They're just listening for the aesthetic value, which, you can't dismiss that. Music is aesthetic, either pleasing, challenging, sad, happy. You know, there's that aesthetic component that affects every person that listens. They're just having to think of it from the construct—composition point, you know, constructing it and putting it together side.

The idea of composition as construction is repeated in Teacher B's reference to the "puzzle pieces" of rhythm and timbre and in the same teacher's metaphorical relation of composition to architecture:

> The way that I view it is like, if we're building a building, you know, I'll just try and provide the steel framework and say there's got to be a door there, and you've got to have windows here, and it's got to be five stories tall. But you decide what kind of building it's going to be. You decide everything else.

There exists a marked emphasis on musical decisions and decision-making skills, as opposed to musical exploration. Teacher B, who articulated this concept repeatedly and clearly, asserted, "I would love to talk more about the creative aspects of composition, and the creative decision

making, which I think is where the real creativity comes." Teacher B also spoke about this decision-making process as the manipulation of musical elements, referencing an activity with the loop-based program Incredibox and saying, "To me, that's a composition exercise, because you can manipulate timbre, you're manipulating rhythm." Teacher B went on to describe this type of work as "taking the language and it's manipulating it and it's making it your own, and it's not just buttons anymore." In this manner, composition is not just the freeform exploration of sound ideas, but the deliberate application of previously learned musical skills in an intentional way.

Exploration

The aforementioned focus on composition as the intentional manipulation of musical skills, unfortunately, seems to have displaced the first and perhaps most essential component of the creative process: exploration. Dedicated time for improvisation or the exploration of sound ideas was not observed in any of the three lessons included in this study. Indeed, one of the most surprising aspects of the observed lessons was their silence. Students were given ample time to think, listen, answer questions, and write, but not to physically experiment with compositional decisions using their instruments.

In the case of Teacher A, only one student was asked to provide a rhythm for the class. Although other students were then led through a series of musical decisions (choosing notes and developing a harmonic line), none were given time to "test" their ideas on their instruments before communicating them to the teacher. It's impossible to tell exactly why this step was absent from the lesson procedures, but as the teacher soon took over the remainder of the process, it is perhaps a moot point. In Teacher B's class, students began composing immediately after being given their manuscript paper, without taking time to improvise or experiment first.

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Although the silence of the room was explicitly requested by the teacher and may have been helpful from a classroom management standpoint, it was perhaps not the most creatively supportive environment for composing. In Teacher C's lesson, students actually completed their compositions at home, so it is certainly likely that exploration occurred, even though it was not directly observed.

Accordingly, exploration was not an oft-repeated theme in the teacher interviews. Although Teacher A mentioned "exploration" as a basis for developing personal composition skills, and Teacher B briefly noted timbre exploration as a component of composition instruction, the teachers for the most part seemed uninvolved with this step in the creative process.

Independent Work and Individualized Instruction

In direct contrast to the lack of discussion about exploration as a step in the creative process, the teachers had much to say regarding individualized instruction and independent work. These concepts appear to be the best understood and most commonly employed components of the creative process. The teachers each described opportunities for independent work in their classes, as well as situations in which they support the individual learning processes of their students. Selected examples of their descriptions of independent composition work within band classes are:

> • "Yeah, it starts off with just the group and then when we get into the computer lab it becomes an individual lesson" (Teacher A).
> • "With the Noteflight, I'll encourage them to keep up with their account at home, like over the summer. I've been using Noteflight for about three or four years now, and I have

some students up at the high school who have a whole portfolio of music that they've created or they've arranged, that's on that website" (Teacher A).

• "We'll work on it in class and then I'll ask them to work on it—I'll give them a couple days to work on it by themselves, either on their own class time—like if they find sometime between classes, or even if they do it at home, and that's to encourage them to work on it outside of the band class" (Teacher A).

• "I offer the opportunity if it's something they're interested at the end of the year as an enrichment activity, to really get that kind of project, to do a longer composition, like a minute to a minute and a half for three voices" (Teacher B).

• "I don't do full compositional things at the high school level, it's more individualized, for those who have that interest and want to expand that" (Teacher C).

Students seemed to work better when they were at home working individually as opposed to at school. In particular, Teacher A and C agreed that their students were more likely to experiment with composition if they had notation software at their disposal at home. Teacher A found that students "[are] a little more creative when they're at home," going on to explain, "They might have the basic outline of what they want to do and then, they work on it at home and when they come back a couple days later, when they turn it in, it's twice as much as what they had before. And again, I don't know if it's they feel a little more free to create when they're at home." Teacher C's entire lesson was based around students completing their work at home, and despite the work being optional, the majority of students chose to do it. Working at home provides students with an opportunity to work independently, following their own creative pathways without concern for social pressures, classroom time constraints, or other impediments

they might commonly face at school.   As Teacher A so aptly noted, students might feel "more free to create" in this environment.

Teachers also expressed a concern for individualizing their composition instruction, especially in order to accommodate differing ability levels. Teacher A recognized that the success of a typical improvisation-based warm-up "depends on the student," noting that the student who was chosen to improvise during the observation struggled with the directions and "stalled" the lesson a bit. However, Teacher A then argued that when he chooses a student "who's really outgoing, who wants to be involved in that creative process, that lesson can be really successful in a very short amount of time." Teacher A thus adjusts instruction based on which students are at the head of the creation. Teacher B, in reflecting over what might be done differently in a composition lesson, suggested the possibility of creating a differentiated, "tiered" system of assignments, where students would receive instructions that matched their ability levels, tailoring the assignment to each individual's needs. Teacher C's method of individualizing a composition lesson was to make it optional, allowing most students to do the work on time, but encouraging others to join in on the assignment once they had gained enough confidence and experience. Teacher C calculated that over 70% of students in the class chose to complete and turn in their compositions, and hypothesized that the remaining students "are the ones that probably could not do it." It is important to note here that Teacher C had no intention of abandoning these students instructionally; instead, this teacher planned to continue encouraging them to participate in any manner they were comfortable doing. During the observed lesson, all students appeared to be listening intently and participating in the votes. Even those who had not turned in original work were therefore participating in the process of crafting the group's final piece.

Reflection and Revision

The final—and perhaps most challenging—aspects of the creative process as it is discussed in this document are reflection and revision, in which students evaluate their work and make changes to it. Like exploration, this step was noticeably absent from the observed lessons. Students presented their compositions, answered questions about them if prompted, and then moved on, beginning the next activity without doing any further editing or analysis of their work. Unlike exploration, however, this step was not missing from the teachers' interview comments. It appears to be understood as a concept and encouraged to some degree through questioning techniques, but rarely enacted as a final procedure in composition instruction. Teacher B conceded that revision was a "good idea," but argued, "We usually don't have time for that…I'm not as good about following up with it afterwards. We kind of do those little performances and then it's on to the next thing." Teacher A recognized a need for revision when students, composing on the computer, realized their compositions didn't seem to work as fluidly once they were transferred to actual instruments, but was also limited by time:

> A lot of times when the students will create their melody on Noteflight, and when they
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> try to play it, they realize, oh, these notes—like, playing this note and this note, that
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> really doesn't make a whole lot of sense. That doesn't sound right, it doesn't feel right.
>
> So, I wish I had more time to go back and revise or maybe give them a second chance at
>
> writing that melody, so that they actually start thinking about what the notes sound like,
>
> they start thinking about what the notes feel like, so that it makes it something more
>
> enjoyable to play.

Teacher C found that students needed the opportunity to correct composition errors and used their revisions as a chance to instruct the entire class, as well. This educator reported that while

most of the class did well with their composition assignment, "there were some that were incorrect, and you can use that as another part of the teaching tool, go back and say, 'Now okay, this here you missed rhythmically or whatever.' "

Reflection appeared to be included as a step in the process, represented largely in this study by instances of the teacher questioning students' compositional choices. Teachers B and C in particular demonstrated feedback that was led by specific, pointed questions. For example, Teacher C asked students why they chose to end their compositions with large leaps, and why their ears were more drawn to one example than another. These questions, although sometimes rhetorical in tone, encouraged students to consider their decisions in an intentional way, contributing to the metacognitive process. Teacher C indicated a desire for students to reflect on their work throughout the process of building the collaborative band piece.

Teacher B, in particular, excelled at addressing students with direct, targeted questions about their musical choices. Besides the questions already included in my discussion of the observed composition lesson, Teacher B gave examples of common questions used to help guide students in their independent work, including:

I really like this first measure here. How are you going to mix up that pattern in the second measure? That was an interesting note. Why'd you pick that note? What other notes sound good there, do you think? Could you add a third note? Why'd you pick those three instruments? I wonder if you could add a brass instrument. Would that be good, would you like that sound?

By using thorough questioning, teachers are able to help their students evaluate their creative options and make thoughtful choices about what should be included, excluded, or changed. The challenge, then, becomes how to begin practicing the art of asking when so much in performance

classes revolves around the act of directing. In order to encourage true reflection and support students in their revision efforts, teachers must carefully consider their roles in the performance classroom and recognize ways in which the traditional large ensemble power structure might influence students' decision-making.

Social Issues in Composition Instruction

The interviews were particularly helpful in illuminating some of the social issues related to composition instruction. All three teachers seemed acutely aware of the social hierarchy of their band classes, including how their role as a teacher functions within the class as a whole, and they made conscious efforts to teach composition in a socially sensitive, responsible manner. Teacher A, B, and C held in common an awareness of students' emotional responses to instruction as well a concern for their overall classroom culture, including building a positive rapport with students and engendering a collaborative spirit within their classrooms.

Awareness of Students' Emotional Responses

In their extended interviews, all three participants made comments signifying their sensitivity to students' individual emotional needs. Teachers A and C worried about student confidence levels in particular, contending that their students were "nervous" (Teacher C) or "terrified" (Teacher A) to perform their original works in class. Teacher A suspected that intimidation by peers may lead students to shy away from composing, remarking that "they may want to write something but, well, that might sound silly, that might sound stupid, and so they may not do that" but also acknowledged that the presence of a teacher had the potential to unnerve or pressure some students, saying, "I don't really know if it's intimidation or not—I mean, I don't know if they feel like they have to do a certain thing when I'm there."

Teacher C echoed these concerns, holding that when teachers ask students to perform their own works, "they get so nervous. And it's their creation. And then they're putting their creation out there. So, what you're doing is, you are adding a lot of pressure." This teacher also noted that some students only turned their compositions in after the initial collection and performances were complete and wondered if they were perhaps "afraid" to share their work. In order to shield students from negative feelings, Teacher C even planned to delay asking students for specific corrections until the final composition was approaching completion, explaining, "I don't want to stymie any of their excitement. And because it is creativeness, and it is their own, it's personal, you've got to be careful." Teacher C also considered the voting process to be potentially troublesome from a social standpoint, saying that next time, the students would vote with their eyes closed in order to avoid feeling pressured to vote a certain way because they're "human. [They're] afraid, you know."

Significantly, the teachers' awareness of and concern for students' feelings influenced their instructional design. They were reluctant to ask students to perform on instruments, for example, and Teacher C postponed the revision step of the creative process until it was more likely that student excitement wouldn't be quelled by a teacher's request to make changes to their work. In this way, the emotional issues present in composition instruction are important not just from a purely social standpoint, but from an educational one as well.

Classroom Culture: Maintaining a Positive Rapport

As noted in Chapter 5, each of the three classrooms I observed featured a positive rapport between the teacher and the students. They were well-managed, focused, and overall cheerful places to learn. This positive energy was viewed as helpful in combatting some of the emotional concerns addressed previously. For example, Teacher B claimed that the students observed in

this study were not particularly nervous about composing, but explained that their confidence was likely due to the establishment of a positive atmosphere and rapport, arguing:

I don't think really my kids are nervous about much of anything, at least band-related, or trying new things-wise. They're pretty—they're pretty good about that. And I think they trust me enough, I hope they trust me enough that they'll kind of do what I ask. Maybe that's a little bit naive, but I feel like my kids and I have a really good rapport and they trust me that I'm going to do the things that make them better. That's something that I talk about a lot.

Teacher B's lesson contained a portion of the assignment in which students were asked to form pairs and rehearse their compositions together. This situation has the potential to be fraught with social issues: avoiding exclusion, managing extraneous conversation, encouraging socially anxious students, and even respecting others' work methods and products. I found, however, that the students in Teacher B's classroom seemed to encounter none of these problems. They paired off quickly and without argument and worked happily throughout the lesson period. Teacher B agreed that the social aspects of the lesson went smoothly and added, "I would hope that's a product of the classroom culture that I try and create. We want to have fun, and I think when I teach I try to have fun, make the kids smile and laugh, but at the same time, it's business."

Teacher A commented that students might be nervous about sharing their work, but never completely decline to participate in their warm-up compositions because the class atmosphere is relaxed enough for them to feel comfortable contributing:

I try to approach them in a very positive way so that they don't feel --I've never had a student say, "No, I don't want to do it." I've had students who will sit there and start

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laughing, like, "I can't"…I try to make it very laid back, very relaxed. I haven't received

any negative feedback, have never received students going, "I just don't want to do this."

A positive working environment like the classrooms described above is essential for helping

students feel comfortable sharing their own work with others, particularly if they are battling

feelings of fear or nervousness.

Classroom Culture: Fostering Collaboration

An obvious benefit to a classroom in which students feel safe to share their work with

others is a sense of cohesiveness among students. This cohesiveness and ability to work together

becomes particularly important when students are creating collaboratively. In these instances, it

is necessary for teachers to help foster a collaborative spirit in their classrooms. All three of the

lessons I observed were collaborative in nature, at least in part, and the teachers reflected a

concern for collaboration in their interviews.

Teacher C, in particular, was consciously focused on making sure no students were

excluded from the class's collaborative composition project, saying, "I'm also trying to be very

sensitive. . . I want to make sure that no one feels left out, that mine wasn't as good as X, okay?"

Although students submitted work individually, they voted as a class to choose which elements

would be included in the final piece, and the teacher was insistent about saving rejected

compositions in case elements from them could be used later on. Teacher C clarified that "it

may not be the exact motif or whatever, we may only use the rhythmic components of it, but then

everybody feels like, 'My part was used there.' And I'm going to try and go back and pull those

different things…And I'm going to gauge on, this person hasn't give me a lot of feedback."

Teacher C also planned to ask students' opinions of musical decisions such as instrumentation

and the role of percussion, so that "they feel like they've had a contribution too."

Teacher A also expressed a desire to help all students, even those with weaker musical skills, participate in group composition, saying, "Sometimes if I know a student is maybe struggling a little bit or maybe is not as outgoing—not to pick on them but to just sort of, help them out a little bit, I think that encouraging the creativity, encouraging the students to create stuff, I think that helps out a whole bunch." The idea of creative work "helping out" a less confident student was repeated by Teacher C, who described an instance in which one student presented an original piece in front of his peers, and they reacted with encouragement. According to this teacher, peer encouragement "validates" the student and helps motivate them from a social standpoint. Teacher C spoke of collaborative composition efforts as a key way to "hopefully tighten the cohesiveness of that group," eventually increasing retention rates in performance programs.

The Role of the Teacher

The conscious effort to adjust one's teaching persona to encourage creativity and participation was not limited just to issues of collaboration. Indeed, the three teachers participating in this study found their teaching roles shifted throughout their composition instruction. They described themselves not as trying to "teach" or "direct" students, but as attempting to "guide" or "facilitate" their learning. The idea of the composition teacher as a "guide" has appeared previously in the research on composition instruction, and it was evident again in this study. The following are some of the statements teachers A, B, and C made in their interviews pertaining to the idea of "guiding" their students:

• "[When teaching composition] I'm much less of a leader, and I'm more of a suggester. 'Hey, that's cool, or you could do that. Think about that,' instead of, you know, 'I like

how you played that forte, but it was a little too much.' You know, like, instead of being the end all be all, I'm more of a suggesting this, kind of leading them" (Teacher B).

• "I become more of a guide when I get up to the high school, especially if they've been doing it for a couple years. . . At the high school level, it's more a guide, it's more of a, "ok, let's listen to that, okay…does that note really fit, or what could you do to make that end a little bit better, where it sounds a little bit better?" (Teacher A).

• "Well, I think it's more guided [at the middle school]. Real guided, 'Okay, here's what you need to do next,' because they don't know. 'How do we build a band work? How do I write a piece?' So, that's part real guided" (Teacher C).

• "It's been more structure at the middle school, guiding them with certain parameters but never limiting their ability once we get beyond understanding how the music's structured. But never limiting and saying, 'Let's do this rhythm.' I've never done that…High school, different…some light guiding, but it's not constricting the creativeness" (Teacher C).

• "I'm trying to be real careful. I want to guide, not orchestrate and tell them how to write" (Teacher C).

Teachers who are functioning as guides recognize the power structures at play in their classrooms and make a concerted effort to shift power to the students. For example, they may emphasize student ownership in the work, saying, "They get to make the final decisions. It's their work, it's not mine" (Teacher C). Teacher C elaborated on the differences between teaching composition and leading more traditional band rehearsals, saying:

At the middle school level, from teaching band to the composition, composition is much freer, and…it has more surprises in it. And it allows me to see what they're offering in creativity. Flip side of that in band, rehearsing them, it's more structured, "I need you to

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do this, this, this, and this," they go home, they do this, this, this, and this…The other is more about them, less about me.

There exists an awareness of the ability of students to "offer" something to the classroom, functioning not as passive receivers of information, but as active components in the educational process. The focus in composition instruction is not the teacher and his or her body of knowledge, but the students and their abilities to create. Teacher must thus relinquish their positions as traditional authority figures -- at least temporarily -- and perform more of a secondary role in the classroom.

Part of transitioning from the traditional authority role to a guiding role is learning to provide feedback that challenges students without explicitly judging them. Teacher C admitted, "I had to be careful not to go (whispers), 'Ooh, yeah!' because I had that [impulse]. So I think that was my challenge today was to not influence their decision of, 'That was much better.'" Study participants emphasized the importance of students making decisions without influence from teachers, telling them, "You don't have to do it like this, but you can, it's just an idea" (Teacher B). For the three teachers in the study, feedback often took the form of questions, "trying to get them to think about the process and whether they like something or not" (Teacher B). This focus on questioning is also a part of encouraging students to reflect and is addressed in my previous discussion of reflection and revision in composition lessons.

Benefits of Composition Instruction

This section will discuss the benefits of composition instruction as identified by the three participating teachers in their interviews. One benefit, the opportunity for individual creative expression, was discussed previously. The other two benefits mentioned most frequently were reinforcement of music skills and increasing student motivation.

Composition and Reinforcement of Music Skills

By far, the most commonly touted benefit of composition instruction was the

reinforcement of musical skills, both performance and theory-oriented. The three teachers in the

study consistently repeated the idea of using composition exercises to teach, practice, and assess

basic music knowledge. As Teacher B put it, "The composition aspect is a way to get that

knowledge and have it stick." Table 13 shows a selection of comments related to using

composition as skills reinforcement, along with which skills are reinforced.

Table 13: Composition as reinforcement of specific musical skills

Interview comment	Teacher	Applicable skills or information
"That is how I create that rhythm that I'm hearing in my head, I have to write it down here." That reinforces counting that we both teach, you know, just down the line.	C	Rhythm, Dictation
I talk about, well, what makes a good melody? Does it have to start on a certain note? Does it have to end on a certain note? What makes a good melody? Can it skip around a whole lot? Does it need to be more stepwise? So the first thing was just learning how to create a melody that made sense. Why does a melody have to end on this note? Well, why can't a melody end on like, the sixth of the scale? Well, for one thing it doesn't sound very good.	A	Melody, Cadences and contour
Today, we'll be doing sixteenth notes, writing compositions, because we're working on counting sixteenth notes, understanding how they fit together, understanding how eighth notes and sixteenth notes fit different patterns, etc, etc. So, that's what I want them to learn. The composition aspect is a way to get that knowledge and have it stick.	B	Rhythm, counting and performing sixteenth notes
It occurred me to that they probably…had never gotten the chance to manipulate the puzzle pieces of rhythm. And so it came from an intense frustration, like I would put syncopated rhythms especially, like (sings) daaaaaaah dah dah dah, like dotted quarter note, eighth note, quarter, quarter. . . And it just blew my mind that they couldn't break down that subdivision, like, you know, how many eighth notes are inside that quarter note. Couldn't answer, had no idea. And it started, like I said, like kind of a utilitarian tool to make them better readers and better timekeepers.	B	Rhythm, counting, pulse
And that leads us to, we talk about form, I usually	B	Form,

encourage—I'll tell them ABA form, you know, and you don't have to do it like this, but you can, it's just an idea. And we'll talk about harmony, like what notes—does that note sound good with that other note, or bad? We talk about transposition, we've done that before, so. The hope is as they get older, they're able to take on more of those higher concepts and apply it if they choose to do their project.		Harmony, Transposition
The follow-up was in [concert piece]. I don't know if you heard while we were talking, but there was a dotted eighth sixteenth rhythm that they were all clapping out there, while some of them were playing. So the application of what they did was, you know, hopefully they're able to play harder stuff more easily.	B	Rhythm, Performance
"Now, do you have an idea—when should that be hitting, when they're playing or in the silent moments?"…Either one's right, but, you know, they'll pick the one that makes the most musical sense, because they're drawing up on things that they've learned.	C	Analysis
Most of them did pretty well, there were some that were incorrect, and you can use that as another part of the teaching tool, go back and say, "Now okay, this here you missed rhythmically or whatever."	C	Rhythm
I want for them to hear. So for them to have the line, then if they don't have a computer at home or if they can't play piano, then I'm wondering how they're going to hear it aurally. Ok, they can play the line, "alright I'm going to put this to it, I'm remembering how the other line sounded in my head while I'm playing this and putting it to it." So I think that is, if they get that going, that's a whole other level of analytical thinking as well as creative thinking. But they're going to hear things different when they're playing. It's going to help them to listen across the group, they're going to, you know, hear things in a different way.	C	Harmony, Performance - blending and listening
I've also noticed that the students, they understand the music on the staff a lot more. They have an easier time reading the notes on the staff, understanding what the notes are on the staff, what is the staff doing, key signatures, all of that, all of that stuff compared to my older students.	A	Music reading, melody, common symbols
I would say it's improving just their overall understanding of how music's written, why it's written that way. Their sight reading skills have gotten a lot better.	A	Analysis, Sightreading

All three teachers in the study agreed that composition is "a way to go back and reinforce the

other components that you're supposed to be going over and making sure you're meeting those

standards" (Teacher C). Through all this reinforcement, students gain "a better understanding of music. They read better, they count better. They have a better understanding of what's going on in [a] piece of music" (Teacher A). Teacher B described how teaching composition has had a positive impact thusly:

> I'd say [the impact has been] positive because, like we've been talking about, the way that I use these, I think they're effective in having the concepts like rhythm take more of an internalized—It sticks a little bit more, I guess. It reinforces it…So, that's less time having to teach that. They can just, they can read it, and then we can go from, "count this rhythm" to "oh, good, okay, now look at the articulation and make this really sound like a march". . . it's good because it's less time pounding notes and rhythms. It's more time talking about making music.

The ability to reinforce rhythmic concepts with composition exercises has allowed Teacher B to spend more time on artistic and expressive elements when rehearsing on concert repertoire.

Motivation: Encouraging Musical Engagement Through Composition Instruction

The second—and perhaps most important—benefit of composition instruction as discussed by the three participating teachers is increased student motivation. Teacher C used composition as a means of keeping advanced students engaged in performance courses, reporting that one particular student was "bored—he did not want to do band this year…and he's had a very enjoyable time because we are doing other things." Teacher C worried that students who chose not to stay involved in music would be involved in more negative activities and contended that composition helps "make it interesting, so that kid that's bored and they get it can [say], 'can I go in the [computer] lab?' "

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Teacher C frequently mentioned the idea of students being excited about composition, speaking of an "undercurrent" of energy and predicting, "that excitement is going to continue to grow and grow and grow and grow, and then, wow, look what we did together." This teacher spoke of students being excited for their peers to compose and suggested that they were more willing to work hard to practice on another student's piece, saying, "there was another element of it, that is, may not have been spoken, but it was there, and that was, we want to do this well to please, because they worked hard to write this, so we want to do well."

Besides excitement for their peers' work, Teacher C said band students were also motivated by personal interests in composition. Teacher C described the recent positive response to composition in his classroom as:

> A really big huge blossom of students becoming excited and able to—it sort of made the circle complete. Oh, this is what I'm doing, now I can use it in this construct and create things of my own. And for some students it was, this is an assignment. For others it's been more of—and that's who I've sort of targeted and helped develop more—of, I really like this, I really want to do this.

Teacher C expressed a desire to continue building his high school composition program so that students could work on writing and recording projects "for their own pleasure" and argued that the students do possess an internal desire to create. Over 70% of Teacher C's students completed an optional composition assignment, suggesting that, indeed, nearly "everybody wants to be a part." According to Teacher C, "They watch other people and they go, 'I want to that.'" Teacher C continued speaking in this vein, attributing students' interest in composition to a desire to experience the act of creation by asserting, "The reason they want to do that [compose] is, they got to see their friend create. And, so they want to create."

Teacher A recognized composition as being a topic of personal interest to students, as well, noting that if improvisation exercises begin with a student "who wants to be involved in that creative process," the activities "can be really successful in a very short amount of time." Teacher A also credited the warm-up composition with positively affecting the atmosphere of the entire class period, saying:

> Adding the composition elements to the lesson, especially the warm-up—it creates a neat little element to the class. I don't really notice a big difference when I do it and when I don't do it. I do notice a big difference in the class when we're very successful. When we come up with a rhythm and then we start harmonizing then all of a sudden it just…it almost gets a life of its own. I notice a difference in the whole class when that happens at the beginning. The students feel a little—they seem to be a little more engaged, they seem a little more willing to make music, to be a little more expressive.

Teacher A argued that including composition in the warm-up helped make "the beginning of the class a little more interesting" and "a little more fun," going so far as to say that the composition exercises were "kind of tricking them into learning."

Other Benefits of Composition Instruction

The main benefits of composition instruction have already been discussed, including increasing student motivation, reinforcing basic musical skills, and providing a creative outlet for individual expression. The teachers in the study repeatedly emphasized these facets of their instruction, but they also called attention to other benefits of teaching composition in band.

Teacher A mentioned that teaching composition was "a great way to incorporate more SOLs [Standards of Learning] in the band class," something school systems are often under

pressure to do. Teacher C wondered if including composition might make "the weaker player become a stronger player" by providing additional, relevant material for them to practice. Teacher C also contended that composition could help keep students involved in music programs by "tighten[ing] the cohesiveness of the group" and providing opportunities for individuals to pursue their own musical interests, arguing:

> I think that composition can be—among all the other things that it is, it allows them to have creativity, it allows that camaraderie, it allows that collaborative process to work, it makes them goal-oriented and mission-minded, it may cause them to reflect more than any of their other musical processes have. It does eat into time, but I am not so sure that it should not be viewed as a way to hang onto some of those students who desperately need another level, without ever affecting everyone else.

Teacher C also commented on greater cultural reasons for teaching composition, including a deeper appreciation of music. This teacher was hopeful that the class's composition project "is going to be very meaningful and [make] them have a different mindset about their approach to music as well as a greater respect of what they're listening to in the music, every—I mean everywhere." For Teacher C, the goal of composition instruction goes beyond the band room and leads to a greater understanding of all music. Teacher C expressed concern for training the next generation of composers, asking, "By not teaching composition or exposing kids to that, what Beethoven have we left out of this century? Or what Schoenberg have we left out, or whoever?"

Impediments to Composition Instruction

Teachers A, B, and C were instrumental in pointing out the many benefits of composition instruction, as well as major impediments to including composition in their curricula. The most

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commonly mentioned impediment was a lack of time to devote to composition. Other

impediments included students' playing level, a lack of technological resources, classroom

management challenges, a lack of personal experience composing, and differing priorities.

Lack of Time as an Impediment to Composition Instruction

Clearly, the largest impediment to composition instruction from the point of view of band

teachers is a lack of time. Preliminary survey results indicated that 79% of respondents felt they

lacked time to address composition as often as they would like to, and my conversations with

Teachers A, B, and C confirmed that they, too, felt the same limitations. Teacher C, in

describing a "dream" composition program, expressed a desire to offer composition as a

dedicated high school course, but then seemed frustrated with the idea, saying, "Could I teach it?

I don't know when. I mean, really and truly, that's the thing, it's the time factor." Teacher C

complained that, "the stove is full, and we've got things on warmers over here, and we've got—

we're trying to make sure it's all happening. For all that we have going on and that I want to do

for my kids, and what they want to do, we really need another person, and I need a secretary."

Indeed, Teacher C revealed a conscious decision to put less energy towards more traditional

playing goals, such as performing at the highest difficulty level, in order to dedicate time to other

educational endeavors, explaining:

> I've sort of changed my way of looking at everything. I would much rather back it down
>
> and play grade 5 [of six levels on the VBODA scale], because that gives me more time. . .
>
> Which is more important? Grade 6, and I've got to browbeat them to get it, and it's going
>
> to be a struggle and, you know, dampen the fires of these other things [extra ensembles]?
>
> Or do I keep that going? Well, the same thing would be—the reason I said all of those
>
> things is it's the same way it is with composition.

Teacher C conceded that it was difficult to include composition alongside regular rehearsals and remarked that the way to "balance" was "trying to find that time." Even within individual composition lessons, time is a factor. Teacher C chose to play the students' compositions for them primarily in an effort to save instructional time, and remarked that in order to prepare the band's composition for their spring concert, "We're going to really have to start picking up the pace…they're going to have to work really hard, really fast, and so am I."

The other two teachers reinforced the theory that lack of time is the primary impediment to composition instruction. At one point, Teacher B said very simply, "Time is huge." I asked Teacher B to describe his dream composition-within-band program, and after taking a minute to consider the possibilities, this teacher began by immediately declaring, "OK, I would need more time. I would want to either see my kids every day or have a double block or something." Teacher B agreed with Teacher C that integrating composition into more traditional rehearsal was a challenge, saying, "I never get to do as much [composition] as I would like." Teacher B blamed a lack of time for the absence of a revision step in composition lessons, saying, "My feeling is just that, we usually don't have time for that. Because it always takes longer than I want it to."

Teacher A similarly regretted having to give up a revision step due to a lack of time, saying, "I wish I had more time to go back and revise or maybe give them a second chance at writing that melody, so that they actually start thinking about what the notes sound like, they start thinking about what the notes feel like, so that it makes it something more enjoyable to play." Teacher A, like the other two educators in this study, doesn't "have a whole lot of time," and provided several concrete reasons for the absence of more instructional time, including

shortened class periods, school assemblies, and pressure to prepare concert music, making the

following comments in our post-observation interview:

(1) My time with the students has gotten shorter and shorter and shorter.

(2) At the high school level I have a little bit more freedom because I have more time. . . I

usually don't have a full band to do a lot of rehearsing, so, we'll do a lot of extra things

like working on composition, you know, group things, individual projects like that.

(3) Well, whenever we get closer to a concert, you know—I mean, all of a sudden, even

working on scales, that's thrown out the door when you're getting ready for a concert.

And at least in this school system, a lot of times, band or the electives are the first thing

that they pull out. I mean, if there's an assembly and the principal needs to talk to that

grade level, or if there's a special thing happening it's always pulled out of the elective

class. And sometimes you don't know about it until the day before or even the day of, so

that's the biggest thing.

It is not surprising, then, given the survey results and these interview comments, that when asked

why their colleagues might not teach composition in their classes, all three teachers immediately

answered "time."

Other Impediments to Composition Instruction

Although lack of time was clearly the biggest impediment to composition instruction

identified in this study, interviews also revealed other reasons teachers might not work on

composition as often as desired. One common lamentation was the lack of appropriate

technology. Teacher A asserted:

I wish I had a SMART Board or something like that, because if I did, then when the

students create that melody, I would actually put that melody up on the board. Put

something like up on Finale or Sibelius [notation softwares] and very quickly copy and paste it to a whole score of instruments so that everyone can see it. I'd love to be able to do this melody creation and actually show the melody written on the page. (Teacher A)

The idea of being able to visually present melodies quickly and in multiple keys was echoed by Teacher C, who said, "If I really had my druthers, I think it would be really good to have that web-based format, so that we could use a projector, so they can visualize what everyone is doing." Teacher C also mentioned a desire to use notation software and an electronic keyboard, and wished his "Finale chops" were "a lot quicker and better" so that computer input would be more fluid.

Teachers also noted students' playing level as a common hindrance. Teacher B, frustrated with students' inability to keep a pulse without a conductor, argued that an ideal composition program would include more chamber music to increase students' ensemble playing skills and provide opportunities to work in smaller groups. Teacher A commented on an issue in the observed lesson, in which an improvising student needed additional help to provide a base rhythm for his classmates to alter:

The lesson, when we do that warm-up, when I have a student create something for me, it really depends on the student. Sometimes they'll just [gestures]. And then once that happens—that kind of happened with him. It was like all of a sudden, he couldn't think of anything, and that kind of stalls the lesson a little bit.

In this case, a student's playing errors impacted not just an individual's work, but the pacing of an entire lesson. Teacher C expressed a desire to include seventh graders as well as eighth graders in the collaborative composition assignment, but noted that "because of their playing level, and

some things that they're doing and stuff and other things that go in the course of the day, their ability to have quite as much input is limited."

Classroom management concerns were also thought of as impediments to composition instruction. Teacher A, who had been confronted with several winter weather delays and cancellations prior to our interview and observation, felt as though consistency of routine needed to be prioritized over creativity. Teacher A explained, "This week is the first time I've had them three days in a row…so it's like, continuity, just like routine, it's been a battle, been a real battle." This teacher also mentioned feeling frustrated with interruptions such as broken instruments, saying, "One thing I noticed the beginning of this second semester, is that I've had a lot of kids come up to me with issues with their instrument, and it's been a struggle getting the class going." When asked why high school students began their compositions on Noteflight instead of on their band instruments, Teacher A pointed out that combining instruments and computers would create a challenging management environment, particularly with regard to noise level and space, saying, "I've also thought about bringing the instrument into the computer lab, which would be a little (laughs) crazy…Yeah, it'd be loud."

Teacher B also acknowledged classroom management issues as possible impediments to composition. In the observed lesson, students were asked to start working silently, because the teacher worried that "if I didn't have their absolute attention on the beginning of the assignment, we wouldn't have been as successful." Teacher B reflected on classroom management challenges, describing instances in which "you'll be talking, and they'll be looking at you but they won't be listening, you know?" Teacher B argued that the students were "very smart, but if they're not focused, it doesn't show" and designed the lesson so that they could supposedly achieve their best focus. However, it's important to note that by starting in silence, the students

were not able to complete the exploratory process deemed so critical to creativity. They were not allowed to improvise or experiment, only to write. While this might have been necessary from a classroom management perspective, it could certainly be viewed as an impediment to teaching composition in a holistic, research-based manner, allowing students to utilize the creative process to its full extent.

Teacher B also pointed out that differences in personal experiences with composition might discourage others from including it in their band classes. Teacher B hypothesized that other teachers don't see composition "as a goal of their programs," going on to clarify that "a goal for them is not to be a composer. A goal for them is to create a good band." This difference in educational priorities might very well stem from their own background as band students. According to Teacher B, "I think a lot of people don't do it because they were never taught [composition]. It was never part of their high school or college band experience." The results of the preliminary survey in this study appear to back up this assumption, with 24% of respondents indicating that a lack of training hindered the frequency of their composition instruction. Indeed, over three-quarters (76%) of the survey respondents revealed that they had not participated in composition as a middle or high school band student.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent band teachers are engaging in composition instruction in southwest Virginia. In particular, the study sought to examine the extent to which teachers utilized the creative process, as described by Hickey, Burnard, and Webster, as a guide in their instruction. Sub-problem questions to be considered were: (1) How are these teachers designing composition assignments, i.e. are their lessons guided by an understanding of the creative process or by other means? (2) Are composition assignments and teaching practices aligned with the musical creative process as it is understood by researchers? Additional questions to be explored were:

- Do teachers face common impediments to teaching composition? If so, what are they?

- Have teachers undergone any training to increase their understanding of creativity, the creative process, or pedagogical approaches to music composition?

- During composition lessons, how much time is spent on each of the following: improvisation or exploratory exercises, listening and analysis, music theory, performance skills, reflection, revision, non-composition content, and general classroom management?

- Are composition lessons aligned with the creative process as it is described by Hickey, Webster, and Burnard? Is there respect for individual processes, time for exploration, and time for reflection?

- How are the composition lessons designed? Are differing creative pathways allowed and encouraged, or do students follow a provided script or sequence?

- How do teachers go about planning their composition lessons? Are they guided by consideration of the creative process or by other factors?

- What do teachers identify as their primary goals in composition instruction?

• What suggestions can be made to improve composition instruction in secondary

instrumental programs?

• What are some specific characteristics of effective composition instruction?

Through examination of a preliminary survey, careful study of three classroom

observations, and analysis of teacher interviews, it was found that although some band teachers

are making an effort to include composition in their curricula, the area in general is lacking.

There is no standardized pedagogical approach, and teachers vary greatly in their understanding

and implementation of the components of the creative process.

Given that composition instruction is required by the Virginia state standards and

National standards for music education, it is troubling that so many teachers are not addressing

this topic in their classes. It is even more alarming that those who do attempt to teach

composition are typically forced to rely on their own trials and experiences in composition to

design assignments, due to the absence of a standard pedagogical method. The research begs the

question: why isn't composition pedagogy being addressed in collegiate music education

programs? Why are teachers placed in a position in which they must develop their own

pedagogy, based only on their personal experiences? If composition is important enough to be

required, shouldn't teachers be better prepared to teach it?

Based on the lessons observed for this study, portions of the creative process are being

supported in band classes, most notably respect for individual thought processes. Teachers are

allowing time for students to work individually and, as much as possible, make a great effort to

avoid influencing student work through their comments. Although I suspected the traditional

social hierarchy of band might impede teachers from addressing composition in a manner that is

supportive of the creative process, the teachers I observed took care to adjust their roles in the

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classroom so that students would be afforded the greatest possible creative space. The greatest limitations on creative freedom in this study stemmed from the design of each assignment, not the classroom culture or hierarchy.

Survey results suggest that composition instruction in southwest Virginia is still lacking in frequency, but that this is likely due to common impediments, including: lack of time, student playing level, lack of available technology, classroom management issues, and differing personal experiences with composition, including educational or curricular priorities. Most teachers appear to be personally interested in composition and supportive of its inclusion in the classroom, but are not always able to fit it into their band classes due to these concerns.

The observations and subsequent interviews revealed that personal experience is an important factor in composition instruction, as teachers tended to teach the way they were taught or the way they compose. Teachers' personal experience affected instructional design, including lesson goals and procedures.

Interview content suggested that the band classroom culture, including teacher rapport, sensitivity to student feelings, a sense of collaboration, and efficient classroom management were common concerns of teachers. A positive classroom culture seemed to help increase student engagement and confidence in composition assignments. Teachers played an active role in fostering positive feelings and encouraging participation among their students.

The teachers in this study shared a common focus on individualization of composition instruction and an awareness of the teacher's role in the classroom. As their students progressed in music knowledge, their composition pedagogy shifted from structure to freedom, eventually allowing students to work almost completely independently on their own pieces. They identified their role in composition lessons as shifting from "teacher" to "guide" and took care not to put

undue influence on students' work. They also shared a common understanding of composition as a series of musical decisions, rather than as a product of pure inspiration or emotional expression, and structured the scope of their pedagogy to support students' learning to make these decisions. Lessons were sequenced gradually to move from practice with manipulating the fundamental elements of music to freer assignments in which students were given more liberty to compose as they wished. Pedagogy was based largely on teachers' personal experience as students or as composers themselves. Lessons were goal-oriented and based around specific objectives rather than on ensuring time for all aspects of the creative process.

Teachers do not agree on the best method for structuring composition lessons or whether compositional goals should be more utilitarian, expressive, or exploratory or in nature. There is also disagreement as to how much freedom is helpful to students, with many teachers arguing that structure and constraints are necessary for young composers, despite research to the contrary. During composition lessons, very little time is spent on improvisation or exploratory exercises or on reflection and revision. Depending on the lesson, listening, analysis, music theory, or performance skills may or may not be emphasized. Non-composition content was not typically included as part of composition lessons and was relegated to a separate, clearly delineated rehearsal period. Classroom management was a nonissue during the observed lessons, with teachers spending very little time on management or discipline during their class periods.

Implications

If a common pedagogy of composition were to be developed based on this study, it might include the following tenets:

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• Instruction moves gradually from basic skills practice within designated restraints toward maximum creative freedom. Despite research to the contrary (Hickey, 2003), most instructors seem to favor more restriction in beginning assignments.

• Teachers act as guides, rather than authority figures.

• Teachers consider social issues and encourage a positive, collaborative class culture.

• Teachers encourage student reflection and decision-making through careful, neutral questioning, but these questions do not necessarily lead to any revision of student work..

• Teachers allow students the opportunity for independent work and support individualization of composition instruction.

• Composition is viewed as a series of carefully considered musical decisions, rather than an as a purely expressive or exploratory exercise.

• Composition instruction has many benefits and is of value to music teachers.

• Technology is used as an auxiliary aid, but not a central feature of instruction.

• Teachers need ample time to address composition within their band classes.

• Teachers may need assistance in learning to facilitate the exploration and revision steps of the creative process.

• Assignments are goal-oriented. Over time, assignments move from utilitarian to more creative or expressive in nature.

The identification of these commonalities in composition teachers is important largely because it has not yet been done. There is currently no standard accepted pedagogy of composition, and, based on the preliminary survey, band teachers appear to harbor a wide spectrum of attitudes about composition and how it should be taught. It is hoped that by illuminating common beliefs in composition instruction, it will be easier for teachers to begin a

proper dialog about how this educational process might best occur. Specifically, the steps of exploration and revision are missing from composition instruction as it was observed for this study. Teachers may wish to consider the importance of these steps in developing the cognitive processes of young composers and discuss methods for including them in their instructional designs.

Strengths in Composition Instruction

Without examining the end products of student work, it is difficult to determine which instructional techniques are most "effective." For the purposes of this study, teaching techniques have been evaluated using their alignment with the three major components of the musical creative process, which are: (1) time for exploration, (2) respect for individual processes, (3) time for reflection.

This study found a major strength of composition instruction is a respect for individual processes. Teachers took care to allow students the opportunity to work independently and guide their decision making without pressuring students to choose one compositional option over another. Teachers were comfortable shifting their role in the classroom away from the forefront of instruction to a more secondary, "helping" position. Teachers also demonstrated an acute awareness of the social issues involved in teaching composition, including a desire to engender a positive, collaborative atmosphere within their classrooms. They also exhibited a thorough understanding of their lesson objectives and goals, including whether or not composition lessons were to be more utilitarian or expressive in nature.

Limitations of the Study

This study took place over a limited geographic area in order to give the research a more localized focus. A larger study with more participants might return different results. The results

of this study are not generalizable and, because of the specific nature of the classroom observations and interviews, are not considered repeatable.

This study does not encompass band practices at the elementary or college level and does not include student data or work as part of its results. It does not evaluate the end products of composition instruction techniques, only their apparent strengths and weaknesses based on classroom observations. A rubric or qualitative evaluation tool would need to be developed in order to compare the quality of composition work done in the three classes.

Suggestions for Further Research

Research on the field of creativity as it applies to music composition, particularly within the context of school band classes, is lacking. There are few studies examining composition instruction within the confines of performance courses, and few again examining the instructional design of composition assignments from a theoretical framework of creativity. Any further study dealing with these elements would be a valuable addition to the field, particularly since composition is a requirement in the National Standards for music (NAfME 2013). A number of specific issues might be addressed, including:

1. How is the quality of student work affected by varying instructional designs? What type of composition instruction produces more innovative, expressive compositions: utilitarian, theory-driven lessons, "free" composition, collaborative projects, or perhaps individual instruction?

2. Teachers in this study seemed to agree on a basic instructional progression of beginning constraints moving towards freedom. Further research might reveal which specific constraints are used at what times and whether or not a common sequence of composition skills is used.

3. What are the major differences in learning outcomes and creativity levels in assignments using traditional notation as compared to those using nonstandard notation or no notation? How does the use of computer-aided notation influence students' compositions? How does the ability to use computer-aided notation change instruction?

4. One issue of contention that was not addressed by this study is that of assessment. For example, how do teachers currently assess composition assignments? How should teachers assess composition assignments? How would the inclusion of a standardized assessment process impact student work and motivation?

5. Since classroom culture and the social issues surrounding composition instruction were clear priorities with the three teachers involved in this research, further research might explore whether or not there is a statistical correlation between classroom atmosphere and student engagement in composition assignments.

6. Further research might measure the influence of composition instruction on other aspects of music learning. Do musicians who compose become better players, expressively or technically? Do students who are taught composition develop a better understanding of music theory? Does including composition improve student motivation and engagement? Does taking time for composition negatively impact other band skills or concert performance quality?

7. Considering the fact that the state and national standards for music education require composition for all students, why aren't teacher preparation programs training teachers to teach composition? Would a common pedagogy, studied by pre-service teachers in college, positively support the inclusion of composition activities in band classes?

8. Does including composition in band classes improve band recruitment and retention? Would more frequently addressing creative tasks, rather than focusing exclusively on performance and music theory, make instrumental programs more relevant in public schools?

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Q1 Approximately how many students are currently enrolled in your band program in grades 6-8?

○ 1-50 (1)
○ 51-100 (2)
○ 101-150 (3)
○ 151-200 (4)
○ over 200 (5)

Q2 Approximately how many students are currently enrolled in your band program in grades 9-12?

○ 1-50 (1)
○ 51-100 (2)
○ 101-150 (3)
○ 151-200 (4)
○ over 200 (5)

Q3 Apart from band, what music courses are offered at your school? Check all that apply.

❑ General music, middle school level (1)
❑ General music, high school level (2)
❑ Music theory (3)
❑ Music composition (4)
❑ Music history (5)
❑ Music appreciation (6)
❑ Digital music (7)
❑ Piano (8)
❑ Guitar (9)
❑ Chorus (10)
❑ Orchestra (11)
❑ Other (12) _____

Q4 How many years have you been teaching?

○ 1-5 years (1)
○ 6-10 years (2)
○ 11-20 years (3)
○ over 20 years (4)

Q5 What is your highest degree attained?

○ Bachelors (1)
○ Masters (2)
○ Doctorate (3)

Q6 What grades do you currently teach? Check all that apply.
- ❑ K-5 (1)
- ❑ 6-8 (2)
- ❑ 9-12 (3)
- ❑ other (4) _____

Q7 How would you describe your school setting?
- ❍ rural (1)
- ❍ suburban (2)
- ❍ city (3)

Q8 What is your training in composition? Check all that apply.
- ❑ No formal training. (1)
- ❑ Elective courses in college. (2)
- ❑ Required courses in college. (3)
- ❑ Some professional development. (4)
- ❑ Private study. (5)

Q9 In the following questions, composition is defined as any activity in which students create original music, planned out prior to its performance. Notation is not necessarily required. How often do you include composition activities in your band classes?
- ❍ Never (1)
- ❍ Less than Once a Month (2)
- ❍ Once a Month (3)
- ❍ 2-3 Times a Month (4)
- ❍ Once a Week (5)
- ❍ 2-3 Times a Week (6)
- ❍ Daily (7)

Q10 If you do not typically teach composition in your band classes, or do not teach it as often as you'd like, what is the reason? Check all that apply.
- ❑ Lack of time. (1)
- ❑ Too many students in the class. (2)
- ❑ Lack of training. (3)
- ❑ Lack of equipment or resources. (4)
- ❑ Composition is covered in another course. (5)
- ❑ Composition is not a priority in my ensemble classes. (6)
- ❑ Other: click to write. (7) _____
- ❑ I do typically teach composition in my band classes. (8)

Q11 If you do typically teach composition in band, how do you fit it into your curriculum? Check all that apply.
- ❑ Short warm-up or exit activities. (1)
- ❑ Composition exercises included in the method book. (2)
- ❑ Dedicated composition lessons. (3)
- ❑ Provide time for students to work independently on compositions while others rehearse. (4)
- ❑ Assign composition for homework. (5)
- ❑ Full-class composition. (6)
- ❑ Small group composition. (7)
- ❑ Individual compositions. (8)
- ❑ Composition using technology or computer notation. (9)
- ❑ Composition using traditional (standard) notation. (10)
- ❑ Composition using non-standard notation. (11)
- ❑ Composition without a notation requirement. (12)
- ❑ Other (13) _____
- ❑ I do not regularly teach composition in band. (14)

Q12 If you regularly teach composition, do your students perform their original work? Check all that apply.
- ❑ Yes, in class. (1)
- ❑ Yes, in a concert setting. (2)
- ❑ No, they do not perform. (3)
- ❑ I do not regularly teach composition in band. (4)
- ❑ Other (5) _____

Q13 Please read the following statement and indicate your response below: I believe the study of composition is essential to the developing musician.
- ❍ Strongly Agree (1)
- ❍ Agree (2)
- ❍ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- ❍ Disagree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q14 Please read the following statement and indicate your response below: I believe composition belongs in instrumental ensemble courses.
- ❍ Strongly Agree (1)
- ❍ Agree (2)
- ❍ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- ❍ Disagree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q15 Please read the following statement and indicate your response below: Performance requirements often interfere with my ability to teach composition in ensemble classes.
○ Strongly Agree (1)
○ Agree (2)
○ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
○ Disagree (4)
○ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q16 Please read the following statement and indicate your response below: I feel I have a strong understanding of the musical creative process as it applies to composition in young people.
○ Strongly Agree (1)
○ Agree (2)
○ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
○ Disagree (4)
○ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q17 Please read the following statement and indicate your response below: I address the Virginia SOL requirements for composition in my yearly curriculum.
○ Strongly Agree (1)
○ Agree (2)
○ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
○ Disagree (4)
○ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q18 Please read the following statement and indicate your response below: I enjoy composing on my own.
○ Strongly Agree (1)
○ Agree (2)
○ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
○ Disagree (4)
○ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q19 Please read the following statement and indicate your response below: I often combine improvisation and composition in the same activity, or in related activities with my students.
○ Strongly Agree (1)
○ Agree (2)
○ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
○ Disagree (4)
○ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q20 Please read the following statement and indicate your response below: I separate improvisation and composition as two different activities with my students.
○ Strongly Agree (1)
○ Agree (2)
○ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
○ Disagree (4)
○ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q21 Please read the following statement and indicate your response below: I believe students compose most effectively when they are presented with limited choices, or with a "script" or sequence to follow.
○ Strongly Agree (1)
○ Agree (2)
○ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
○ Disagree (4)
○ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q22 Please read the following statement and indicate your response below: I believe students compose most effectively when they are given maximum freedom to create what they wish.
○ Strongly Agree (1)
○ Agree (2)
○ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
○ Disagree (4)
○ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q23 Please read the following statement and indicate your response below: I can recall participating in composition activities as a middle or high school band student.
○ Strongly Agree (1)
○ Agree (2)
○ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
○ Disagree (4)
○ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q24 If you regularly teach composition, can you please briefly describe a typical composition lesson? Include lesson procedures, learner goals, and assessment strategies where applicable.
○ Describe lesson here. (1) _____
○ I do not regularly teach composition in band. (2)

Q25 Would you be willing to participate in a voluntary case study on teaching composition, including a classroom observation and brief pre- and post-observation interviews? Case studies will be used for research purposes only, and no identifying information will be included in the final research report.
○ Yes. (1)
○ No (2)

Q26 Do you have any colleagues who are currently teaching composition in band classes who you would recommend as possible participants in a case study? Names and references will be kept confidential, and their participation would be voluntary.

❍ Yes - please include first and last name below. (1) _____

❍ No (2)

Q27 For research purposes ONLY, please provide your first and last name, your school district or county, and a phone number or email where we may reach you. This information will be kept confidential and not be linked to survey results or used in the final research report. Your name and any other identifying information will not be published, included in survey results, or viewed by anyone other than the researcher.   Please be sure to check and complete all three response fields.

❏ Your first and last name. (1) _____

❏ Your school district or county. (2) _____

❏ Contact phone or email. (3) _____

Appendix B: Interview Response Summaries

Teacher A

TEACHER A: Comment	Central Theme or Element
I took a couple courses in college that helped me understand the basics of composition. And then a lot of it, really was my own exploration, starting all the way when I was in middle school, just writing, just exploring music and what works, what doesn't.	Pedagogy and personal experience Exploration
Really, a lot of that [training in creativity] has been my own experience.	Pedagogy and personal experience
I just looked at, just the basics on just creating a melody, because that's the first thing you do when you write a piece of music is you want to have a melody. . . So that's the first thing is creating that melody and then I thought, okay, well, how can I incorporate this into the lesson? Well, how do we create a melody? Alright, let's find a rhythm first. That's the easiest thing.	Pedagogy and personal experience Building a foundation of musical mechanics Instructional design
A lot of times, when we try to create a rhythm I try to create something that's more stepwise, so that we can very easily have some people playing a third above.	Building a foundation of musical mechanics Performance considerations
The first time we go on Noteflight [computer notation program] the kids will just put whatever, just randomly put stuff, like, "oh, this sounds good." I talk about, well, what makes a good melody? Does it have to start on a certain note? Does it have to end on a certain note? What makes a good melody? Can it skip around a whole lot? Does it need to be more stepwise? So the first thing was just learning how to create a melody that made sense. Why does a melody have to end on this note? Well, why can't a melody end on the sixth of the scale? Well, for one thing, it doesn't sound very good. Does it have to end on this note or does it have to end on this note?	Building a foundation of musical mechanics Composition as a reinforcement of music skills
I like to try to get as much participation from the class as possible. I went ahead and took over and chose F because that one student chose E-flat so we're going up a fourth -- you're starting to get into a little bit of dangerous... when you're leaping that far, when you're getting that far away from the concert Bb. I was like, alright, I'm going to put F there, so we can easily come back down.	Performance considerations Role of the teacher

They do write that one melody for their own instrument, and then I ask them to perform in front of the class. And then, I have them do a two-part, and I'll play it on the piano, for them.	Performance considerations Role of the teacher
We use Noteflight. We'll go into the computer lab and get on Noteflight.	Technology
It starts off with just the group and then when we get into the computer lab it becomes an individual lesson.	Technology Independent work and individualized instruction
With the Noteflight, I'll encourage them to keep up with their account at home, like over the summer. I've been using Noteflight for about three or four years now, and I have some students up at the high school who have a whole portfolio of music that they've created or they've arranged, that's on that website.	Technology Independent work and individualized instruction
I wish I had a SMART Board or something like that, because if I did, then when the students create that melody, I would actually put that melody up on the board. Put something like up on Finale or Sibelius and very quickly copy and paste it to a whole score of instruments so that everyone can see it. I'd love to be able to do this melody creation and actually show the melody written on the page.	Technology Impediments to composition instruction
NG: Are they more comfortable sharing things they've written on the computer than playing themselves on their instruments? Yeah.	Technology Performance considerations Social issues and classroom culture
I think having a SMART Board, to where I could -- I don't know if they have the software where you could play something and it'll notate it on there, but either that happens, the student plays that rhythm and then it automatically is placed on the board, or I write it out there on the board for them after they play it. And then very quickly, I would love for, like, a trumpet player to play that rhythm, and then I put it up, and then they play it on a concert B-flat, and then maybe I ask that student to maybe change one note, and I put that on the board, and then I copy and paste, put it on all the different instruments so the students immediately see, "Ok, that's a concert B-flat for him, that's what my concert B-flat looks like, that's what a concert B-flat is for an alto saxophone."	Technology Building a foundation of musical mechanics

NG: I noticed you had to take time to practice each concert pitch. Yeah... That [SMART Board application] would eliminate that, and that would also give them an opportunity to see, "Oh, that's how these are related."... And then for those students who have a hard time comprehending doing that stuff just off the top of their head, they would have a visual.	Technology Building a foundation of musical mechanics Time as a major impediment
Well, what I'm doing now, the creation of a rhythm, that's strictly a group thing at first. And then, usually what I do for seventh grade and I do it for eighth grade too, is we'll actually get into composing.	Building a foundation of musical mechanics Scope and sequence
At the middle school level, I deal mostly with melody creation, and creating a melody that sounds good, that makes sense.	Building a foundation of musical mechanics Scope and sequence
When we get to the high school level, then we start working on harmony. We start working on two parts and the more advanced students, I give them the opportunity to do actually some different chords. Very, very basic. Very basic level harmony.	Building a foundation of musical mechanics Scope and sequence
Now, up at the high school level, I'll them to write a melody, an 8-bar melody, and then I'll ask them to write the melody for their instrument and then they play that.	Scope and sequence
I ask the student, "Alright, play me a 4-count melody, and put a different note on it," I mean, you do too much with -- you ask, especially a seventh grader that, most of them are not going to be able to comprehend that, they're going to have a really hard time with that. So, it's, alright, let's start with a rhythm. Ok. And then, let's just add maybe one or two different notes. When I first started doing this, instead of doing a different note for each count, I just changed one note. So we'd play all concert B-flat and I would put a concert C somewhere in there in the middle. And that's how we started doing that. Just so they start thinking about that.	Building a foundation of musical mechanics Scope and sequence Instructional design Creative cognition
And once we get into actually writing a rhythm, the first thing I do is I ask them to write out a 4-measure melody. And I will give restrictions, like I'll say, "It can only have half notes and quarter notes," so that we're not getting too crazy with note values that they really don't understand. So, we'll do that, and hearing the warm-ups, that creative process is starting a little bit. They're starting to think in that way. So when we go into the, alright create that four-measure melody, okay, they think	Building a foundation of musical mechanics Scope and sequence Freedom vs. restrictions

about the rhythm first. I've seen students write out underneath the staff the quarter notes or the half notes, and where they want those notes to be, and then they add the notes after.	Creative cognition
I think I did that [chose one harmony note] because it would have taken a little bit longer to try to explain to everyone, alright, think a third above B-flat, now think a third above concert E-flat, think a third above concert F. It would've been a little bit longer than I wanted to today.	Time as a major impediment
I don't have a whole lot of time. I try to keep it within the warm-up, so that it's not like, "Okay, now we're going to do composition, not we're going to do music theory." It's, "Let's create a melody." It makes it a little more fun. You're kind of tricking them into learning.	Time as a major impediment Motivation Instructional design
Well, whenever we get closer to a concert, you know -- I mean, all of a sudden, even working on scales, that's thrown out the door when you're getting ready for a concert. And at least in this school system, a lot of times, band or the electives are the first thing that they pull out. I mean, if there's an assembly and the principal needs to talk to that grade level, or if there's a special thing happening it's always pulled out of the elective class. And sometimes you don't know about it until the day before or even the day of, so that's the biggest thing.	Time as a major impediment
My time with the students has gotten shorter and shorter and shorter.	Time as a major impediment
At the high school level I have a little bit more freedom because I have more time. . . I usually don't have a full band to do a lot of rehearsing, so, we'll do a lot of extra things like working on composition, you know, group things, individual projects like that.	Time as a major impediment Independent work and individualized instruction
I'll usually be in the computer lab the entire period, just because I don't get to go in there as often, so when I am in there, I want to utilize as much time as I possibly can.	Technology Time as a major impediment
I try to do something like that [the warm-up] at least four times a week, if not five times a week. It's really easy just to do. Especially if I pick a student who's really outgoing, who wants to be involved in that creative process, that lesson can be really successful in a very short amount of time, within like two or three minutes.	Time as a major impediment Individualized instruction Motivation
The student created the melody and the melody was just a little	Time as a major

stepwise -- I think it was concert B-flat, concert C, concert D, back to concert B-flat, and we quickly expanded that to a third and then we had some people playing a fifth above that, so we had this huge -- oh, we had all this harmony happening, and it all happened within like a minute. And it was just like all this creativity, all this music that had never been created before and now we're hearing it for the very first time. And it all happened so fast. And then sometimes it doesn't happen as quickly.	impediment
This week is the first time I've had them three days in a row... so it's like, continuity, just like routine, it's been a battle, been a real battle.	Other impediments to composition instruction
One thing I noticed the beginning of this second semester, is that I've had a lot of kids come up to me with issues with their instrument, and it's been a struggle getting the class going with "my instrument's not working," "my instrument's not working," "my instrument's not working."	Other impediments to composition instruction
I've thought about trying to do both, like, having them start off on their instrument and maybe creating, maybe a rough draft or maybe just the beginning of the melody, starting with their instrument. And I've also thought about bringing the instrument into the computer lab, which would be a little (laughs) crazy... Yeah, it'd be loud.	Other impediments to composition instruction Instructional design
The lesson, when we do that warm-up, when I have a student create something for me, it really depends on the student. Sometimes . . . they'll just [gestures]. And then once that happens -- that kind of happened with him. It was like all of a sudden, he couldn't think of anything, and that kind of stalls the lesson a little bit.	Other impediments to composition instruction Independent work and individualized instruction Social issues
When it comes to -- here at the middle school, just creating the melody, it's something we just try to develop during the class time and they'll print it off and give it to me, or I'll go around and just listen to them. When I get to the high school level and they're doing more involved assignments like creating like an 8-measure melody or maybe creating two parts, we'll work on it in class and then I'll ask them to work on it -- I'll give them like a couple days to work on it by themselves, either on their own class time -- like if they find sometime between classes, or even if they do it at home, and that's to encourage them to work on it outside of the band class. Not so much that I want them to do it at home, it's just to encourage them to open up that Noteflight	Building a foundation of musical mechanics Scope and sequence Independent work and individualized instruction Motivation Benefits of

account at home or outside of the band class, so it becomes something that they don't just associate with the band class, it's something -- it's mine, it's something I can do outside of band. It's another way of advocating music outside of the band class.	composition instruction Technology
I find that they're a little more creative when they're at home.	Independent work
I find that, for example, I may ask them to write an 8-measure melody and they might have the basic outline of what they want to do and then, they work on it at home and when they come back a couple days later, when they turn it in, it's twice as much as what they had before. And again, I don't know if it's they feel a little more to create when they're at home.	Independent work Social issues and classroom culture
A lot of times when the students will create their melody on Noteflight, and when they try to play it, they realize, oh, these notes -- like, playing this note and this note, that really doesn't make a whole lot of sense. That doesn't sound right, it doesn't feel right. So, I wish I had more time to go back and revise or maybe give them a second chance at writing that melody, so that they actually start thinking about what the notes sound like, they start thinking about what the notes feel like, so that it makes it something more enjoyable to play.	Reflection and revision Time as a major impediment Performance considerations
I become more of a guide when I get up to the high school, especially if they've been doing it for a couple years. . . At the high school level, it's more a guide, it's more of a, "ok, let's listen to that, okay…does that note really fit, or what could you do to make that end a little bit better, where it sounds a little bit better?"	Role of the teacher Scope and sequence
I don't really know if it's intimidation or not -- I mean, I don't know if they feel like they have to do a certain thing when I'm there.	Role of the teacher Social issues and classroom culture
Most of the students, they hold onto them, they keep them in their band folder. I have some students who have every song that they've written -- they have seven or eight of the little melodies and songs in their little band folder and they've gotten to this thing where they'll create all these really (laughs) weird titles... and I guess it's another way for them to express themselves, instead of just playing their instrument, they're actually writing something, this song's about polka dotted penguins and something else... So, it's just another outlet for them to express themselves.	Composition as creative expression Benefits of composition instruction
NG: So you think they do better when they have a little more	Composition as

freedom? When they have more freedom to create what they want to. And really not so much what they want to hear, it's -- they're learning this new way to express themselves. I've gotten a lot more positive feedback from students doing that than when I was asking them to write out a specific thing, giving them specific instructions on what to write.	creative expression Freedom vs. restrictions
I just wanted to find another way for the students to be able to express themselves.	Composition as creative expression Benefits of composition instruction
The part of the lesson today that will include some composition will be our warm-up. What I'll do is I will -- we'll explore a rhythm or two and then the students will change the rhythm. The students will improvise on that rhythm and then we'll harmonize. Really what we're going to be doing in our warm-up is creating a melody, so just the very beginning of how you'd create a melody -- finding a rhythm, finding what notes you'd want to use... that's really the inspiration for the sequence that we're going to use in the warm-up.	Instructional design Building a foundation of musical mechanics
I've learned that the more I let the students create, the better. The very first time -- the very first lesson I did, I was basically sort of telling them what -- I think I asked them to write out like "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." I think I gave them the notes to write out and then I think I asked them to maybe improvise, change some notes, whatever notes they wanted to. And they did that fine but I don't think they got as much out of it as now, I'll give them -- we'll do what we just did: create a rhythm, just 4-beat, 4-count rhythm. Ok, let's add some notes to that. Alright, let's maybe do another measure. And then maybe another measure. They get a whole lot more out of that.	Freedom vs. restrictions Instructional design
I've also noticed that the students, they understand the music on the staff a lot more. They have an easier time reading the notes on the staff, understanding what the notes are on the staff, what is the staff doing, key signatures, all of that, all of that stuff compared to my older students.	Benefits of composition Composition as a reinforcement of music skills Building a foundation of musical mechanics

I would say it's improving just their overall understanding of how music's written, why it's written that way. Their sight reading skills have gotten a lot better.	Benefits of composition Composition as a reinforcement of music skills Building a foundation of musical mechanics
A better understanding of music. They read better, they count better. They have a better understanding of what's going on in the piece of music. I mean my freshmen and sophomores at the high school level, they were reading the prepared piece better than the juniors and seniors were. And I think, again, I think it's just -- I don't know if they see it in a different way? I'd like to give credit to the books I use, but I mean -- I can also see it, how the composition lessons are benefitting.	Benefits of composition Building a foundation of musical mechanics Creative cognition Composition as a reinforcement of music skills
Adding the composition elements to the lesson, especially the warm-up -- it creates a neat little element to the class. I don't really notice a big difference when I do it and when I don't do it. I do notice a big difference in the class when we're very successful. When we come up with a rhythm and then we start harmonizing then all of a sudden it just... it almost gets a life of its own. I notice a difference in the whole class when that happens at the beginning. The students feel a little -- they seem to be a little more engaged, they seem a little more willing to make music, to be a little more expressive.	Benefits of composition Motivation Classroom culture
When I first started doing it... I found it was a great way to incorporate more SOLs in the band class.	Benefits of composition
It makes the beginning of the class a little more interesting too. You're throwing different things at them.	Benefits of composition Motivation Instructional design
I try to approach them in a very positive way so that they don't feel --I've never had a student say, "No, I don't want to do it." I've had students who will sit there and start laughing, like, "I can't" (inaudible). I try to make it very laid back, very relaxed. I haven't received any negative feedback, have never received students going, "I just don't want to do this."	Motivation Social issues and classroom culture
Sometimes if I know a student is maybe struggling a little bit or	Social issues and

| maybe is not as outgoing—not to pick on them but to just sort of, help them out a little bit, I think that encouraging the creativity, encouraging the students to create stuff, I think that helps out a whole bunch. | classroom culture

Individualized instruction

Role of the teacher

Motivation

Benefits of composition |
|---|---|
| I think it's their peers [intimidating students]. They may want to write something but, well, that might sound silly, that might sound stupid, and so they may not do that. | Social issues and classroom culture |
| They're terrified of playing their own music. | Social issues and classroom culture |
| At the high school level, when I ask them to play their melody for their instrument, they're absolutely terrified. Some of them are fine with it, but most of them -- and then, that also helps reinforce my thinking that they're a little bit intimidated by their peers. | Social issues and classroom culture |
| Sometimes, especially when we get into the crunch time for concerts, I feel like it's no longer -- like the expression and creativity's no longer there. It's just, we're here to get this done. | Time as a major impediment

Composition as creative expression |
| Every now and then I would have a student put something in for Reflections, and they would ask me to look at it, and I'd look at it and go, "Oh my gosh" (grimaces, laughs). "This isn't very good." So, it was almost a little bit of pride, like, well, if I have a student who enters something -- if this young lady wants to enter a flute composition for Reflections, it better make sense. | Building a foundation of musical mechanics

Role of the teacher |

Teacher B

TEACHER B: Comment	Central Theme or Element
I started in high school, I tried to arrange -- I guess it's not compose, but -- tried to arrange a song for high school marching band, and that really kind of was interesting to me. In college I took composition lessons for four semesters I think, kind of did that. No one ever said, "This is how you teach composition," so	Pedagogy and personal experience

it's kind of just been me fitting little composition exercises into what I already do with my band students.	
I really loved motivic development. And my best stuff, I thought, was finding a little piece, and then finding all the ways I could possibly spin that. I love Beethoven's writing, because his motivic development is just sensational. Like, the symphony number 7, getting into the exposition of the introduction, you know the (sings). I just love that! He's so good at that. And so, I really enjoyed that motivic development, so for me it usually started with that, whether it was a melodic motive, a rhythmic motive, a harmonic motive.	Pedagogy and personal experience
The fundamentals of composition, to me, are the things that make music sound interesting, which is setting up an expectation for the listener, and then flipping it...When I write, that's one of the things that I try and go for. Set an expectation and then don't meet it. And that's an abstract thing that is difficult to teach unless you are super solid on how to create an expectation in the first place, with rhythm, with pitch set, with key signature, with cadences, you know?	Pedagogy and personal experience Building a foundation of musical mechanics
Composing at a computer can be a little bit limiting. It's real easy to copy paste, and I know my best stuff was always when I would write it out.	Pedagogy and personal experience Technology
My primary goals are for them to be confident performing sixteenth notes and writing sixteenth notes and being able to manipulate the theory in a creative way, I guess. Like, not just writing out (mocking) 1-and-a, like trying to be clever about it, I guess, to really understand it.	Instructional design Building a foundation of musical mechanics Composition as creative expression Composition as reinforcement of music skills
Today, we'll be doing sixteenth notes, writing compositions, because we're working on counting sixteenth notes, understanding how they fit together, understanding how eighth notes and sixteenth notes fit different patterns, etc, etc. So, that's what I want them to learn. The composition aspect is a way to get that knowledge and have it stick.	Composition as reinforcement of music skills Building a foundation of musical mechanics Benefits of composition

When I went around individually to talk to each little group of two, they all were able to identify the counts and count it through with the right pulse.	Composition as reinforcement of music skills Individualized instruction
There's a puzzle piece aspect of fitting pieces together to make something new. I think that's the biggest creative aspect, whether it was the rhythm or the puzzle piece of two instruments creating a new color. I think that was the biggest creative thing.	Composition as creative expression Building a foundation of musical mechanics
Because, like I said, to me composition is about building a musical expectation and then messing it up for the listener, and the more ways you have to create an expectation, the more colors you have in your palette to paint with as a composer, you know?	Building a foundation of musical mechanics Composition as creative expression
I'll assess them by -- you know, a couple ways. Make sure they did the assignment, make sure it's correct, and then there's the performance aspect of it. And when I say correct, it's like, there's the right number of beats in the measure, and -- I guess I -- the bottom line is that this is much more a utilitarian composition exercise than a creative exercise. There's a creative component to it, but I guess I view it more as a utility to make them better musicians.	Instructional design Composition as reinforcement of music skills Building a foundation of musical mechanics
So something like that [Incredibox], to me that's a composition exercise, because you can manipulate timbre, you're manipulating rhythm, and that's one of the things with the beginners.	Building a foundation of musical mechanics Technology
It occurred me to that they probably…had never gotten the chance to manipulate the puzzle pieces of rhythm. And so it came from an intense frustration, like I would put syncopated rhythms especially, like (sings) daaaaaaah dah dah dah, like dotted quarter note, eighth note, quarter, quarter. . . And it just blew my mind that they couldn't break down that subdivision, like, you know, how many eighth notes are inside that quarter note. Couldn't answer, had no idea. And it started, like I said, like kind of a utilitarian tool to make them better readers and better timekeepers.	Building a foundation of musical mechanics Composition as reinforcement of music skills
I guess the way that I use composition is more to reinforce musical basics in performance.	Composition as reinforcement of music skills
I think that would be the biggest thing that would get us to the next level of composition, being able to confidently perform chamber music in groups of like, three to seven. And then from there, doing more score study, kind of tackling some of the	Building a foundation of musical mechanics Scope and sequence

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music theory things, getting that internalized.	
NG: So would you say this is like a fundamentals lesson, and you'd be working up towards more freedom? Yes, absolutely. Absolutely, yeah.	Building a foundation of musical mechanics Freedom vs. restrictions
One of the things we do at the end of the year for our final project is I give the kids a couple different choices for projects they can do, but one of them is always a composition. And we do little exercises like this throughout the year. And if they're interested in it, at the end of the year, they can write out (inaudible) for three voices, and they can write it and perform it in class. We've actually had some really good ones. So the way it kind of progresses, not so much like when they get older, but I offer the opportunity if if's something they're interested at the end of the year as an enrichment activity, to really get that kind of project, to do a longer composition, like a minute to a minute and a half for three voices. And that leads us to, we talk about form, I usually encourage -- I'll tell them ABA form, you know, and you don't have to do it like this, but you can, it's just an idea. And we'll talk about harmony, like what notes -- does that note sound good with that other note, or bad? We talk about transposition, we've done that before, so. The hope is as they get older, they're able to take on more of those higher concepts and apply it if they choose to do their project.	Independent work and individualized instruction Motivation Scope and sequence Composition as a reinforcement of music skills Role of the teacher
Like I said, I would love to talk more about the creative aspects of composition, and the creative decision making, which I think is where the real creativity comes is making the decisions to set up the sounds that you want and the expectations you're going to then, follow. It started, like I said, like kind of a utilitarian tool to make them better readers and better timekeepers. I just haven't been able to move past that	Composition as a reinforcement of music skills Building a foundation of musical mechanics Scope and sequence Other impediments to composition instruction Creative cognition Composition as creative expression
I would love to get into that [setting a musical expectation and then not meeting it], but where I guess, where my program is	Other impediments to composition

right now, I don't -- I don't feel like we're quite -- quite ready for that.	instruction
Like I said, to get to that point, it would start, for me in my mind, with access to more time, more chamber music, more kind of theoretical knowledge, and then approaching like a nuts and bolts composition creativity perspective and just doing more composition.	Time as a major impediment Other impediments to composition instruction Building a foundation of musical mechanics Creative cognition
One of the things we struggle with all year is just the pulse, and you heard, you know, they're playing what they think is right in their brain, but what they're playing doesn't line up with the rhythm they created on the page, you know? So, it's not all the time. Some of them were great. But some of them aren't quite sure exactly how to fit rhythm in the confines of this pulse. So . . . I realized that it needs more work.	Performance concerns
When I went around individually to talk to each little group of two, they all were able to identify the counts and count it through with the right pulse... Just adding that one extra thing [playing on instruments] just blows their mind a little bit.	Performance concerns
The follow-up was in [concert piece]. I don't know if you heard while we were talking, but there was a dotted eighth sixteenth rhythm that they were all clapping out there, while some of them were playing. So the application of what they did was, you know, hopefully they're able to play harder stuff more easily. And just through the door it sounded like it went better than it did last class, so that was great.	Composition as reinforcement of music skills
I do find I'm limited more by time.	Time as a major impediment
That's [revision's] not something I usually include. I haven't even thought about that. That's a really good idea. Yeah, my feeling is just that, we usually don't have time for that. Because it always takes longer than I want it to, just because there's moving parts and -- whatever. But yeah, I'm not as good about following up with it afterwards. We kind of do those little performances and then it's on to the next thing.	Time as a major impediment Reflection and revision
NG: Has it been difficult to include composition alongside rehearsal?	Time as a major impediment

Yeah. I never get to do it as much as I would like.	
NG: Do you feel pushed for time? Always, yeah, because, you know, I want to pick -- I want to do everything I can to help them sound better, and I also want -- but we can't, like, warm-up for an hour and a half, you know? So we gotta play music too and I always -- one of the things that's important to me is playing challenging, quality literature, appropriate for the group. And, yeah, I always feel like if we had, like, two more rehearsals, the concerts, you know, would be way better. Not that the concerts are bad, I think they generally go very well, but yeah, I do feel strapped for time.	Time as a major impediment
[To make dream composition program] Ok, I would need more time. I would want to either see my kids every day or have a double block or something.	Time as a major impediment
Technically, it's part of your SOLs. Right, exactly. And I think a lot of people don't do it because they were never taught it. It was never part of their high school or college band experience. I think a lot of people feel they don't have time for it. I think a lot of people just don't see it as important. I don't think they see it as a goal of their programs. They don't -- a goal for them is not to be a composer. A goal for them is to create a good band. And, did I mention time?	Impediments to composition instruction Pedagogy and personal experience
Time is huge.	Time as a major impediment
NG: What are the biggest impediments, do you think? Them not practicing at home (chuckles), because, it just -- if they played their instruments every day, they would play -- they would just naturally have a more mature tone, and when you have a more mature tone you can balance faster, when you balance faster, you can tune faster.	Other impediments to composition instruction Time as a major impediment
I wanted everybody to just sit down, shut up, and take a second to pour their absolute attention into this, because I felt like -- couple things, we hadn't done this in a while. I mentioned we'd done this at the beginning of the year, but in the middle we'd gotten away from it a little bit. So bringing it back, I thought if I didn't have their absolute attention on the beginning of the assignment, we wouldn't have been as successful. And with that class especially, I have to do a lot of, "Guys, I need your eyes, look at me... forte," you know what I mean? Like, just to have it sink in, because I find that, especially that younger group. . . you'll be talking, and they'll be looking at you but they won't be listening, you know?	Instructional design Other impediments to composition instruction

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I just wanted mental focus, because they're very smart, but if they're not focused, it doesn't show.	Other impediments to composition instruction
See if... creatively if they like that timbre that they're creating, the "flarinet," you know, sound.	Exploration Creative cognition
One of the things we do in percussion class, because percussion is, you know, so much like sound worlds, there's so many ways to play a cymbal crash, we want this type of cymbal crash. So when we're working on something, a couple ways we incorporate that. The first quarter we did toy of the day. We'd take one the percussion whizz-bang instruments, you know, and we'd focus on performance technique of that particular thing. So if it was finger cymbals, you know, you can do the (sings and gestures) bing, you can do the Xs (sings and gestures) ding, you can do, I mean, you never play it this way, but the monkey hands thing, you know. And then once we'd gone through all the toys that we had, we would kind of do like three at a time, and, you know, see if you can make different sounds and put it together in a different way.	Exploration Creative cognition
I feel like they made some interesting choices picking instruments. There's some cool colors.	Exploration
NG: Do the kids who have it [notation software] at home -- are they more likely to experiment with it and bring you pieces, you think? Yes. Yes.	Independent work Technology
I'll take a look at them [the compositions]. I usually write a couple comments and I'll hand them back and they'll keep them in their folder.	Role of the teacher
[examples of composition feedback] "I really like this first measure here. How are you going to mix up that pattern in the second measure? That was an interesting note. Why'd you pick that note? What other notes sound good there, do you think? Could you add a third note? Why'd you pick those three instruments? If you" -- I'm thinking about that end of year project I was talking about -- "Try and think of something else besides percussion, we're not going to -- we only have one percussionist in this class. I wonder if you could add a brass instrument. Would that be good, would you like that sound?"	Role of the teacher Creative cognition
Yeah, I try and ask a lot more questions. Like I said, I guess	Role of the teacher

kind of trying to get them to think about the process and whether they like something or not.	Creative cognition
[When teaching composition] I'm much less of a leader, and I'm more of a suggester. "Hey, that's cool, or you could do that. Think about that," instead of, you know, "I like how you played that forte, but it was a little too much." You know, like, instead of being the end all be all, I'm more of a suggesting this, kind of leading them to their own (inaudible).	Role of the teacher
I view my classes as performance classes first.	Role of the teacher Performance concerns
Would you teach composition differently in a class with a different overall culture? Absolutely, yes. . . In my beginners' class there's a lot of variation…so I have to kind of adjust my approach to a more per student basis, I think. In my class that you came in on, wind symphony, it's a much bigger class and more—higher performing, musically. They're more aware of the cognitive part of music, so I'd probably—I'd definitely let them alter pitch if they wanted to, I would definitely put the idea of key signature…I would change my approach based on what class it was.	Classroom culture Individualized instruction Scope and sequence
What limited creativity... was that obviously there was limited rhythmic values that I wanted them to use, because that was the focus on what I wanted them to think about. There's a couple of them, they asked if I could change notes, it was like, yeah, you want to try it, go for it. But for most -- for some of them you might have heard me, I said, "No, keep it on one note," because I just felt like, based on the kid, that was best for them.	Freedom vs. restrictions Instructional design Individualized instruction
Yeah, a lot of the times, yes, I'll kind of set "three instruments" because I don't want them to get overwhelmed, because a lot them think, "Oh this sounds fun, I'll do this" and then they try it and it's a little bit more than they think it is. So, I just keep it three instruments to make it a little less overwhelming. And then it's pretty much up to them. I'll check back and see how it's going. You know, I'll usually ask them to start with a melody, but then they create the melody on their own. And then I'll usually ask them, okay, how are you going to work in harmony parts with the other instruments? What instruments would sound good playing harmony, what instruments would sound bad playing harmony. But they have a lot freedom in that project.	Freedom vs. restrictions Independent work Individualized instruction Freedom vs. restrictions

I'd say with a little exercise like this that we do with some of my younger students, a little bit more structured in terms of the goal, they still get the opportunity to pick and choose the patterns that they want. So, from that aspect I think they get a lot of flexibility as well.	Freedom vs. restrictions Scope and sequence
I think it sounds really cool, especially to the kids who are pretty high achieving, it's like, "Oh, composition, that's interesting," I think it kind of catches their eye a little bit. I mean, composing is kind of like Alice in Wonderland. You can dive in and you can not come out for a while. I mean, there's so much that you can do, I mean, as you can listen to. I think if you give some parameters it becomes a less scary proposition. Just to give a little bit of structure.	Freedom vs. restrictions
The way that I view it is like, if we're building a building, you know, I'll just try and provide the steel framework and say there's got to be a door there, and you've got to have windows here, and it's got to be five stories tall. But you decide what kind of building it's going to be. You decide everything else. And I just think that's more effective and makes it more accessible to more students.	Freedom vs. restrictions Creative cognition
For me it usually started with that, whether it was a melodic motive, a rhythmic motive, a harmonic motive. I guess that's a more creative way of approaching composition and this was more a measured way of approaching composition. I think it's a way to do it.	Instructional design
I come up with the activity based on what I want the student to know.	Instructional design
The second thing is [assignment goals], you know, do they have a good enough grasp on the sixteenth note counting that they can play those parts independently?	Instructional design Composition as a reinforcement of music skills
I was focused on what I wanted at the end and then I kind of worked backwards and tried to incorporate as many elements of music in the process as I could.	Instructional design
[What he would change next time] I've played around with this, but basically, doing it in tiered groups. . . one of the things I might change is, you know, when we did those worksheets I'd have three different worksheets. I'd have a different one for -- kind of split them in three groups based on their ability, and tailoring a composition lesson like this to -- Like, there were a	Individualized instruction

couple of them that wanted to play different notes, like change the pitch, and they did a pretty good job. It's like, "Oh, yeah, that's awesome," like, "You guys go do that work together, see if you can stay in the same key!" You know, and talk about key signature. Have one group just stay on one note and one group, maybe not even play, just trying, not even worrying about this or this (mimes playing an instrument), just counting and clapping. So that might be another fix, next time I do it.	
You have to start at the beginning. If you incorporate it in the daily rhythm or the weekly rhythm of the beginning of the school year, kids don't really think much about it. . . my second year I started a lot earlier, and it seemed to go a lot better.	Instructional design Classroom culture
NG: I noticed there wasn't any arguing or pressuring for whom to work with whom, they divided up pretty peacefully. Yeah, that was great. I mean, I would hope that's a product of the classroom culture that I try and create. We want to have fun, and I think when I teach I try to have fun, make the kids smile and laugh, but at the same time, it's business.	Social issues Classroom culture
NG: Do you run into anybody who just gets really discouraged? No, ah (hesitates)... Yeah, they're all pretty with it, you know? Not in this class, these are all pretty good kids.	Social issues Classroom culture
I don't think really my kids are nervous about much of anything, at least band-related, or trying new things-wise. They're pretty -- they're pretty good about that. And I think they trust me enough, I hope they trust me enough that they'll kind of do what I ask. Maybe that's a little bit naive, but I feel like my kids and I have a really good rapport and they trust me that I'm going to do the things that make them better. That's something that I talk about a lot.	Social issues Classroom culture Role of the teacher
It's [composition is] like -- it's taking the language and it's manipulating it and it's making it your own, and it's not just buttons anymore, it's more of an idea here (points to head), which makes this (mimes playing) easier I think. So I guess that's what I mean when I say use composition to reinforce music fundamentals.	Creative cognition Composition as creative expression Composition as reinforcement of music skills
Do you feel like these lessons have an impact on the performance program at all, positive or negative?	Composition as reinforcement of

I'd say [the impact has been] positive because, like we've been talking about, the way that I use these, I think they're effective in having the concepts like rhythm take more of an internalized—It sticks a little bit more, I guess. It reinforces it…So, that's less time having to teach that. They can just, they can read it, and then we can go from, "count this rhythm" to "oh, good, okay, now look at the articulation and make this really sound like a march". . . it's good because it's less time pounding notes and rhythms. It's more time talking about making music.	music skills Time as a major impediment

Teacher C

TEACHER C: Comment	Central theme or element
My professor never said, "This is what you need to write." He would say, "We're writing a brass quintet. I want you to do it in ABA form." He would tell me form, he might tell me how to structure, the rest of it was up to me. And so, I think that, if they get to do that, then it's more "I own this" versus "Well he's just guiding us, we're not really doing this." And they're sharp enough to figure that out, you know.	Pedagogy and personal experience Freedom vs. restrictions
NG: Have you had any training on how to teach composition? No. . . A lot of it I'm drawing from my own experiences, both in the music theory sequences that I took in college, plus then what I have had in my private study.	Pedagogy and personal experience
All of the kids hear this terminology [countermelody, secondary theme, etc]... For example, when we're talking about when they're playing the music for concert festival, the big thing that they use now is layering, and we've talked about that. Or when we see another thing we say, "That's the same melody, all he's doing is using another technique here of elongating the melody. Oh, this is the melody backwards, this is what they would call retrograde." And so, the kids have heard that from 7th grade up, that most of them, I would say 50% of them, if you asked them, "What -- what is this?" they would know "This is that."	Building a foundation of musical mechanics
They're going to write where they're comfortable and not "I can't play it."	Performance concerns
They understand rhythms and how the rhythms fit in time, so	Freedom vs. restrictions

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their limitation was, you know, what rhythms that you've had thus far in your own musical experience, there are your limits. And it works. They're not trying to write running 16th notes because most of them have never played a bunch of that.	Performance concerns Scope and sequence
I don't want to go harder than 3, and I don't think we will because of, you write where your musicianship is.	Performance concerns
And, "Now, do you have an idea -- when should that be hitting, when they're playing or in the silent moments?"... Either one's right, but, you know, they'll pick the one that makes the most musical sense, because they're drawing up on things that they've learned.	Composition as reinforcement of music skills
Well, you know, we got 16 out of the 22 [compositions turned in]. Those that didn't do it are the ones that probably could not do it.	Individualized instruction
I've had kids come in and go, "Listen to what I wrote." And they'll play it on (inaudible) and I'll go, "Wow! Now go home and notate that."	Individualized instruction
It's composition and then, alright you have to -- it's performance related. Even if it's just the small exercises in the book. Okay, you play your line for me. And then, what we've also found, or at least I have, when they're playing, then I'll look at that and I'll go, "That's not what you have written." "Well no, that's -- but that's what I want." And then we talk about how do we write the rhythms and then we teach -- then we tell everybody that. "Did you hear what they did? Now let's -- let's go back."	Composition as reinforcement of music skills Creative cognition Building a foundation of musical mechanics Reflection and revision
We have a new theory method we're using, and so we're trying to figure out how to, you know, make that work with everything else that we've got going on. Because, we want to make sure that every child understands the key signatures, every child understands the mechanics that they're looking at, because then if they -- as we do the composition stuff, then that becomes easier because they've got the mechanics down.	Building a foundation of musical mechanics
Most of them did pretty well, there were some that were incorrect, and you can use that as another part of the teaching tool, go back and say, "Now okay, this here you missed rhythmically or whatever."	Composition as reinforcement of music skills Instructional design Reflection and revision
The better and stronger the player, guess what? The more solid their motif was and it made more sense.	Building a foundation of musical mechanics

	Performance concerns

Composition as reinforcement of music skills |
| You know, it [today's lesson] is typical, the generalities of what we would talk about in composition are all still there, but instead of it being smaller, especially at the middle school level, it being smaller in scope, it's getting bigger in scope and growing in depth. But, then at the high school, it's been more guiding, general parameters, go compose. | Independent work

Freedom vs. restrictions

Scope and sequence |
| I don't do full compositional things at the high school level, it's more individualized, for those who have that interest and want to expand that. | Individualized instruction

Motivation

Scope and sequence |
| *NG: How do you find that your role as the teacher changes from middle school to high school for composition?*
Well, I think it's more guided [at the middle school]. Real guided, "Okay, here's what you need to do next" because they don't know. "How do we build a band work? How do I write a piece?" So, that's part real guided... I now sense (?) that the role is expanding because the project's bigger. So, a lot of guiding, then at the high school it's like, "Have you ever thought about doing this?" okay, or they'll come and ask me, "How do I do this?" because they know. They watch other people and they go, "I want to do that," you know. | Role of the teacher

Building a foundation of musical mechanics

Instructional design

Creative cognition

Motivation

Scope and sequence |
| Providing limited structure at the middle school really helps. | Instructional design

Freedom vs. restriction |
| At the high school part of, is it more guided and stuff, no. . . I think the kids like the freedom, at the high school level it's all the -- you know, their creativeness and I think sometimes they surprise themselves. And so that's sort of neat to watch. | Freedom vs. restriction

Creative cognition

Role of the teacher |
| I thought that for them to find and create their own rhythm, you know, there are some things in the early processes, in sixth grade, for them, the rhythm is dictated, use the note. . . And then it gets a little freer as it progresses. | Building a foundation of musical mechanics

Scope and sequence

Freedom vs. restrictions |
| *NG: So would you say you build a mechanical foundation first and then set them free composing?*
Yes. | Building a foundation of musical mechanics |

	Freedom vs. restrictions
It's been more structure at the middle school, guiding them with certain parameters but never limiting their ability once we get beyond understanding how the music's structured. But never limiting and saying, "Let's do this rhythm." I've never done that. . . High school, different. . . some light guiding, but it's not constricting the creativeness.	Freedom vs. restrictions Scope and sequence Role of the teacher
My percussion write their own drumline cadences. They write their own cadence every year.	Scope and sequence Individualized instruction
So, that's [composition's] a way to go back and reinforce the other components that you're supposed to be going over and making sure you're meeting those standards.	Composition as reinforcement of music skills
Consistently, the number one consistent thing that I am seeing is that correlation that I talked about a minute ago. The better the player, they're a better writer. And they're also willing to go out there and try the fringes of areas that we may not know a lot. For example, one of the motifs was in 6/8. Most folks don't want to -- most middle school you don't want to do a lot of 6/8. . . But for me, I knew that kid, you know... and they nailed it.	Individualized instruction Performance concerns
All of this is uncharted water. Everything I'm doing right now is uncharted. It's been in small boats before. This is all new. But that group is the right group to try it. They're very fine playing.	Classroom culture Performance concerns
NG: I was going to ask you about your decision to play the phrases for them rather than have the kids play them on instruments? Time... and a lot of times when they play, then even though they wrote it and they worked through it, they haven't worked it up... I've learned this through some of the stuff in their books that they've done, where they're guided composition ideas, they get so nervous. And it's their creation. And then they're putting their creation out there. So, what you're doing is [by having them play their work], you are adding a lot of pressure, and so therefore it may not come out as well. Well, if it doesn't come out as well, then what does everyone else hear? Judgment on it. Okay? Secondly, it's -- they're hearing it on their instrument, okay, versus visualizing and hearing it on trumpet, but if I hear it played on clarinet sometimes I can't, you know. So -- and, "Okay, I didn't perform that as well so mine doesn't come across as good." This way everything's on an equal playing field.	Time as a major impediment Performance concerns Social issues Classroom culture Role of the teacher Pedagogy and personal experience

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NG: They seemed more engaged [on a piece written by peers]? Yeah, they wanted to do it. You know, and I think there was another element of it, that is, may not have been spoken, but it was there, and that was, we want to do this well to please, because they worked hard to write this, so we want to do well. So I think maybe knowing that the composer's there, there is a level of, "We want to play this better."	Social issues Motivation Benefits of composition
The other thing that I've noticed the most to help propel it [composition], is technology. . . and things that are free. You know, when Finale started offering Notepad, free, then I was able to say, "Go and get this, and try that." And then it was, "Oh, I like that." So there was that draw, technology-wise.	Technology
NG: I'm wondering how they hear both [two composed portions] together. Will they hear both as they're writing it, or will they write it and then listen [in class]? That's the interesting thing that I'm wondering about, because not everyone has a laptop at home. Now I can -- and we can talk about that, I can tell them and show them how to do Notepad, so that they can have that ability to go and listen to it. If we email it to them, which I haven't even thought about this, we may be able to set up a portion of our website...that's a secure site for them, that they can go and hear and work out of. I haven't thought about that. Hmmm.	Creative cognition Technology Role of the teacher Independent work
I want them to be able to use ProTools and know what that's like so it's like a recording studio and they can record things here and put it together for their own pleasure. I'd like for it then to go to the next level in compositions and doing little things to, "Alright, go make a video. Now put music to the video."	Technology Motivation Independent work Role of the teacher
If I really had my druthers, I think it would be really good to have that web-based format, so that we could use a projector, so they can visualize what everyone is doing.	Technology
Dreaming-wise would be that we have some of the things that I've already talked about, that boy we've got to have, this would be great, is you know, kids have computer access at home, kids have the technology tool, which is out there free, so we can at least get Notepad, so that's a possibility, if they have computers that's a possibility. More of a lab setup that I didn't have to, you know, both at the middle school and the high school and when I say -- maybe not a lab, but a sort of a console system that all I'd have to do is plug in my computer and my computer would work. I would have an electronic keyboard versus the other keyboard. I would have -- my Finale	Technology Other impediments to composition instruction

chops would be a lot quicker and better than what my Finale chops are. We would have -- you know, even my projector down there doesn't work. So we're going to have to get that fixed or I've got a portable one that I can take.	
Ideally, fourth day would've been in January. So we're going to really have to start picking up the pace for us to meet our May deadline, because then, that's the concert, so really we have to have the piece together by the middle of April, and April is crazy for us. So, they're going to -- they're going to have to work really hard, really fast, and so am I.	Time as a major impediment
And then because of time, then instead of them sketching it [the expanded composition], I'm sketching it fast.	Time as a major impediment Role of the teacher
NG: Why aren't more people doing it [teaching composition]? I think it's because one, time. Two, it's just their, maybe their kids wouldn't, you know, be excited about it and want to do it, but they don't take the time to implement it, and then they've got to facilitate the whole thing.	Time as a major impediment Motivation Role of the teacher
NG: Have you found it difficult to include composition alongside the regular festival prep and rehearsals? Yeah. . . It's time. The kids that are doing the creativeness, they don't have homework. They've got their music under their fingers where we want that right now. But I think that's the balance, is trying to find that time.	Time as a major impediment
I've sort of changed my way of looking at everything. I would much rather back it down and play grade 5, because that gives me more time. . . Which is more important? Grade 6, and I've got to browbeat them to get it, and it's going to be a struggle and, you know, dampen the fires of these other things? Or do I keep that going? Well, the same thing would be—the reason I said all of those things is it's the same way it is with composition.	Time as a major impediment
At the high school, I wish that we could offer that [composition] as a separate class. Or, you know, could we do that as an after school program and someone fund it? I mean, could I teach it? I don't know when. I mean, really and truly, that's the thing, it's the time factor.	Time as a major impediment
I think that composition can be -- among all the other things that it is, it allows them to have creativity, it allows that camaraderie, it allows that collaborative process to work, it	Benefits of composition Social issues

makes them goal-oriented and mission-minded, it may cause them to reflect more than any of their other musical processes has. It does eat into time, but I am not so sure that it should not be viewed as a way to hang onto some of those students who desperately need another level, without ever affecting everyone else.	Classroom culture Creative cognition Reflection and revision Motivation
But because of their [7th grade's] playing level, and some things that they're doing and stuff and other things that go in the course of the day, their ability to have quite as much input is limited.	Other impediments to composition instruction Performance concerns
You know, the stove is full, and we've got things on warmers over here, and we've got -- we're trying to make sure it's all happening. For all that we have going on and that I want to do for my kids, and what they want to do, we really need another person, and I need a secretary.	Other impediments to composition Time as a major impediment
I had some others turn it in, you know, after the fact, so I wondered were they afraid to turn them in? Or did they sit there and work on it? But I didn't catch anybody really working.	Social issues
NG: So do they do most of the work at home, the actual writing? As of now, but eventually it will become a blend. I'm trying to be real careful. I want to guide, not orchestrate and tell them how to write. I want for them to hear. So for them to have the line, then if they don't have a computer at home or if they can't play piano, then I'm wondering how they're going to hear it aurally. Ok, they can play the line, "alright I'm going to put this to it, I'm remembering how the other line sounded in my head while I'm playing this and putting it to it." So I think that is, if they get that going, that's a whole other level of analytical thinking as well as creative thinking. But they're going to hear things different when they're playing. It's going to help them to listen across the group, they're going to, you know, hear things in a different way.	Independent work Role of the teacher Benefits of composition
This is a beautiful way to do individualized instruction, but they're also forced to do a collaborative work. And it helps to hopefully tighten the cohesiveness of that group, because what do we want to do? We want to see every one of those kids come into, you know, 9th grade.	Individualized instruction Social issues Classroom culture Benefits of composition

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[On inviting a band composer to give feedback on their work] We'll say, "Okay now, these are some of his suggestions, what do you think about that?" They get to make the final decision. It's their work, it's not mine. Am I helping? Yeah.	Role of the teacher Creative cognition Reflection and revision
I have realized that, you know, the older you get, maybe you -- you're more reflective, and I'm really in that mode right now as an educator, that I am reflecting back on what was successful, what worked, what didn't, and I make the kids do that more now. I make them reflect and think about, well, what do you think about that performance? What was good, what was bad? What do we need to do better?	Reflection and revision
They were young listeners, so what are they listening for? They're just listening for the aesthetic value, which, you can't dismiss that. Music is aesthetic, either pleasing, challenging, sad, happy. You know, there's that aesthetic component that affects every person that listens. They're just having to think of it from the construct—composition point, you know, constructing it and putting it together side.	Role of the teacher Composition as creative expression Creative cognition
They were doing a thing for the marching band and stuff, whatever, and I said, "You're probably getting out of range here. You need to either change key so that as you're writing this it stays within the key you need it to be but it brings everyone down a step, especially the trumpet part, because not everybody's going to scream that C up there for you, you know". . . and they go, "Oh yeah," you know. So, they're learning, "Okay, I was creative. Oh, now my creativity has to be played by everybody. So how do I make that happen, without changing my creativity?"	Role of the teacher Performance concerns
Some of them just wrote this down [the original motif], on the board. I said, "Here it is," and I wrote it on the board, because I didn't have the screen or anything, things like that... Here's the motif, didn't have time to print it, so that was on day before yesterday... Yesterday I gave them this (shows Finale-notated copy of motif). "Here, this might help you to get it better." I got more of these (shows student work with handwritten motif at top). They were already in the throes of doing it. So they didn't change, which I think's interesting. You know, it speaks to, I think, I've got this going, I don't want anything (inaudible)... and so I think they are reflecting.	Reflection and revision Independent work
When we had students that have done some stuff for pep band, they were so excited and ecstatic because they arranged it, then	Social issues

we rehearsed it, and then they were able to listen and then they had to go and modify some things, and they learned some errors. Oops, I transposed that wrong. Oops, did that.	Composition as reinforcement of music skills Reflection and revision Independent work
I had to be careful not to go (whispers), "Ooh, yeah!" because I had that [impulse]. So I think that was my challenge today was to not influence their decision of, "that was much better."	Role of the teacher
Used to I thought, you know, as you're playing, and I would tell them, "Now clarinets and flutes, you have a trill there and that's just, that's salt and pepper, okay, that's just -- now, easy, we don't want too much, it's like in food and cooking, well, that'd just ruin it if we got too much trill. Sound's great -- be careful," you know, and we're guiding some things there. And on the composition side, it's like, "Oh, you don't have to worry. Pour on the salt. Yeah, that's your flavor. Let me have that," you know, and -- and I think it's freer for them. They feel more relaxed.	Role of the teacher Classroom culture
I've never done this, you know. . . And it's -- I think, just like a work in progress. I think of it that way.	Pedagogy and personal experience Role of the teacher
Now it may not be the exact motif or whatever, we may only use the rhythmic components of it, but then everybody feels like, "My part was used there." And I'm going to try and go back and pull those different things. And people who didn't turn in a motif, you know, ask their -- "What do you think instrument?", you know. And I'm going to gauge on, this person hasn't given me a lot of feedback.	Role of the teacher Social issues
At the middle school level, from teaching band to the composition, composition is much freer, and . . . it has more surprises in it. And it allows me to see what they're offering in creativity. Flip side of that in band, rehearsing them, it's more structured, "I need you to do this, this, this, and this," they go home, they do this, this, this, and this, and in the process because I know that's the pathway to build good technique and good foundations, so that the playing keeps doing this, this, this, and this. . . The other is more about them, less about me, you know. Really just giving them broad freedoms.	Freedom vs. restrictions Role of the teacher
I don't think you can say "Alright, go home and write it in this rhythm." You know, that defeats the whole creativity and everything else.	Freedom vs. restrictions Creative cognition

	Composition as creative expression Instructional design
I am going to make sure everyone's involved because I've got their names, so I want to go through and those that didn't, then I want to make sure, "What do you think about this? What do you think rhythmically?," so that they feel like they've had a contribution too, you know.	Role of the teacher Social issues
Most of them did pretty well, there were some that were incorrect, and you can use that as another part of the teaching tool, go back and say, "Now okay, this here you missed rhythmically or whatever." And I may just do that toward the end, because I don't want them to then start hearing me talk to them and then, because they're kids, they want to please so much. And they'll go, "ehhh," some would be afraid to say anything, you know, so I don't want to stymie any of their excitement. And because it is creativeness, and it is their own, it's personal, you have to be careful.	Reflection and revision Composition as reinforcement of music skills Role of the teacher Motivation Social issues
Part of it was -- and I think that's been more of the drive here recently -- has been student response. . . I really started to see a. . . really big huge blossom of students becoming excited and able to -- it sort of made the circle complete. Oh, this is what I'm doing, now I can use it in this construct and create things of my own. And for some students it was, this is an assignment. For others it's been more of -- and that's who I've sort of targeted and helped develop more -- of, I really like this, I really want to do this.	Motivation Composition as creative expression
And then the other thing I do is find those kids who need (inaudible) outlet, a consistent outlet. Not just playing, but, "Alrighty, I got that" and then "Oh, I can do that too!" and "Oh, I can do that too."	Motivation Composition as creative expression
No, the reason they want to do that [compose] is, they got to see their friend create. And, so they want to create. "Help me create."	Motivation Composition as creative expression
The primary goal for today is for us to find the melody and define the structure -- the next board structure part of it, programmatic or not.	Instructional design
What about the assessment part of it? Well, you can see, this is what we're doing, this is what they're producing, it's very --	Instructional design

they did their four measures or they did their next eight measures. And I think, you know, it would be very. . . it would just be my opinion, "This is good," you know.	Role of the teacher
As I've watched the older students at the high school lab do things, it's really cyclic, you know. It adds a dimension of learning the instrument that has been missing.	Benefits of composition
I talked about that was the dimension missing because I think that fills in the gap for them, okay, of, alright I've learned how to play my instrument, I've got the rhythms, got everything else and I've done performance, and some folks, that's enough.	Benefits of composition
I don't think it's the end-all tell-all. I don't think you have to do composition to have a good music program. I do believe that composition opens the windows of opportunity for those students who so desperately need it. They need to be creative, okay, I'm here and I'm performing it, but it's not -- I talked about that person, this is complete for them. There are some people that this is missing, that composition, and seeing those creative juices come out and then it's performed, completes the circle for them. If they don't ever -- if they never had that, then they would not know any different and they would just go through but there'd be something that would be missing.	Benefits of composition Composition as creative expression Motivation
I hope that that [composing] is going to be very meaningful and it makes them have a different mindset about their approach to music as well as a greater respect of what they're listening in the music, every -- I mean everywhere.	Benefits of composition
By not teaching composition or exposing kids to that, what Beethoven have we left out of this century? Or what Schoenberg have we left out, or whoever?	Benefits of composition
"That is how I create that rhythm that I'm hearing in my head, I have to write it down here." That reinforces counting.	Composition as reinforcement of music skills Creative cognition
He was bored -- he did not want to do band this year. . . and he's had a very enjoyable time because we are doing other things that he's having to help with.	Motivation Benefits of composition Individualized instruction
You know, I think there's also the element of do we know the backstory of a particular piece? I think when you're talking	Benefits of composition

about composition, as you share things about a work, the more you share, even if they're not composing, but I think if you talk about composing, talk about construction, talk about the other things that are going on, then I think that provides that next layer of (inaudible).	Composition as reinforcement of music skills
I hadn't planned on having the discussion about why did you like this better? But that is a -- I think that's a valid question. And it gets them thinking of how and why they're listening to things in a certain way.	Creative cognition
And I have, you know, things that I'd like to see happen, but, this is pretty big for me. But I would say everyone else is going, "Really? I'm trying to get them to do scales, and focus on this and focus on that." And I'm anxious to see the outcome. You know, in this process, does the weak player become a stronger player? Because he was just going (mimics bored student), "God, these scales" but he got excited because of the composition, for the middle school level. High school, they might be as excited, then again, maybe not.	Other impediments to composition instruction Benefits of composition Motivation
In that 7th grade group I've got kids already, you know, that they're this over here and here (gestures with hands apart to show gap) on skill level, and so, this may help them and they can have some parts in it.	Motivation Benefits of composition
I think it did [composing improved performance skills]. Because the students could relate -- and I don't know about improve of, we went up a grade level, so to speak, or our technical ability was better or tone quality was better because of that. I think it was more of the students, "Hey, this is someone that I know. I know the arranger, and I know the person that created this. That is cool." And they were -- they were excited for the student, their peers, being able to do that.	Benefits of composition Social issues Classroom culture
And, so, you know, and they're excited about it. I think there's this undercurrent of just, you know -- that energy. And the more we do, I think that excitement is going to continue to grow and grow and grow and grow, and then, wow, look what we did together. And I think that's another strong point.	Motivation Classroom culture
Everyone who wanted to wrote me a motif, and in a class of probably 22 or [2]3, I have 16 motifs. So that's pretty good representation. Everybody wants to be a part.	Classroom culture Motivation
With this, when he did the _____ (student composition), then we let the students listen to that, and that was, "Hey, that's great," and it was encouragement for him, and it validates for	Social issues Benefits of composition

him, not just from a teacher standpoint of "Hey, that's a great thing, I really did good."	
As I'm going through the process I'm also trying to be very sensitive. That's why I kept reiterating some things. I want to make sure that no one feels left out, that mine wasn't as good as X, okay?	Role of the teacher Social issues Classroom culture
I'm going to have them vote with their eyes closed. And then that way -- because, we're human. We're afraid, you know. I don't want to have them, "is my answer wrong if I'm raising my hand?" You know what I'm saying? And I think I will do that with the motifs in the future, or the phrase, or here's the counter -- whatever we're talking about.	Social issues
That's my vision and what I want for our kids because if they're not involved, then they're going to be involved. You know how that is. And . . . they're going to be making choices that aren't good choices. So, I'm trying to make it interesting, so that kid that's bored and they get it can, "can I go in the lab?"	Social issues Benefits of composition Motivation