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Band Director Perceptions of Tradition and Change: A National Survey

The purpose of this research was to examine K-12 band directors' perceptions of tradition and their thoughts on their and the profession's readiness for change. The research questions were: a) What practices do band directors view as more traditional, somewhat traditional, and less traditional?; b) From their current practice, how willing are participants to change toward more and less-traditional practices (as defined by participants)?; and c) How do band directors perceive the profession's readiness for change? Respondents were 1,832 band directors from across the United States. Results indicated a strong consensus of what constitutes tradition in band that supports descriptions in the scholarly literature. Band directors viewed change as necessary but seemed reticent to initiate change in their practice. Respondents noted a lack of instructional time as a primary barrier to enacting change in their practice. It appears band directors' agency to preserve tradition or enact change may be more nuanced than the current national discussion allows.

Keywords: band director change, organizational identity, band tradition, change agency, music education tradition, band director perceptions

Introduction

The K-12 band program has been the subject of much scholarly discussion and debate. Calls for change have described the band and its traditions as not serving the interests of individual students, instead focusing on group achievement (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Kratus, 2007; Mantie, 2012; Williams, 2011). In response, Fonder (2014) called these desires for change in the large ensemble

paradigm "preposterous" and "absurdist." Miksza (2013) appealed to practitioners by suggesting rather than moving on from bands, music educators' focus might be better served with "reimagining the instructional approaches and musical experiences that could be possible" (p. 48). Echoing this sentiment, Hill (2009) offered that "what we call 'innovative' is usually nothing more than a recombination of already-existing things into some new object or form" (p. 109). Regardless of their attitudes toward change in K-12 band, these scholars held common conceptions of the traditions of band and the organizational identity to which these traditions contribute.

Literature

Discussions of band tradition in the literature seem to refer to means/ends pragmatism. Scheib (2006) described tradition in band as students' opportunities to compete with other students, skill development for achievement's sake, and varying aspects of classroom discipline in a classroom setting. Heuser (2011) asserted the product-focused nature of band, with its emphasis on strict discipline, is due to its military roots and influence. The band's repertoire has also been a component of tradition (Mantie, 2012; Reynolds, 2000). Mantie described that the focus on repertoire results from a desire for band to be considered artistically legitimate. More broadly, repertoire received attention when the College Music Society's Task Force for the Undergraduate Music Major issued a report calling for the de-centering of Western art music (Campbell et al., 2016). In response to this report, the Collegiate Band Directors National Association issued a rebuttal cautioning against such a change and defending the repertoire they believed was integral to undergraduate study (Peltz, 2017). Allsup and Benedict (2008) and Mantie (2012) also contended director-centered instruction and external evaluation are a part of the band tradition. Taken together the consensus among scholarly writers regarding traditions in band include faithful re-creations of Western art music, autocratic teaching methods, student competition, and a focus on artistically relevant (quality) repertoire.

Change in music education is presented by Jorgensen (2003) as both natural and intentional. This vision of change is ongoing and is never entirely complete. Mirroring the intentionality to which Jorgensen referred, change involves both reflection and action (Regelski & Gates, 2009): teachers reflect on their current practice, identify a direction for change, and then enact that change. However, Bowers (2003) challenged a determinist understanding of change-as-inevitable and tradition as backward and oppressive, directing educators to consider the question, "What do we need to conserve in order to have a more sustainable future

and just world order?" (p. x). Using Bowers' and Jorgensen's divergent conceptions together, we synthesized a two-directional model for change for the current research project: change can be toward traditional or non-traditional ends.

Barriers exist when enacting change. Jorgensen (2010) cited expectations by the government, businesses, religions, music professionals, and the general public as challenges to implementing change. Sears (2016) described the Socratic ideal of *aporia*, a type of learning that occurs after experiencing paradoxical confusion. She wrote, "Just as waking from a deep and peaceful sleep causes discomfort, awakening from or calling into question long held beliefs can also be an uncomfortable, even painful process" (p. 10). Natale-Abramo (2014) concluded her band director participants struggled with differing teaching ideals, notably ideals learned in undergraduate experiences which focus on preparation for ensemble performance contrasted with ideals learned in graduate school with a focus on individual musicianship and creativity. Noting an openness to change, Draves (2016) found that instrumental music teachers "want to be challenged, engage their personal musicianship and to reflect" (p. 44) and were more likely to try new pedagogies (e.g., improvisation) after first-hand experience.

Nelson (2011) provided one of the few empirical insights into band directors' views of change and tradition. He explored their "perceptions of and receptiveness to" (p. v) contrasting philosophical ideas by having participants read and respond to two articles representing traditional and non-traditional approaches to band. Participant responses reflected a preference for traditional approaches to band and were generally reticent to accept the non-traditional approaches. This reticence seemed to stem from a "perceived impracticality of education methods" (p. 48) advocated by the non-traditional approach.

Writing from their own experiences and research with band, most of the aforementioned authors were university faculty who can be understood as outsiders discussing their view of the culture of band in schools. The genesis of this study was our curiosity regarding band directors' perceptions of tradition and openness to change, a voice which appears to be missing from the scholarly discussion. The purpose of this research was to identify band directors' perceptions of tradition and change to or from tradition. The research questions were:

1. What practices do band directors view as more traditional, somewhat traditional, and less traditional?
2. From their current practice, how willing are participants to change more or less-traditional practices (as defined by participants)?
3. How do band directors perceive the profession's readiness for change?

Theoretical Framework

Band directors' perceptions of tradition and change may be tied to their concepts of the organization's and/or culture's values and interests in tradition and change. The Drzensky et al. (2012) model of organizational change indicated "identification can even lead to less acceptance of change if the change process is at odds with the culture of the organization" (p. 98). We used the Drzensky et al. model as a framework for considering K-12 band directors' views on tradition and change, with the definition of "band director" as referring to a possible organizational culture shared by teachers of band that reflects shared professional traditions, values, and interests.

Method

We used survey methodology for this investigation as a questionnaire allowed us to invite participants from a wide array of contexts, experiences, and backgrounds to see how these attributes might influence thoughts of tradition and change. As there are no published national-level data regarding what band directors consider traditional, this descriptive design allowed us to establish baseline data about their perceptions of tradition and change.

Participants

Because we were investigating band director perceptions of tradition and change, the population for this project was current, retired, or collegiate band directors who taught or had taught in K-12 schools in the United States. As such, the sample for this investigation were members of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) who identified band as an area of interest. We used the NAfME email service for its accessibility and national scope. Due to the size and reach of the organization, we believed this list of band directors would give us a variety of participants from different contexts, backgrounds, and experiences. However, we recognize that there are many teachers of band from an even greater variety of contexts, backgrounds, and experiences who are not members, and therefore, this population does warrant limited generalizability. The list from NAfME consisted of 20,625 members who met our criteria.

Instrument

We designed a four-part questionnaire using Qualtrics questionnaire design software. After granting consent in the questionnaire, participants were asked

to confirm they taught band. The first part of the questionnaire contained questions for demographic information regarding participant age, years of experience in teaching, highest degree earned, gender, race, school SES (based on percentage of free-reduced lunch students), level taught (first year students, second year students, middle school students, and high school students, and college students), and the urbanicity of the school in which they taught.

The second part of the questionnaire contained items concerning the first research question about activities band directors consider traditional. We created a list of activities drawn from the authors cited earlier, our own experiences, and practitioner articles (e.g., Feldman et al., 2010, Veblen & Waldron, 2016). Through this process we intentionally included the greatest variety of activities we could identify. We next consolidated the list by eliminating redundancies, which resulted in 20 activities. Participants categorized each activity according to how traditional each activity seemed to them. We were careful to not define tradition for the participants as we were interested in their conception of the term. Much of the literature refers to non-traditional pedagogic techniques as progressive techniques. We were concerned the term *progressive*, with its socio-political associations, could be a distraction for band directors, thus affecting how they might normally answer the prompt. As a result, we labeled categories based on their relation to tradition: *more traditional*, *somewhat traditional*, or *less traditional*. Examples of activities included "having a chamber program," "insisting on appropriate attire at concerts," "creating improvisation exercises," and "allowing students to have the final say on musical elements of performance (e.g., how loud a forte is performed; how slow a largo goes)."

The third part of the questionnaire was divided into three segments and addressed the second research question. In the first segment, participants were asked how often they participated in each of the previously addressed 20 activities, and were prompted to respond with *never*, *seldom*, *sometimes*, and *often*. In the second segment, participants were asked that, given their current amount of instructional time, how willing were they to devote time to the specified activity to which they could respond: *Not at all, I would choose to do this less, I am satisfied with the current amount of time I spend on this activity,* and *I would choose to do this more*. Finally, for the third segment, participants were asked what barriers prevented them from doing each of the activities more. They were given seven choices including *performance expectations for the ensemble, teacher knowledge of the activities, acceptance by other band directors,* and *time*. Respondents could choose more than one answer.

The final part of the questionnaire had two segments addressing the last research question. In the first segment, we asked participants the extent to which they agreed with statements regarding change in the tradition of band using a

four-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. These statements were adapted from Drzenksy et al.'s (2012) research regarding organizational change. Examples of change statements were "change is necessary for band's survival," "most of my band director colleagues feel positively about change within the profession," and "generally band directors agree that things, which have always worked, do not need to be changed." The second segment provided participants the opportunity to share their thoughts regarding band director practices and change via free response. As with our approach with the construct of tradition, we specifically did not define or describe change.

Procedure

We received IRB permission at our respective institutions and piloted the questionnaire to ensure clarity of the items with a small, select group of band directors from one author's state. Pilot participants were K-12 band directors and represented a range of ensemble achievement levels, urbanicity, and socio-economic diversity. They were asked to complete the survey and respond to an additional question to provide feedback on the clarity of the questions and any other issues they believed needed to be addressed. After completing the pilot, minor changes were made to the wording of some of the items to aid in clarity. Once we completed the pilot phase, we next contacted NAfME to request research invitations be sent on our behalf to members who selected band as an area of interest. NAfME sent three invitations at approximately one-month intervals beginning in June and ending August of 2017. We closed the survey in late August. We chose this time frame to allow teachers who were still finishing their school year to respond before they left for summer break, while also taking advantage of the summer break for others. Closing the survey in August allowed us to capture participants who were beginning the new school year and had just returned to school. Once we closed the survey, we began analyzing the data.

Analysis

We calculated descriptive statistics for the data using SPSS™ Version 27 Statistics Software. For each segment of the questionnaire, analysis was first conducted on responses provided across the sample and then on the stratified data according to the demographic variables. An activity's placement in a category was determined by calculating the mode. We placed each activity in the category (more traditional, somewhat traditional, and less traditional) for which it received the highest number of responses. A similar procedure was used to analyze responses to how often they use activities as well as how satisfied they are with the

amount of time they spend on each activity. We calculated the frequencies of the answer choices for each activity. Open response data were analyzed according to the research questions they best supported.

Results

Respondents

Of the 20,625 invitations sent, 1,832 (8.89%) returned complete responses; the low response rate could have been due to the timing of the survey (summer). Also, the questionnaire required approximately twenty minutes, a time commitment that may have dissuaded potential participants. Despite the low response rate, the percentage of respondents for each NAfME region matched the overall percentage of that region's representation in NAfME (Table 1). The number of respondents exceeds the recommended minimum sample size for our given population (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Further our margin of error is +/- 2.19 (CI: 95%) warranting analysis and discussion of the data.

Table 1

NAfME Regional Division Invitee and Respondent Percentages

	Invites		Responses	
Eastern	6,331	30.70%	490	26.75%
North Central	4,286	20.78%	414	22.60%
Northwest	1,396	6.77%	132	7.21%
Southern	5,324	25.81%	447	24.40%
Southwestern	1,691	8.20%	170	9.28%
Western	1,597	7.74%	179	9.77%
Total	20,625		1832	

Table 2 displays the demographic data of respondents. The largest NAfME divisions (Eastern, Southern, and North Central) saw the most representation (73.7%). The majority of respondents identified as male (57.9%), White/Non-Hispanic (92%), taught in suburban communities (43.4%) with 50% or fewer free/reduced lunch recipients (56%). Most recipients had attained a Master's degree (60.1%) and the largest percentage of respondents (39.6%) had taught for 10-25 years.

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	Frequency	%
Urbanicity of School Community		
Suburban	796	43.4
Rural	611	33.3
Urban	296	16.1
Public College	73	4.0
Private College	51	2.8
n	1,827	
Socio-Economic Status of School		
25% Free/Reduced Lunch	563	30.7
25-50% Free/Reduced Lunch	463	25.3
50-75% Free/Reduced Lunch	338	18.4
75-100% Free/Reduced Lunch	328	17.9
N/A (College/Retired)	132	7.2
n	1,824	
Highest Degree Attained		
Masters Degree	1102	60.2
Bachelors Degree	558	30.4
Doctorate	172	9.4
n	1,832	
Years of Experience		
26 or more years	463	25.3
0-10 years	620	33.8
10-25 years	725	39.6
n	1,808	
Grade Level Taught*		
First Year Students	962	52.0
Second Year Students	904	49.0
Middle School	1,090	59.0
High School	996	54.0
College	152	8.0
n	4,104	

Note. Due to IRB requirements, participants could choose not to answer a particular question
* Participants could choose more than one grade level

What practices do K-12, collegiate, and retired band directors view as more traditional, somewhat traditional, and less traditional?

Participants viewed practices related to the re-creation of Western music as Traditional or Somewhat Traditional. Activities that were generative or creative on the part of students were generally categorized as Less Traditional. These results were consistent across all demographic variables. With few exceptions, there was strong agreement regardless of years of experience, NAfME region, degree earned, race, gender, SES taught, and urbanicity. *Using social justice-oriented repertoire to teach about a historic issue* was the activity over which there was the most amount of disagreement. The results from the first portion of the questionnaire can be seen in Table 3.

In open responses, participants referred to popular music and chamber groups as less traditional. To exemplify, one respondent commented "I try to emphasize less traditional models like modern band (pop music band), chamber groups, and other student-led groups." Another respondent discussed place appropriateness, stating "American urban schools are exposing music students to less traditional music and focusing too much on popular cultural music." As one respondent commented, technology itself seemed to be viewed as less traditional, commenting "I think both models (a tech-oriented one and a more traditional wind band model) benefit students." Other more traditional models specifically mentioned were "pep-band and competitions," "concert band," and "symphonic band literature."

From their current practice, how willing are participants to change toward more or less-traditional practices (as defined by participants)?

When asked how much time they spend on an activity, participants responded they "often" did activities categorized as traditional with two exceptions. Respondents were divided on how much time they spent conducting chair auditions and challenges for seating (see Table 4). Also, respondents reported "sometimes" having students take private lessons. Respondents reported being "satisfied" with the amount of time they spent on each traditional activity with the exception of *taking private lessons* in which they wished to "do more" (see Table 5).

Table 3
Band Director Categorization of Instructional Practices

More Traditional		Somewhat Traditional		Less Traditional	
Practice	%	Practice	%	Practice	%
Preparing for a concert	94.7	Learning to play a secondary instrument	59.8	Having students construct their own instruments	86.3
Playing scales to teach skills/warm-up	93.0	Using peer mentoring (student mentoring other students)	54.7	Students compose a "score" for a short film using technology (e.g., Garageband, Finale, Sibelius) for my students to generate new music.	81.9
Insisting on appropriate attire at concerts	91.7	Learning musics of other cultures arranged for band as a way to develop multicultural awareness	51.3	Learning to play fiddle tunes and other folk musics by ear	66.9
Preparing and performing at contests, assessments, or festivals	85.8	Having a chamber music program	47.5	Creating improvisation exercises from the repertoire	56.7
Playing chorales to warm-up the ensemble	83.4			Learning to improvise in another specific musical style (e.g., pop music, bluegrass, baroque)	55.8
Having students participate in honors ensembles	79.5			Allowing students to have the final say on musical elements of performance (e.g., how loud a forte is performed, how slow a largo goes)	48.9
Programming a “reach piece” (harder piece)	70.0			Using social justice-oriented repertoire to teach about a historic issue (e.g., the 1963 church bombing in Birmingham)	44.6
Auditions and “challenges” for seating	66.8				
Having students take private lessons	60.1				

Table 4

Time Respondents Reported Spending On Activities

Activity	Never %	Seldom %	Sometimes %	Often %
Preparing for a concert (*n* = 1831)	0.2	0.1	5.1	94.5
Playing scales to teach skills/warm-up (*n* = 1822)	2.6	11.1	36.0	49.7
Insisting on appropriate attire at concerts (*n* = 1829)	0.9	1.9	9.7	87.3
Preparing and performing at contests, assessments, or festivals (*n* = 1822)	10.3	9.2	22.3	57.7
Playing chorales to warm-up the ensemble (*n* = 1823)	4.1	12.6	27.7	55.1
Having students participate in honors ensembles (*n* = 1826)	6.3	9.3	31.6	52.4
Programming a “reach piece” (harder piece) (*n* = 1823)	1.2	3.9	35.3	59.1
Auditions and “challenges” for seating (*n* = 1831)	34.5	21.9	26.7	16.7
Having students take private lessons (*n* = 1823)	7.0	29.2	39.2	24.0
Learning to play a secondary instrument (*n* = 1832)	10.0	29.6	48.4	11.9
Using peer mentoring (student mentoring other students) (*n* = 1832)	39.0	15.5	44.5	35.1
Learning musics of other cultures arranged for band as a way to develop multicultural awareness (*n* = 1832)	37.0	24.1	52.3	19.9
Having a chamber music program (*n* = 1829)	21.9	24.8	33.5	19.5
Having students construct their own instruments (*n* = 1830)	79.8	15.1	3.9	1.1
Students compose a "score" for a short film using technology (e.g., Garageband, Finale, Sibelius) for my students to generate new music. (*n* = 1821)	68.9	21.5	7.2	1.7
Learning to play fiddle tunes and other folk musics by ear (*n* = 1824)	60.2	26.9	10.1	2.2
Creating improvisation exercises from the repertoire (*n* = 1828)	33.4	39.1	22.7	4.4
Learning to improvise in another specific musical style (e.g., pop music, bluegrass, baroque) (*n* = 1826)	37.3	37.2	20.2	5.0
Allowing students to have the final say on musical elements of performance (e.g., how loud a forte is performed, how slow a largo goes) (*n* = 1830)	10.1	27.3	47.1	15.3
Using social justice-oriented repertoire to teach about a historic issue (e.g., the 1963 church bombing in Birmingham) (*n* = 1827)	20.6	37.9	35.2	5.9

Table 5
Respondents Satisfaction With Time Spent On Activities

Activity	Not at all	Do less	Satisfied	Do more
	%	%	%	%
Preparing for a concert (*n* = 1823)	0.2	8.3	71.7	19.2
Playing scales to teach skills/warm-up (*n* = 1818)	2.1	9.7	64.8	22.6
Insisting on appropriate attire at concerts (*n* =1822)	0.9	5	77.9	15.6
Preparing and performing at contests, assessments, or festivals (*n* = 1819)	6.6	8.3	63.4	20.9
Playing chorales to warm-up the ensemble (*n* = 1816)	1.9	2.3	55.8	39.1
Having students participate in honors ensembles (*n* = 1823)	3.7	1.4	52.2	42.2
Programming a "reach piece" (harder piece) (*n* = 1814)	0.9	3.5	73.8	20.8
Auditions and "challenges" for seating (*n* = 1826)	20.6	8.2	52.3	18.5
Having students take private lessons (*n* = 1823)	2.2	1	21.7	74.5
Learning to play a secondary instrument (n=1825)	7.1	4.4	64.1	23.9
Using peer mentoring (student mentoring other students) (*n* = 1823)	1.2	1.2	40.3	56.8
Learning musics of other cultures arranged for band as a way to develop multicultural awareness (*n* = 1815)	1.8	2	51.4	44.4
Having a chamber music program (*n* = 1826)	7	1.9	28.3	62.4
Having students construct their own instruments (*n* = 1822)	48.9	6.9	31.4	12.2
Students compose a "score" for a short film using technology (e.g., Garageband, Finale, Sibelius) for my students to generate new music. (*n* = 1817)	31.4	9.6	22.1	36.1
Learning to play fiddle tunes and other folk musics by ear (*n* = 1808)	33.7	9.1	24.4	31.5
Creating improvisation exercises from the repertoire (*n* = 1823)	10	4.4	30.3	54.7
Learning to improvise in another specific musical style (e.g., pop music, bluegrass, baroque) (*n* = 1820)	14.2	6.1	31.2	47.7
Allowing students to have the final say on musical elements of performance (e.g., how loud a forte is performed, how slow a largo goes) (*n* = 1822)	6.7	4.2	62.2	26.3
Using social justice-oriented repertoire to teach about a historic issue (e.g., the 1963 church bombing in Birmingham) (*n* = 1822)	9.3	5.8	42.9	41.4

In open responses, time was discussed often. Most frequently, lack of time was identified as a limiting factor to incorporating less traditional practices: "with my instructional time, I don't want to rob my students of the opportunity and joy of high-level group performance either." Some participants wanted to change toward more traditional practices but lacked time: "I would love to make changes that would actually allow me to do more traditional band director practices."

However, others saw non-traditional practices as a waste of time: "I teach [music technology] classes and they are great, but if I was going to do a movie score in my band class it would be like trying to do sit ups in social studies—completely unrelated and a waste of time for the curriculum designed for that setting."

Regarding activities categorized as somewhat traditional, participants reported they "sometimes" did each activity. They reported wanting to *use peer mentoring* and *have a chamber music program* "more" while being satisfied with time spent on *learning a secondary instrument* and *learning music of other cultures*.

Items categorized as less traditional had the widest variety of responses as to how much time is spent on each activity and their satisfaction with the time currently spent. Respondents indicated "never" as the time spent for three listed activities: "Having students construct their own instruments," "Students compose a 'score'," and "Learning fiddle tunes and other folk music by ear." Other activities were either listed as "seldom" or "sometimes" done. Respondents reported not wanting to devote time to students constructing instruments or playing tunes by ear. Respondents also wished to have time to "have students compose, create improvisation exercises from repertoire" and "improvise in a specific style" more. They were satisfied with how much time they spent for students to have a say on performance decisions and how much time they spent on social justice issues through repertoire. It is important to note that satisfaction with current amount of time spent on activities did not necessarily denote a particular level of approval of that activity as a part of band, but rather satisfaction with the amount of time spent on it. A director could spend no time on perfecting scales and be satisfied. As with the categorization of activities there were no differences in responses across demographic variables.

When asked what barriers existed to engage in any of the activities (Table 6), most respondents responded overwhelmingly with "Not enough instruction time" (88.9%). Additionally, performance expectations of the director (50.9%) and community (42.3%) were cited as barriers. Approximately a third of respondents (33.2%) cited their "knowledge, skills, or background" as a barrier to doing activities more.

Table 6

Barriers To Devoting More Time To Instructional Activities

	Freq.	%
Not enough instructional time	1,629	88.9
Your performance expectations for the ensemble	933	50.9
Outside performance expectations of the ensemble	775	42.3
Your own knowledge, skills, or background	609	33.2
School traditions	428	23.3
May compromise opportunities for students (like festivals and honor bands)	397	21.7
Acceptance in the profession by other band teachers	144	7.9

How do band directors perceive the profession's readiness for change?

Respondents provided a complicated answer to this research question. In general, participants believed change is necessary for both the field of music education (90.3% *agree* or *strongly agree*) as well as band's survival (82.9% *agree* or *strongly agree*). At the same time, results indicated a reticence for the profession to change. Respondents were split when answering "Most of my band director colleagues feel positively about change within the profession": 50.4% responded with *agree* or *strongly agree* while 48.4% responded with *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. Additionally, respondents agreed (70.1% *agree* or *strongly agree*) that "things which have always worked do not need to be changed." Further complicating an answer to this research question was a general disagreement (61.3% *disagree* or *strongly disagree*) with the statement "change is more likely to mean risk than rewards." Finally, participants disagreed (69.8% *disagree* or *strongly disagree*) that "tradition is more important than change." Considered together, these responses indicate participants seem to believe change is a necessary component of teaching, but perhaps look for others to initiate the change or at the very least have a cautious attitude towards changing their practice. One participant wrote,

> *Band directors, from my perspective in 22 years of teaching, are generally slow to adapt to changes – not because of fear of the change, but rather caution for how the change could negatively impact their day-to-day teaching. The changes in culture and community that have occurred during the last quarter of a cen-*

tury have been vast, and not all of them have been good for music instruction at any level.

The open-ended responses gave us limited insight as to participants' thoughts regarding "change" because we purposely left the definition of "change" open to interpretation by the participants. Yet their responses painted a complex picture of their ideas about change. Technology seemed to be synonymous in many respondents' minds, e.g., "We must find a balance between incorporating change and/or technology and the traditions of band music" and "Technology is a big factor, now." Other participants, both for and against, focused on change as social justice, popular music, and improvisation. To contrast two opinions, one participant wrote, "Social justice has no place in the band room. Quit trying to indoctrinate children," while another wrote, "for the last seven years [I] have been teaching at a school where community, social justice, creativity and student-led learning are the norm. What is seen as 'new and unusual' in a band classroom in other places simply looks appropriate in my current environment." Participants focused on what should be, could be, or ought not be changed or preserved, such as marching band, repertoire, and contests.

Participants also identified peers as barriers to change. One participant wrote "When I entered the profession I hit the ground running trying to do different things and when I reached out to more experience [sic] directors they 9 times out of 10 highly discouraged me from doing that." Another participant responded, "So many of my colleagues are stuck and adamant about teaching the way that they were taught when they were in school, instead of exploring practices that best meet the musical needs of our students." And finally, a participant wrote, "you have older male colleagues (not necessarily band teachers, but other teachers) that value tradition/'how it's always been' more than innovation." Some respondents were open to what they considered change, but were also cautious, with several specifically stating a concern for "change for change's sake."

Discussion

The intent of this investigation was, in part, to establish baseline data regarding what band directors consider traditional aspects of their practice as there is a lack of descriptive data substantiating perceptions within the field. Perrine (2017) characterized music education scholarship on change as overgeneralizing, stating "The problem here is not that these critiques may have merit in particular cases, but rather that the authors have overgeneralized based on anecdote to generate a sweeping narrative that condemns instrumental music in large ensembles far too broadly" (p. 28).

Addressing these assertions, the forced-choice and open-ended responses together indicate a duality among the participants' views. The forced-choice question results from this investigation indicated a strong consensus among band director participants of what constitutes tradition in band. In general, band was portrayed essentially as a fixed practice, emphasizing the performance of primarily Western art music through group instruction and performance. Further, activities emphasizing individual creativity were consistently identified as less traditional and respondents described engaging in such activities sometimes, seldom, or never. The shared view of band tradition as Western-based group performance with little individual creativity supported many characterizations by scholars such as Allsup and Benedict (2008), Mantie (2012), and Schieb (2006) that band exists as a product-driven, director-centered ensemble.

In contrast to the forced-choice data, however, respondents reported a more nuanced view of their openness to change toward less traditional activities. Consistent with Miksza's (2013) suggestion of revitalizing and reimagining instructional approaches, forced-choice question results indicated band directors' interest in trying new activities, particularly those activities which allow students to create music. This was further corroborated in the open responses, "I would love to do more to build individual, creative, non-traditional musicianship skills in my program," and "I would like to incorporate more improvisation into my classes." While stating desire to change does not necessarily correspond to actual change, it could indicate an openness to less-traditional activities, which might challenge much of the cited critiques of band.

An interesting result was the amount of attention marching band received in participants' open responses despite not being included as a topic in the questionnaire. Most respondents discussed it negatively, referencing the current competitive marching band environment. Some participants seemed to associate marching band with change, noting trends in the use of electronic instruments and amplification (similar to the participant's comment regarding technology cited earlier) as examples of unwanted change. However, more than one participant noted that change, when so defined, created issues of access. As one participant noted, "Spending money on electronics, props, hugely intricate drill, flags, specialized equipment, etc., is simply not education when there are kids who want to make music but do not have - and cannot afford - an instrument." It is possible that marching band and its association with technology exemplify a larger concern that directors feel toward change: that change may only be welcome once the tradition (or perhaps trappings of tradition) is firmly in place. Research that addresses when and how band directors view the space and place for non-traditional activities would further enlighten the national conversation surrounding band and tradition.

Results from this investigation may indicate that individual band directors have both interest and concern about the future of band and feel uncertain or powerless to address them. As the change management literature suggests, directors may feel change should be led by "influencers" (Auster & Ruebottom, 2013), not by themselves. Such a feeling would be consistent with the Drzensky et al. (2012) model that indicated members of an organization are more ready for change if they "perceive that the organization has adopted a culture of change" (p. 106). While our data suggested that directors seem to share a consistent definition of tradition, and an interest in change emerged, the presence of a culture of change was substantially less clear. Perhaps band directors think of change more in terms of their personal, daily instructional practices, squaring them (or not) with past tradition rather than what impact they might have on the future and not the organizational identity of band as a whole.

Limitations

The response rate for this survey was low and caution should be used when generalizing from the results. Additionally, this was a descriptive survey dealing with complex topics often dependent on the unique contexts of time and place, further complicating a clear picture of band director perceptions of tradition and change. Evidence from the questionnaire indicates a high potential of response bias as some respondents were highly suspicious and negative in their answers, likely indicating many respondents with similar reactions chose not to participate (as discussed below). In addition, as mentioned earlier, we acknowledge that using the NAfME listserv excludes the perspectives of band directors who have chosen not to be a member of the organization. Nonetheless, participants' responses provided insight on how practicing band directors perceive tradition and change in the profession. The large number of responses, while limited in generalizability, can provide a rich source for discussion about a topic that is often critiqued, but under-researched.

Implications

It is clear from our data that band seems to reflect a well-established and shared view of tradition, but that band instructors share far less consistency regarding their views on the process of change. As noted above, some participants seemed antagonized by the questions on less traditional practices in the survey and what they perceived to be the motivation for the research. This negative reaction was similar to responses to Nelson's (2011) investigation regarding tradition and non-traditional views. At no point did we directly ask participants if they believed

band should change. Yet, some open response answers seemed to be directed at that very question. There were many open responses suggesting strong resistance to change, such as cautioning against "change for change sake" and promoting "if it isn't broke, don't fix it." Conversely, there were few participant responses discussing the perils of tradition for tradition's sake. These responses may suggest that for those scholars and teachers who wish to see the practice of band change, a need should be established before taking steps to initiate change. Establishing this need *with* band directors instead of *for* band directors could help change makers overcome the distrust some respondents seemed to have.

A national conversation about the future of band is complicated by the vast differences in how the traditions of band are realized (or not) among individualized, local schools. Standards such as those communicated by NAfME, state contest rules, and influential conferences, such as state conventions and the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, seem to establish what "should" be outcomes of the band classroom. These national influences reach into teacher preparation as Hewitt and Koner's (2013) findings show that collegiate instrumental methods courses are highly standardized. One-third of respondents from the current investigation reported they felt ill-prepared to teach non-traditional aspects of band. As one respondent stated, "I think both the teacher training programs and the national trade organizations push tradition and excellence through regimented and outdated ways of teaching." There seem to be several possible avenues for conversations about the future of band, such as state and national organizations and collegiate programs, but as Jorgensen (2010) suggested, these large-scale organizations are perhaps too homogenized to reflect the needs of individual communities and the vast array of situations band directors encounter. More direct networking and connection among, and representation of, individual band director voices may be sources for the desired change participants desired.

Finally, time was cited as a limiting factor in trying new activities and seemed to affect participants' desire to do activities identified as less-traditional. The implication from the data is that with more time, participants would be more traditional and also less traditional. Likewise, participants who are satisfied with time spent on more-traditional activities could reflect a satisfaction with their balance of activities rather than an aversion to change. As it seems the traditional approach in band is long-standing, and is being met with less and less time given for that practice, perhaps inclusion of those less-traditional practices for which participants expressed desire (e.g., Draves (2016) and our data) might provide a more solid basis for requests for time.

Conclusion

Even though this survey was a national survey and responses yielded little difference in results based on the selected demographic variables, many respondents noted the importance of community in their pedagogic decisions. This raises the issue that, for the most part, the topic of change in band has been more of a national, rather than local, issue. State and regional music educator conferences often focus on pedagogic tools reinforcing and extending undergraduate training, rather than larger philosophic issues. The broader conversations tend to be held by organizations in higher education such as the College Music Society and the Collegiate Band Directors' National Association. Again, echoing Perrine (2017), generalizations about instrumental music through the large ensemble may be far too broad. As a profession, we must be cautious when describing, nationally, what band "is." Doing so may silence the voice of the K-12 band directors, particularly in how community influences their pedagogic choices.

One of the foundational studies in change management literature stated that in order for an organization to change, the current structure must "unfreeze," move to a new structure, and then "freeze" the new structure (Lewin, 1947). Most of our participants expressed that "unfreezing" was needed; some provided individual examples of their own unfreezing while others expressed a sense of powerlessness to unfreeze. If change is indeed needed or desired, who, ultimately, will "unfreeze" the structures in place to begin change?

If unfreezing is desired, support will be needed for the process (Auster & Ruebottom, 2013). Band directors may be encountering parallel narratives that reinforce uncertainty and confusion as well as codifying separation within the profession. Some narratives focus on preserving traditions and other narratives challenge those traditions. Publications for academic audiences tend to encourage change and innovation, whereas more practitioner-oriented publications tend to uphold the narrative of tradition. All the participants in this research were members of NAfME, which contains a Band Council and a separate Innovations Council. These councils demonstrate a physical, and perhaps metaphoric, barrier that may contribute to the separation of narratives regarding tradition and change within band and keep the conversations from blending and potentially moving forward.

Band has been a passionate topic of discussion in academic literature which points to the perceived influence those who teach band have in the field of music education. Fairly or unfairly, band has been largely held responsible in the literature as a focus of change. The agency of band directors to enact change in their practice, and likewise affect change to the organizational identity of band,

appears to be more nuanced than the scholarly discussion about band and change acknowledges. Indeed, for any type of organizational level change to occur, it is likely to start with small acts at local levels. These acts may involve university professors working with K-12 band directors, collaborations among like-minded band directors, or band directors in similar contexts working together.

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