Jason B. Gossett
West Virginia University

Structure, Agency, and Career Stage: Stories of Three Band Directors

Band directors have a strong sense of the traditions of band when they begin teaching. They learned these traditions as students in band and through music education coursework. They also have unique personal histories that influence the ways in which they perpetuate or alter these traditions. The variety of personal and professional experiences influences their agency. Using strong structuration theory (Stones, 2005) as a theoretical framework, I conducted a collective case study to understand how both life experience and professional preparation can constrain or enable band director agency. Three band directors who taught in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States participated in individual and focus group interviews and completed reflective journals. Results indicated participants faced gatekeeping early in their careers as part of their professional preparation which constrained teacher agency. Additionally, life stage/experience (e.g., age, motherhood, and non-music related experiences) played a role in participants' agency.

Keywords: structuration theory, structure, agency, band

Band directors are influenced by students, parents, school administration and their own desires when designing and implementing instruction. However, tradition may play a primary role in shaping their approach to teaching band (Gossett et al., 2022). Like many school music experiences, band is rich in tradition. Band directors learn these traditions as students and can pass them on when they enter the field. This recursive process perpetuates tradition through the replication and/or modification of the structures of band (Stones, 2005). Structures are the rules and resources used in social reproduction (Giddens, 1984). As such, structural forces influence band directors and can often constrain and/or enable band director agency (the capacity to accept, reject or modify structures) (Priestley et al., 2015).

Literature Review

Structures of the American Band Experience

It is difficult to create a universal description of school bands. They exist in a variety of geographic and socio-economic contexts. As a result, the activities of school bands and what counts as success is also varied. For this investigation I primarily focused on perceptions of concert bands discussed in literature and celebrated/awarded through festivals and conference performances (e.g., state music educator association performances, Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic performances, etc.), admitting that this does not apply to all school bands. The concert band paradigm itself has been criticized in the literature (along with orchestra and choir) as not meeting the needs of students (Kratus, 2007; Williams, 2011). Allsup (2012) also challenged prevailing conceptions of concert band envisioning an approach where "each section in band decides chair placements. Guitars, accordions, and iPads come into view. Students perform the music of Percy Grainger, Duke, Ellington, and the kid next door" (p. 184). In philosophic literature, scholars have highlighted performance, competition, and the importance and influence of the conductor as structural to the identity of band in K-12 schools in America (Allsup, 2012; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Mantie, 2012). Allsup and Benedict (2008) described that band directors are concerned with "the careful maintenance of the orchestral classical repertoire celebrated and revered by a cultured audience, the careful maintenance of the venerated wind band conductor, and the accompanying normative practices for transmitting this repertoire" (p. 161). Mantie (2012) elaborated on the transmission of repertoire by describing it as the performance of "conductor-chosen and rehearsed art music literature to exacting standards of, most typically, tone quality, tuning, and ensemble precision" (p. 67).

In contrast to the philosophic literature, there are no empirical studies which broadly examine the collective structures of band. Scholars have examined the individual components of the American K-12 band experience to which philosophic scholars refer: performance, competition, and the importance/influence of the director. Perhaps the most well-known structure of band, performance, prioritizes ensemble achievement over individual achievement (Kancianic, 2006; LaCognata, 2010). Supporting the centrality of ensemble performance, LaCognata (2010) found directors believed assessment in the classroom should focus on contributions to the achievement of the ensemble over individual achievement. Further, band directors labeled instructional activities involving the preparation and performance of western art music as *traditional* and accounted for most of their instructional time (Gossett et al., 2022).

Competition in band, related to ensemble performance, influences students and teachers alike. Band directors first experience competition in band as students (Scheib, 2006). They then often perpetuate the structure when they enter the profession. It can often be seen as band versus band in events like marching or concert band competitions (Collins, 2012). Competition also exists within a band as students often compete with each other through chair challenges and auditions (Scheib, 2006). Larue (1986) and Gouzouasis and Henderson (2012) discovered students viewed competition as a source of motivation, and preferred competitive events over non-competitive events. This finding may help explain the fact that preservice band directors cite marching competitions as meaningful and influential in their decisions to become directors (O'Leary, 2019). However, when they enter the field, band directors believe the pressure to compete will primarily come from peers (Collins, 2012).

The importance of the director and their continuing influence on students, while not unique to band, is nonetheless a structural component of band. Allsup and Benedict (2008) described "directorship" (p. 157) where the focus is on the director's decisive action, best practices, and rehearsal efficiency. Supporting this assertion, Bazan (2011) found directors favored teacher-directed instruction, wherein instruction emphasizes the role of the teacher in the learning process more than student-centered instruction. Pre-service teachers often cite secondary teachers, such as band directors, when describing motivations to pursue teaching band as a career (Austin et al., 2012; Isbell, 2008). Mertz (2018) discussed how college band directors exert influence over their students and the field as their opinion on repertoire can be seen in the numerous publications advocating for the performance of quality wind literature (e.g., Budiansky & Foley, 2005; Fonder, 2014; Kirchhoff, 2004; Reynolds, 2000). However, band directors can experience internal conflict as they balance this messaging in undergraduate coursework with the unique contextual factors of the band and community in which they teach. Mertz (2018) explained how this manifested for his participants, stating "Ideas of 'quality' repertoire, seemingly simple when discussed in a vacuum apart from teaching considerations, became complicated as participants expanded their definitions of quality to include educative ends in clear contradiction of the values in the higher education band habitus" (p. 120).

It is likely the structures described above also vary by degree or application depending on the unique contextual realities in which the band director teaches. Ultimately though, these structures do not exist outside the band directors who reinforce them.

Transmission of Structure and Band Director Agency

Learning the structures of band begins during "structural conditioning" (Stones, 2005, p. 53), when participants learn the structures of the activity through an apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975). It is during this time that participants are influenced by people and experiences that exemplify what band directors do, and by extension what band 'is.' Researchers found that respected teachers and experiences positively affect the choice of music education as an occupation (Austin et al., 2012; Bergee et al., 2001; Isbell, 2008; Rickels et al., 2013; Thornton & Bergee, 2008). Further, experience serves as a source for instructional practices (Schmidt, 1998, 2013). Once they enter the profession, novice teachers cite peers as influential of their rehearsal strategies (Chaffin, 2009), repertoire selection (Bauer, 1996; Chaffin, 2009), and assessment (Kancianic, 2006; LaCognata, 2010).

Band directors can choose to accept, modify, or reject the strategies learned from influential others. Doing so requires them to rely on their own sense of agency. Agency is something people achieve in particular contexts (Priestley et al., 2015). It can be achieved but can also be constrained. Powell (2018) found that a state's high-stakes competitive structure constrained the agency of student teachers. Interestingly, his participants defended those same structures during their first year of teaching. Tucker (2020), also examining band director agency in a competitive environment, found that agency in participants reinforced existing norms of band and the structures that exist within them. She noted that one of her participants exhibited generative agency when creating a new situation (establishing a jazz festival as an alternative to existing festivals) rather than repeating existing structures. Band directors themselves cite peers as constraining agency to change their teaching (Gossett et al., 2022; Natale-Abramo, 2014)

While experiences in band influence and inform band director agency, personal experiences outside of band may as well. Most of the limited research regarding these personal factors centers on personality traits and skills believed necessary for successful teaching. Band directors believe personal skills (i.e., the ability to motivate, energy and enthusiasm) were more important than music skills (Miksza et al., 2010). In an investigation of motherhood and teaching band, Fitzpatrick (2013) found that unique personal qualities enabled her participant to balance the two responsibilities. In previous research I found lessons learned from a band director's unique life experiences play a central role in shaping their approach to student outcomes, performance, and repertoire (Gossett, 2016). There is a need to further examine how a band director's non-band experiences interacts with structural experiences of band to inform their agency as a teacher. The purpose of this research was to examine the structure and agency of three band directors at different points

in their career and life. The questions that guided this investigation were: 1) In what ways do teaching experience and the structures of K-12 band interact to enable and/or constrain the agency of instrumental music educators?, and 2) In what ways do band directors use their agency to accept or reject structures?

Theoretical Framework

I used strong structuration theory (SST) (Stones, 2005) as the theoretical framework for this investigation. SST is built on structuration theory (Giddens, 1984). The key assumption of structuration theory is the duality of structure where structure is both means and ends of social action. Agents enact structures adhering to or creating *written* rules (e.g., performance lengths at band festivals) and/or *implied* rules (e.g., not programming well-known cornerstone repertoire for band festivals). Band directors draw on rules to signify the interaction between structure and agency creating a shared meaning among agents. They then legitimize these rules through reproducing them or they set out to modify the structures. Giddens described that agents draw on resources through which they exercise power to influence structures. This influence exists as forms of domination that exists physically (as in material and economic resources) and authoritative (as in persuasion/peer pressure). Analytically, the rules and resources are distinct, but, in practicality, all are involved in agential action.

Stones (2005) believed structuration theory was broadly conceived labeling it as *ontology-in-general*. To make it useful on an empirical level, he conceived the quadripartite nature of structuration. He situated this approach as *ontology-in-situ* and described it as "particular social processes and events in particular times and places" (p. 8). The quadripartite nature begins with external structures as conditions of action. External structures consist of two types, the first being *independent causal influences* over which the agent has no control. Examples of these are school, district, and state mandates for curricular content, physical space in which directors teach, and funding. The second type of external structures are *irresistible causal forces*, over which the agent may not believe they have control, but ultimately do. These forces can exist as pressures, such as the pressure to program high quality repertoire (Mertz, 2018), that directors feel unable to resist. However, they often, if not always, have autonomy over their choice of repertoire and the criteria they use to choose it.

The next component of the quadripartite nature is internal structure. These structures exist within the agent and consist of conjuncturally specific knowledge of external structures and agents' general disposition. Conjuncturally specific knowledge is specific knowledge of time, place, and practice emphasized in different combinations according to specific situations. General disposition consists

of "transposable skills and dispositions" (Stones, 1985, p. 88) used in different circumstances. The third part of the quadripartite nature consists of agents' actions, which are both planned and routine. These actions result in the final component of the quadripartite nature of structure: outcomes, during which structure is accepted, modified, or rejected. The result of the outcome influences the external structure in the recursive cycle of structuration. Given its focus on empirical level analysis, strong structuration theory provided a framework for considering the simultaneous nature of context and conduct in band director agency; that structure and agency are mutually constitutive of each other.

Method

I employed a collective case study design (Stake, 1995) for this investigation. The collective case study is much like an instrumental case study where participants are selected "to understand something else" (p. 3). In this case, multiple participants were selected to understand structure and agency within the American K-12 band director experience. Participants were bound by their experiences in K-12 band as students, pre-service teachers, and in-service teachers. Data collection began during the middle of the 2018-2019 school year and continued through the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year. Data for each participant consisted of three individual interviews, two journal prompts, and a focus group interview with all three participants. Additionally, I journaled throughout the data collection process to capture my thoughts in the moment, guide subsequent interviews and journal topics, and serve as an anchor point for my thoughts when I began analyzing data.

Individual and focus-group interviews were semi-structured (Merriam, 1998). Individual interviews allowed participants to discuss their personal backgrounds in privacy, while the focus group allowed them to describe shared experiences. Individual interview questions were initially centered on identifying context and structures particular to each participant. I asked about participants' history in band, their obligations and interests outside of band both as students and now as teachers, and about ways in which the structures mentioned above emerged in their experiences as students and teachers. Questions for the second and third interviews were generated based on a cumulative analysis of the previous interviews and generally focused on instances of agency. The focus group interview, beyond a few initial questions, was largely unstructured as the participants led most of the discussion and I interjected only to ask clarifying questions. Journal prompts addressed agential aspects of participants. The first was a simple personality profile

where participants rated the importance of several personality traits in their job. The second prompt asked them to think to a specific instance when they were faced with a significant decision related to their position as band director and describe considerations when making that decision.

Data were analyzed in two phases. In the first phase I categorized the elements of structure and agency through structural coding (Saldaña, 2013) using the elements of the quadripartite nature of structure (external structures, internal structures [conjuncturally specific & general dispositional], agency, and outcomes). This process facilitated an individual case analysis. After examining the results of this phase, I created new codes that emerged from the data and conducted a second analysis based on these codes. The second phase of analysis constituted a cross-case analysis. After this, I wrote the manuscript and sent it to each participant for member checking. All participants approved of their representation in this report.

I purposefully selected participants based on my knowledge of them through my position as a music teacher educator in a northwestern state (Patton, 2015). The criteria I employed in their selection were a) a variety of K-12 and collegiate band experiences, and b) a shared context for participation in the profession. I selected participants because all three had vastly different K-12 and collegiate band experiences. However, they were also all influenced in one way or another by the structures in this particular state. Zeta (all names are pseudonyms) grew up in a large Midwestern state in a prototypical band program. Her experiences focused on concert band and competitive marching band. Outside of band, she was a volleyball athlete in high school and played Division I collegiate volleyball during her undergraduate degree. Upon completing her degree, she taught for 14 years in her current position as a high school band director which is the only position she has ever had. Over the course of her teaching, she completed a master's degree through a local university that focused exclusively on band performance and instrument pedagogy. Outside of teaching, Zeta is an avid runner and outdoors enthusiast. She is married and has no children. Bernice grew up in southern California and was a cellist and trombonist. She did not participate in band competitions in high school. She began her undergraduate degree as a cello performance major. Before completing the program, she met and married her husband who served in the Air Force. Several years later, during which they lived abroad and began a family, they arrived in this state. She began teaching orchestra on an emergency teaching certificate and completed her bachelors and master's in music education. Her children are grown and no longer live at home. Bernice taught public middle school orchestra and band for eleven years and is the oldest of the participants. Chris grew up in Southern

California. He described his high school band experience as typical but noted that band played a positive role in motivating him through high school. Upon gradua-tion he initially enrolled as a science major at a university in the Midwest, but after a year transferred to the northwest and eventually changed his major to music edu-cation. A tuba player, Chris participated in, and eventually taught at a drum corps. He had just gotten married the summer prior to data collection. He was in his first year of teaching band in a neighboring state and is the only participant not teaching a public school, instead teaching at a private Catholic high school.

I met all my participants through my position as a university professor. I worked with Bernice in her capacity as a cooperating teacher. Zeta's band par-ticipated in the concert festival I administrated, and Chris was a student of mine though I taught at a different institution at the time of data collection. My primary area of expertise is band. I taught public middle and high school band for ten years prior to entering higher education. Having a common background and experience as the participants allowed me insight into their experiences for this investigation.

Findings

I present findings through the analytically distinct components of the quad-ripartite structure. However, it should be understood that the core of SST is that structure and agency are not separate phenomena. I will focus on two distinct structures of band that emerged in the experiences of the participants: festival experiences and gatekeeping/validation.

External Structures

One independent causal factor common to all three participants was public assessment of ensemble performance through participation in band festivals. The state's athletic association sponsors a competitive concert band championship that is similar to most American high school band festivals. Bands perform approved repertoire for a panel of judges at regional contests where they are ranked so that they can qualify for a performance spot in the final state championship in May. While middle school bands do not have a state championship, they do have a sys-tem of regional festivals run in the same fashion. Placements for the middle school festival are not awarded, but scores are anonymously released to directors and many directors communicate these scores with each other to discern how each ensemble placed. Most schools in the state, both middle school and high school, participate in the festival system. Success at these festivals is equated to success as a band director. Participants either taught (Zeta and Bernice) and/or learned to

teach (Chris) in the influence of this system. The rules of this structure are that bands must be assessed, and the resources through which the rules are enacted is the state championship format, the repertoire list (approved by influential directors), and the assessment by judges.

Chris's festival experience, though in a neighboring state, existed as an irresistible causal force as he felt pressure to perform and earn recognition for the band. He described:

> *The basketball team is the best in the state two years in a row. The football team is in the state playoffs. The lacrosse team made state … They're all here [places left hand at eye level], and I feel like the band is here [places right hand at chest level]. I need to get it up to par with the rest of the [groups].*

Zeta, a multi-year state champion band director, recalled similar pressures in her first year of teaching, though in her case it came from her students, as she described "I was mostly just kind of surprised by it. I wasn't necessarily bothered; it was just that the kids were so motivated by it, and I had no clue that it was a thing". Bernice took her ensembles to festivals but used them for more than ensemble assessment:

> *We didn't look at scores. We talked about how we could do better, and we had a really great time together. And so, then that's when I thought, oh, well, this isn't about numbers. This is about us getting to know each other, my primary concern is for my students, and that's it.*

A second independent causal force was that of validation as participants felt the need to validate their ability to teach band. This need to validate was, in part, due to negative experiences with veteran band directors who participants believed were acting as gatekeepers. For Chris, the veteran band directors were his cooperating teachers. He recalled struggling to build relationships with them:

> *I think they were trying to act as gatekeepers and they decided, "All right, this guy isn't going to be a good teacher. We're not going to help him we're not going to put any time into him." And so, they didn't really devote any sort of thought or effort to developing a relationship.*

Describing their approach to teaching as "festival oriented," Chris believed his cooperating teachers expected him to get results with the ensemble immediately. Chris's student teaching experience provided motivation for him. He recalled, "I feel their presence haunting my decision making in a way because towards the first festival, I was really motivated to get the bands to sound as great as possible, because I was like, 'Screw those guys.'" Zeta's experience was similar to that of

Chris and occurred during her first year of teaching. She described how the previous director, now retired, "would come and loom at concerts and give feedback that wasn't always wanted, you know, and so I got a little bit of that kind of stuff." Bernice had several experiences of gatekeeping due to her expertise in, and desire to teach, both orchestra and band. Her collegiate band director told her she would never find work as an orchestra teacher and that she should concentrate on learning band instruments and more importantly band repertoire. She recalled, "he just seemed like as, not a kind person…he is thought of in [the state] as one of the top [directors]". Bernice often struggled to be viewed as a band director, stating "Oh yeah, I was not accepted as a band director by my band colleagues. I still am not." She also experienced gatekeeping later in her teaching career. She was invited by a friend to sit at a table with several notable band directors (who ran the state concert championship) and who were all members of a professional band organization:

> *Okay, that pin, I hate that pin. To me, it seems very elitist, and so I was sitting at the table with all the pins and they didn't talk to me. I felt really bad about it. It made me feel clearly, I was the odd duck out.*

Internal Structures

Numerous internal structures influence agents' decisions. I present internal structures that seemed most salient in the analysis here while acknowledging they alone do not account for all factors in participants' agency. All participants had internalized the expectation to participate in festivals. However, their conjuncturally specific knowledge resulted from their unique festival experiences as well as what they learned when studying to teach band. For instance, Zeta had non-competitive festival experiences as a student. She described, "As far as concert band goes, [I] had never done any real competitive stuff…And so coming to [current position], they had been used to competing in the state championships and all that stuff that I'd never had experience with, and honestly just didn't know how to prepare for." She described the pressures informing her normative expectations of a band director. She emphasized, "you got to use the tried and true, man. You got to play the Holst and you got to do what they tell you." 'They', in this instance, were band director peers. Chris experienced contrasting methods for preparing for festivals and performance. The first focused on student involvement in musical decision making. He credited his master's experience in this approach:

> *We worked on it in my master's degree experience, sort of that clinic with Dr. Kirchhoff and kind of watching campus band and getting feedback from the students as far as how we should perform a piece, the actual process of rehearsing.*

His other experience was with his cooperating teachers, which he described as being "very prescriptive. And I guess always knowing the right answer". Bernice's conjuncturally specific knowledge regarding band was different from the other participants. She described her high school band experience as "not great" and that "kids came in, they kind of just blatted noises and played whatever, and then the conductor would yell, and we'd all go, 'Oh God.' Then we'd go take our seats and do the thing." Each participant had a different orientation to competition and were prepared in differing ways for the competitive festival paradigm.

General dispositional knowledge is transferrable across different contexts and times. Zeta's experience as a scholastic athlete provided her with a sense of perseverance and tenacity that she credits as a large portion of her approach to teaching. She stated, "I had no idea I was going to probably take 80% of my teaching from my volleyball coach I had my 11th and 12th grade year." Bernice's general disposition was influenced by her role as a mother. She recalled school experiences with her son, "The teachers did not give him a clean slate. You know, when he would change grades, the teachers would talk about him and say, 'Look out for this kid.'" As a result of her son's treatment, she decided that in her class, "I don't talk about other kids, and I want them to come in and have that clean slate and know them as humans." Bernice worked to model kindness in her interactions with students and peers.

Agency

Participants described feeling constrained by the pressures of the festival as novice teachers, as Zeta described in this reflection:

> *The first five years you feel like you got to make a name for yourself, or you got to show that you know what you're doing and have the right product and that kind of thing. So now, it's more, what's going to benefit my kids educationally?*

Chris, still a novice teacher, echoed this constraint, saying "I can't get composition into the curriculum in some way at all" because the festival "needs to be right." He later described the pressure he feels:

> *And as somebody who's new to it, I feel like I'm trying to prove myself. I feel like I'm at that stage... I'm still trying to prove myself to my cooperating teachers, to my professors even though they're not there watching me, and they probably don't even think twice about me anymore.*

Despite this pressure, he exercised agency to teach in a less prescriptive approach than that of his cooperating teachers. He stated, "I think that the difference is I get student input. So almost like a lot of big decisions I make, I seek out student input."

Unlike the others though, Bernice did not feel constrained, stating "I never ask for permission when I try these things because I never have thought that I've needed to, until you asked me. 'Who gave you that permission?' I'm like, I didn't know that I was supposed to ask. I just do stuff."

Teaching experience seemed to positively contribute to agency. At the beginning of his second year of teaching, Chris acknowledged taking more chances. He related that he changed the format of his rehearsals to spend time with one section, "So I kind of tried that format out, where I just worked with them, I gave them all my attention, so yeah, I feel a lot of agency compared to before." Zeta noted it took about four or five years to feel the agency described above and perhaps best exemplified the 'capacity', if not the desire, to enact change when she stated

> *I believe if I chose and had good reasoning, I could justify not participating in the state championships here in [state]. I do however think the students and community would be disappointed in that decision, especially at first. Once that culture is established it is something that people tend to use for validation of success. So, I suppose I would not actively choose to withhold that opportunity from my students.*

Bernice credits her age, and the knowledge and experience that comes with that age, as enabling her agency, reflecting "I think this comes as being an older than average person going through a program and then coming in. Usually, I'm older than my administrators. I think it gives me the benefit of the doubt."

Outcomes

The outcomes for participants were generally a questioning of the role competitive festivals play in band. For example, the constraints Zeta described trying different instructional strategies in her first years of teaching, in addition to the perseverance and tenacity from athletics, influenced her to accept and perpetuate the competitive festival structure of band. However, as she gained experience, her conjuncturally specific knowledge changed, and her confidence in teaching enabled her agency. She drew on her experience as a student at non-competitive (rated) band festivals when she began exploring other options for the competitive festival in an effort to bring options to the athletic association. Chris, although not teaching in the same state as Zeta and Bernice, participated in competitive band festivals. He had reservations about their usefulness in student learning, but the pressures to participate outweigh his concerns as he described here:

> *Sometimes I question, is this the right way to be teaching kids about music and about what the art of music making is? We've talked about marching band,*

and I'm somebody who loves marching band. I'm a drum corps dude, but even then, am I really making people more creative when I'm teaching marching band? But, I question, maybe three or four times this year, I've gone down that dark path, and then worried about more important things like getting through each day.

Discussion

The purpose of this investigation was to examine the structure and agency of three band directors, each at different points in their career. Teaching experience played a role in participant agency. The more experience participants had as a teacher, the more they tended to enact agency. Early in participants' careers, structural expectations to demonstrate competency (to be validated) as a teacher through festival performance constrained their agency. Interestingly, the more participants took part in the structure of festival performance, perpetuating the structure, the more agency they believed they had to make changes in their teaching. Life experience seemed to have an immediate effect on their teaching (Zeta's perseverance and tenacity and Bernice's motherhood).

Early instances of agency seemed to be confined to their individual situations within the classroom as novice teachers, and involved instructional experimentation as participants tried strategies not employed by their influential others (previous band directors, cooperating teachers, etc.). Other early instances included subverting the competitive structure (Bernice). Later instances of agency seemed more visible outside of the school such as Zeta's work to move away from competitive festivals and toward rating festivals.

The rules and resources of structures (as exercised by agents) are powerful and difficult to overcome. Stones (2005) identified three properties necessary for agents to reject or modify structures: capability, adequate knowledge, and requisite reflective distance. Capability and knowledgeability often work hand in hand. Participants' conjuncturally specific knowledge and expectation to comply with the demands of festivals limited their capability to do otherwise. They lacked knowledge of options available to them so they reinforced the options with which they had experience—a structure they would eventually question. Agents must possess adequate knowledgeability of structures, as well as themselves, to explore avenues of possibility available to them as teachers. Knowledgeability cited in this study was directly tied to experience and was necessary before critical reflection could occur. Only after they acquired this knowledge did participants begin to question what role festivals should play in their practice and how they should play that role. Due to the need for direct experience to provide requisite knowledge-

ability, it may be too much to expect novice teachers to enact agency that may trigger large-scale change.

Agents must also possess knowledgeability of themselves, their general dispositional knowledge, and connect this knowledge to their teaching practice. They should not only view themselves as hosts of the external structures of their practice (Freire, 2012). The knowledge of self will include acknowledging the unique experiences that inform their agential identity—an understanding that band directors are more than the sum of their musical knowledge. When they first entered the field, Zeta and Chris seemed concerned with 'what band directors do.' However, Bernice's orientation was more aligned with 'who band directors are.' Music teacher educators should facilitate their students' exploration of all elements of personality and life experiences they bring with them to the classroom. Bringing their general dispositional knowledge forward to use as a tool when teaching may provide pre-service and novice band directors with the agency necessary to meet the unique contextually driven needs of their students.

To generate a requisite reflective distance, agents must be given opportunities to step away from the day-to-day actions of their practice and allowed to critically reflect on their decisions and the "situational pressures" (Stones, 2005, p. 115) that accompany them. Participants expressed how being involved with this study provided them with the opportunity to reflect on how they interacted with the structures of band. This sentiment has been expressed by participants in other research (Dwyer, 2015). Graduate school (Natale-Abramo, 2014) and music education conferences (Gossett, 2016) can also be spaces for reflecting on the goals and means of participation in band and how structures can be used to meet or fail to meet these goals. In all of these cases, the reflection was facilitated by someone outside of the context of participants. This highlights the need to create spaces for novice teachers to safely engage in critical reflection as they gain experience in the classroom, adding to their conjuncturally specific knowledge. Care must be taken when facilitating critical reflection that agents are part of the process, working with the agents and not dictating to them. If agents are left out of reflecting on their practice, and the structures at large, they "will fail to initiate (or will abandon) dialogue, reflection, and communication" (Freire, 2012, p. 66) and fall into the defensive postures that sometimes accompany new ideas (as can be seen in Fonder, 2014; Gossett et al., 2022; Nelson, 2011; Peltz, 2017)

To facilitate novice band director agency, steps should be taken by music teacher educators to balance a critical reflection of structural forces in band with attention to day-to-day teaching methods. Pre-service teachers should confront questions like "Who does the festival experience serve?", "In what ways are they served?", and "Who/what is being centered in this experience?". Experiences in

music teacher education programs should not only model this critical reflection, but also highlight and center non-traditional band experiences to expand conceptions of what band can be. This may be a difficult task as most professional band/music organizations (e.g., state NAfME affiliates, The Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, and Bands of America) tend to highlight traditional programs as models of success. Nonetheless, knowledge of options available to band directors combined with tools to critically reflect on the aims and means of band, in their in-situ context, would contribute to band director agency.

Pre-service education is likely only a stepping off point to fostering band director agency. Participants in this investigation experienced mentoring as gatekeeping. Conway (2015) found her participants viewed that some mentor directors, particularly retired directors, viewed the first year of teaching as an opportunity to weed out those they believed were not suited for the profession. Novice band directors need supportive mentors who foster growth and development without judgment. Mentors should be able to recognize unique personal qualities of young directors and help them reach their potential by capitalizing on these qualities. Despite results that suggest band director peers can negatively affect novice band director agency, there exists little research exclusively focusing on the subject. The judgment of worthiness, peer pressure, and possible bullying by experienced band directors is an area of research that needs to be further explored.

Powell (2018) and Tucker (2020) described that it will take the collective effort of agents to make large-scale change. The results from this investigation support that it may also take an influential agent with a fair amount of cultural capital (ironically resulting from success in the very structures of band where change may be desired) for others to enact change in their practice and see alternative options as available to them. Researchers suggest implementing change in structures may work better if an influential agent initiates it (Gossett et al., 2022). Zeta may be able to shepherd this change through as a multi-year state champion band director who has this cultural capital. Her exploring of alternative approaches to the states' festival format could provide the spark necessary for others to initiate change.

Results from this investigation support that band directors rely on more than knowledge of band when enacting agency. They rely on structures of the profession as well as their own internal structures. For any sort of change to happen, agents will have to engage both domains of experience. Both domains, in a variety of combinations, provide knowledgeability and capability. It will be up to music teacher preparation programs and professional development facilitators to provide opportunities to engage in the necessary critical reflection to enact change beyond the school level.

References

Allsup, R. E. (2012). The moral ends of band. *Theory into Practice, 51*(3), 179–187. http://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2012.690288

Allsup, R. E., & Benedict, C. (2008). The problems of band: An inquiry into the future of instrumental music education. *Philosophy of Music Education Review, 16*(2), 156–173.

Austin, J. R., Isbell, D. S., & Russell, J. A. (2012). A multi-institution exploration of secondary socialization and occupational identity among undergraduate music majors. *Psychology of Music, 40*(1), 66–83. https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735610381886

Bauer, W. I. (1996). The selection of concert band music by high school band directors. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 15*(1), 4–9. https://doi.org/10.1177/875512339601500102

Bazan, D. (2011). The use of student-directed instruction by middle school band teachers. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 189*, 23–56. https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.189.0023

Bergee, M. J., Coffman, D. D., Demorest, S. M., Humphreys, J. T., & Thornton, L. P. (2001). *Influences on collegiate students' decision to become a music educator.* MENC: The National Association for Music Education. http://musiced.nafme.org/resources/nafme-online-publications/influences…

Budiansky, S., & Foley, T. (2005). The quality of repertoire in school music programs: Literature review, analysis, and discussion. *Journal of the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles, 12*(5), 17–39.

Chaffin, C. R. (2009). Perceptions of instrumental music teachers regarding the development of effective rehearsal techniques. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 181*, 21–36. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40319225

Collins, A. N. (2012). *Perceptions of pre-service music educators regarding participation in competitive band events* [Master's thesis, The Florida State University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Conway, C. (2015). Beginning music teacher mentor practices: Reflections on the past and suggestions for the future. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 24*(2), 88–102. https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083713512837

Dwyer, R. (2015). Unpacking the habitus: Exploring a music teacher's values, beliefs and practices. *Research Studies in Music Education, 37*(1), 93–106. https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X15589260

Fitzpatrick, K. R. (2013). Motherhood and the high school band director: A case study. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 196*, 7–23. https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.196.0007

Fonder, M. (2014). Another perspective: No default or reset necessary—large ensembles enrich many. *Music Educators Journal, 101*(2), 89–89. https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432114553776

Freire, P. (2012). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (revised). Bloomsbury.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration.* University of California Press.

Gossett, J. (2016). An examination of the pedagogic values of band directors. *Visions of Research in Music Education, 28*(1), 5. https://opencommons.uconn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1172&context=vrme

Gossett, J., Shevock, D., & Thornton, L. (2022). Band director perceptions of tradition and change: A national survey. *Contributions to Music Education, 47*, 129–150. https://discovery.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=bacf0ea1-bcc3-3101-b739-6e2143f8fa5f

Gouzouasis, P., & Henderson, A. (2012). Secondary student perspectives on musical and educational outcomes from participation in band festivals. *Music Education Research, 14*(4), 479–498. https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2012.714361

Isbell, D. S. (2008). Musicians and teachers: The socialization and occupational identity of preservice music teachers. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 56*(2), 162–178. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429408322853

Kancianic, P. M. (2006). *Classroom assessment in United States high school band programs: Methods, purposes, and influences* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global

Kirchhoff, C. (2004). Selecting repertoire: A matter of conscience - a personal viewpoint. *Canadian Winds: The Journal of the Canadian Band Association, 3*(1), 45.

Kratus, J. (2007). Music education at the tipping point. *Music Educators Journal, 94*(2), 42–48. https://doi.org/10.1177/002743210709400209

LaCognata, J. P. (2010). *Current student assessment practices of high school band directors.* [Doctoral Dissertation, University of Florida]. ProQuest dissertations & Theses Global

Larue, P. J. (1986). *A study to determine the degree of consensus regarding outcomes of band participation and the competitive elements in band programs among band directors, band members and members of parent booster groups* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global

Lortie, D. C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. University of Chicago Press. http://www.gbv.de/dms/bowker/toc/9780226493510.pdf

Mantie, R. (2012). Bands and/as music education: Antinomies and the struggle for legitimacy. *Philosophy of Music Education Review, 20*(1), 63–81.

Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Mertz, J. J. (2018). *Tension in the band repertoire selection process: Issues of compatibility between training, belief, and practice* [Doctoral dissertation, Boston University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global

Miksza, P., Roeder, M., & Biggs, D. (2010). Surveying Colorado band directors' opinions of skills and characteristics important to successful music teaching. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 57*(4), 364–381. http://doi.org/10.1177/0022429409351655

Natale-Abramo, M. (2014). The construction of instrumental music teacher identity. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 202*, 51–69. https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.202.0051

Nelson, R. (2011). *An exploration of secondary level instrumental music educators' receptiveness to select philosophical writings* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Louisiana State University. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global

O'Leary, E. J. (2019). A phenomenological study of competition in high school bands. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 220*, 43–61. https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.220.0043

Patton, M. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage.

Peltz, C. (2017). *A Position paper by the CBDNA music education committee*. https://www.cbdna.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/CBDNA-The-Call-for-Perspectives.pdf

Powell, S. R. (2018). Structure and agency in novice music teaching. *Research Studies in Music Education, 41*(2), 206–218. https://doi.org/1321103X18794514

Priestley, M. R., Biesta, G., & Robinson, S. (2015). *Teacher agency: An ecological approach*. Bloomsbury.

Reynolds, H. R. (2000). Repertoire is the curriculum: Repertoire selection has a major impact on what students will and will not learn, and it should help their musical understanding and appreciation. *Music Educators Journal, 87*(1), 31–33. https://doi.org/10.2307/3399675

Rickels, D. A., Brewer, W. D., Councill, K. H., Fredrickson, W. E., Hairston, M., Perry, D. L., Porter, A. M., & Schmidt, M. (2013). Career influences of music education audition candidates. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 61*(1), 115–134. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022429412474896

Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Scheib, J. W. (2006). Lindy's story: One student's experience in middle school band. *Music Educators Journal 82*(5), 32-36. https://doi.org/10.2307/3878499

Schmidt, M. (1998). Defining "good" music teaching: Four student teachers' beliefs and practices. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 138*, 19–46. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40318937

Schmidt, M. (2013). Transition from student to teacher: Preservice teachers' beliefs and practices. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 23*(1), 27–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083712469111

Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage

Stones, R. (2005). *Structuration theory* (Vol. 1). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-230-21364-7

Thornton, L. P., & Bergee, M. J. (2008). Career choice influences among music education students at major schools of music. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 177*, 7–17. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40319448

Tucker, O. G. (2020). *"Everybody is good enough": Band teacher agency in a highly competitive environment*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of North Texas].

Williams, D. A. (2011). The elephant in the room. *Music Educators Journal, 98*(1), 51–57. https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432111415538