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School Music Administration During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Trauma, Loss, Meaning, Change, and Innovation

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School Music Administration During the COVID-19 Pandemic:

Trauma, Loss, Meaning, Change, and Innovation

by

Christopher Burns

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Music
with a concentration in Music Education
Department of Music Education
College of The Arts
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Date of Approval:
March 31, 2021

Keywords: music education, pandemic, social emotional learning, curriculum development, student-centered learning

Acknowledgements

Throughout the writing of this dissertation I have received a great deal of support and assistance. I would first like to thank my dissertation committee, Dr. Clint Randles, Dr. David Lee, Dr. David Williams, and Dr. Victor Fung, whose expertise was invaluable in formulating, writing, and editing this paper. Their insightful feedback made this document possible and alive. I would like to acknowledge my colleagues from the University of South Florida, specifically Dr. Patrick C. Cooper, who has helped to pull me into the world of research and data, sometimes kicking and screaming. Also, PhD Candidate Charlotte, who introduced me to this program and is the reason I became a student at USF.

I would also like to thank the many friends and teachers along the way who paved the path for me to become a competent educator and scholar, beginning with Mr. Anthony Williams, my middle school band director; Dr. Jay Dorfman, my high school band director, friend, and mentor through my many years of schooling; Professor Jeff Moore, who saw something in me and took a chance on the raw drummer in the room. I would also like to thank the soon to be Dr. Jarritt Ahmed Sheel, a great friend and leader who has kept me grounded from our first days performing at Disney to the day of my defense, always a voice of reason. Additionally, I would like to thank my parents Kevin and Lisa Burns for their continued support through the nearly 30 years of education in which they never questioned me in my endeavors, just asking for my best always. Finally, my wife Shana, whom I could never thank enough for sticking by me while enduring three children, job gains and losses, questions of how and why, and all of life's many ups and downs. She has always stood by my side and been my biggest cheerleader.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Abstract

On Friday, March 13, 2020, the School District of Osceola closed its doors for Spring Break and did not open again until 3 weeks later in a digital capacity. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way teachers and students learned. The band, chorus, and orchestra classrooms were empty, and replaced with digital meetings with the need to unmute and turn cameras on. This study is an autoethnographic narrative of my life during the COVID-19 pandemic as a district resource for the teachers that I serve. While music administration has existed in many forms over the past 100 years, there are no definitive explanations of what the role of a music administrator looks like, or should be, especially during a pandemic. In this autoethnography I tell the story of how music education has been affected by, in what ways have teachers have had to adjust to, and how music education has changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the lens of a digital student and music educator, I bring the correspondence and organic stories of teachers in my district to the reader with the hopes of understanding what I have lived through as a music administrator over this period of profound change and innovation in music education. The loss and grief suffered by teachers and myself shaped the way pedagogy changed and adapted for students who have also suffered loss and grief. Through this experience of trauma and loss has come change and a need for innovation. This innovation may come in many forms, not just in what is referred to as innovative practices in a classroom, but novel (to some teachers) ways to educate and reach students. This is my story.

Chapter 1:

Introduction

In March of 2020, many school districts across the Central Florida region closed their doors due to the COVID-19 virus. With this unprecedented closure, music education took on a major transformation that would affect not only the way music is taught, but the teachers and students involved at every level. As a District Resource Specialist, my position also changed and the way I support my teachers had to quickly adapt to a new normal. The discourse around music administration and district supervision over the past 100 years (Andrew, 1956; Boska, 1970; Can, 2011; Hellemn, 1999; Heller & Quatraro, 1977; Katz-Cote, 2016; Normann, 1959; Porter, 1994) is mixed, suggesting that the role has adapted in that time from a traveling supervisor assisting classroom teachers, to general music teachers themselves, to evaluators, and most recently to curriculum writers or specialists.

As the music resource specialist in my district, I am responsible for curriculum support and writing, event management, district funding, as well as a large number of "other" responsibilities as needed. Within the last year, I have had to also become the social emotional support for the teachers in my district as well as the health expert as it pertains to performances and rehearsals during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is this data that supplements the writing of this dissertation as an autoethnography, one where I not only seek to describe the current situation in my district and the music educators it

affects, but also unpack what this pandemic has meant for me both personally and as a music resource specialist.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic closing everything from schools to businesses, many students and teachers were required to work from home, thus immediately having to move their teaching online or to a hybrid classroom scenario that was previously thought to be the exception and not the standard. Many teachers had not taken part in either a digital or hybrid educational paradigm and were quite lost in the mix of learning to work with the tools they had. Furthermore, they were lost when tasked with keeping a viable curriculum for their students. Although many teachers have begun to adopt more technology into their curriculum through the use of YouTube and other streaming services (Bauer, 2009; Bovin, 2018; Cayari, 2017; Chtouki, Harroud, Khalidi, & Bennani, 2012; Green, 2019; Kruse & Veblen, 2012; McMarrow, 2018; Samsonov, Daspit, Mayers, & Briggs, 2009; Thorgersen & Zandén, 2014), and have worked to introduce the flipped classroom approach to music education where students are supported in their education through a device at home or outside the classroom, the immediacy of closure proved that as a field, music educators were not yet prepared for teaching music online or hybridized, and lacked the infrastructure to support a fully flipped classroom.

As a resource, YouTube provides an open door to the various musics of a world that both students and teachers may not have been previously privy to within the four walls of a music classroom. Given YouTube's popularity around the world and the ability for students to share their performances, Cayari (2011, p. 24) states, "YouTube can be seen as a large canvas that allows millions of artists to place their own mark on a digital

2

mosaic." Many performers use the medium to share their music on a free platform that transcends language barriers and socioeconomic statuses. YouTube has provided numerous students with an education beyond the classroom free of charge (Gilroy, 2010), allowing anyone with an internet connection the ability to learn to work and grow. Music teachers can use videos on YouTube to demonstrate various instruments they may not have had access to in their classroom or show various videos of the same piece of music, having students compare the differences in the videos.

Due to the novelty of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is insufficient research on the consequences it has had on general education or music education (Carrillo & Flores, 2020; Grogan Iii, 2020; Igra, 2020; Shaw, 2020), and more specifically, there is little to no research on 1.) how administrators have had to deal with the effect of the pandemic and on 2.) the supervision of music education at the district level. Administrators in the field of music education have been tasked with curriculum changes, policy changes, and health and safety measures not thought of before 2020.

A major push since the pandemic began has been including Social Emotional Learning in the educational practices of our teachers. Districts are providing professional development to administrators and teachers alike with the addition of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to better support the well-being of students during this time of loss and sorrow, a curriculum including SEL provides for the whole child (Edgar, 2013, 2014, 2015; Edgar, Morrison, & Morrison, 2020; Varner, 2020; Yanko, 2020). This holistic approach not only teaches the content (in this case music), but also promotes mental health awareness and preventative measures. Music educators are in a great position to positively effect a student's welfare, as they are with their students more

3

often than any other teacher. As Edgar states, "This bond can be attributed to multiple years with the same teacher, augmented time spent in rehearsals outside of the classroom, and the inherent emotional connection and trust that group music making can create" (2013, p. 30).

This chapter should further explain the basis of my research as well as how I build a theory on change through my place within the music education community, specifically a school district in Central Florida. I provide information in a way where the reader can get a glimpse into the changes to curriculum I shared with our teachers on hybrid and digital learning while still keeping a viable, quality curriculum, and how our teachers had to change their approach designing and delivering curriculum. Interwoven in this data, I share the stories of teachers dealing with grief, loss, stress, and the unknown future of music education in our county. I also impart my own stories of dealing with the stresses set forth by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

Music education during the COVID-19 pandemic has changed dramatically for both the educator and the student, the performance of music (live or recorded), and consumption (Austin, 2020; Crappell, 2020; Daubney & Fautley, 2020; Edgar et al., 2020; Menhart, 2020; Morrison, 2020; Reimers, Schleicher, Saavedra, & Tuominen, 2020; Shaw, 2020). In this dissertation, I seek to set forth a framework based on my experience as a district resource for music educators during the COVID-19 pandemic while also telling the story of how I arrived where I am at this place in time, as I write this dissertation. I am a PhD student who began my degree program in much the same way as how the world of music education is now living—in a digital-hybrid format. I have

4

been lucky enough to be one of two students at the University of South Florida to participate in a "trial" of a synchronous PhD program in music education, attending classes virtually while the majority of (all but the two of us) attended classes in person. Many of the issues our students now face, from microphones not working, to video issues, and poor internet connections, occurred during classes while both the professors and we the students worked out the kinks in a synchronous online environment.

While frustrating, this style of learning was not new to me, as I received my Master's degree online (asynchronously), and I had already begun testing the waters of a flipped classroom with my own elementary school music students. The social aspect and connectedness of the internet has always intrigued me as it pertains to pedagogy and music education. The internet affords teachers and students with opportunities often limited by socioeconomic differences. Working in a Title I school, my students may not have ever seen a concert hall, Broadway show, or heard a live orchestra, but with YouTube and other video services, many of these previously unaffordable events became available in our classrooms and their homes.

As I explore more completely in Chapter 2, many studies have shown how students may upload assignments to YouTube in order to share their ideas/compositions (Armstrong, 2012; Ashraf, 2009; Crawford, 2017; Jackman, 2019; Jenkins, 2007; Jung & Lee, 2015; Means, Toyama, Murphy, & Baki, 2013). Classrooms have begun to "flip" their curriculum, where the teacher assigns videos to students for homework and then are able to spend more time discussing or creating in the brick and mortar classroom (Webb, 2007). One of the major advantages of using YouTube and

5

other media sharing sites is to build a portfolio without worrying about storage, and

other students (or people in general) may comment and critique the work uploaded

(Waldron, 2013). Using digital media to supplement the curriculum currently in place not

only adds a culturally relevant element to the music classroom but allows for more

creativity inside and outside of the classroom.

It is this digital implementation and systemic restructuring that may help teachers

better cope with the changes we are experiencing, as well as afford an outlet for

students (and teachers as well) to express themselves and share their

feelings/emotions as they navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. This

work builds on the experiences gained by living through the COVID-19 pandemic but

reaches into the future as we as a profession grapple with the larger issues involved

with online and hybrid versions of music teaching and learning.

Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore my journey as a music resource

specialist, husband, father, and empathetic human being during the COVID-19

pandemic and how it is affecting me in all these areas of professional and personal life.

During this journey I have become a resource not only for curriculum and music, but for

counseling on how to cope in times of stress and trauma. This paper is an

autoethnography involving self-observation and reflexive investigation, with data from

correspondence through emails, conversations, and general classroom walkthroughs as

is it an obligation of my position in the district. I specifically examine 1.) the values music

teachers place on music performance vs diverse other pedagogies during the COVID-

19 pandemic, 2.) what music teachers have lost and/or gained during the COVID-19

pandemic, 3.) changes the teachers have had to make to adjust to teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, 4.) curriculum adjustments for teaching in a synchronous and/or asynchronous style of teaching, 5.) how teachers envision these changes impacting their teaching practice, post-COVID-19 pandemic, and 6.) how the COVID-19 pandemic affected my position and my pedagogy now and in the future?

Through this examination, I attempt to find innovation at the ground level as well as ways to change the current pedagogical models in classrooms towards an approach that is more student centered and less director centered. While some of my teachers have shown their ability to adapt to change, many are resistant. Without change and innovation regarding their methods of reaching students, their programs stagnate, and students miss out on the opportunity to become lifelong music participators. It is my hope that from the major shift in education caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, there can be an unfreezing of the teacher centered methodology found in many classrooms and a change now to a classroom with autonomy, where students are in charge of their education and the teacher is a support. We can then re-freeze the methods and move on from there.

Rationale

Scholars and researchers have provided insight into the importance of doing autoethnography during and after loss/grief as a way to self-regulate and deal with the affects they are feeling (Adams, Jones, & Ellis, 2014; Bochner & Ellis, 2002; Douglas & Carless, 2013; Ellis, 1995, 1998b; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Ellis & Bochner, 1996; S. H. Jones, Ellis, & Adams, 2016). The rationale behind my research comes from understanding both the personal side of what has happened during the COVID-19

pandemic as well as the professional side in which I, as a resource specialist, have had to deal with the virus affecting our schools and the students/teachers within them. A literature review shows very limited research on autoethnography as a research method in music education, music administration, or music during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to (and during) the pandemic, I was enrolled at the University of South Florida as a PhD student in music education as a "hybrid" student. Much of my participation in this program has been virtual, and as such, I felt prepared for the impending digital divide we met during the pandemic.

Theoretical Framework

"Autoethnography is gaining momentum as a research method within the creative and performing arts, partly because of the opportunity it provides for writers, artists, performers and others to reflect critically upon their personal and professional creative experiences" (Pace, 2012). This dissertation is about my journey, rooted in ideas which are presented by gathering and analyzing relevant data from teachers around the school district as a current member of the music education community that I am a part of while simultaneously researching, and personally reflecting on what I am living through.

I have found that Lewin's Change Theory (Lewin, 1947; Schein, 1999) fits the narrative well, as I believe due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there needed to be an "unfreezing" of methods and an implementation of change in order to teach during and after such a societal shift. To make a substantial change allowing for an unfreezing moment, a catalyst needed to occur, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, completely stopping whatever method of education is in place. Only by unfreezing this previous

method, can real change take place, and we then "refreeze" the newer method for future use. Many teachers in my district are frustrated with how they are treated and/or taking on more than what they are expected to. It is through this dissatisfaction during the pandemic that change has been necessary, as Schein (1999, p. 60) states, "It is my belief that all forms of learning and change start with some form of dissatisfaction or frustration generated by data that disconfirm our expectations or hopes." The following figure demonstrates what is needed for organizational change and where unfreezing
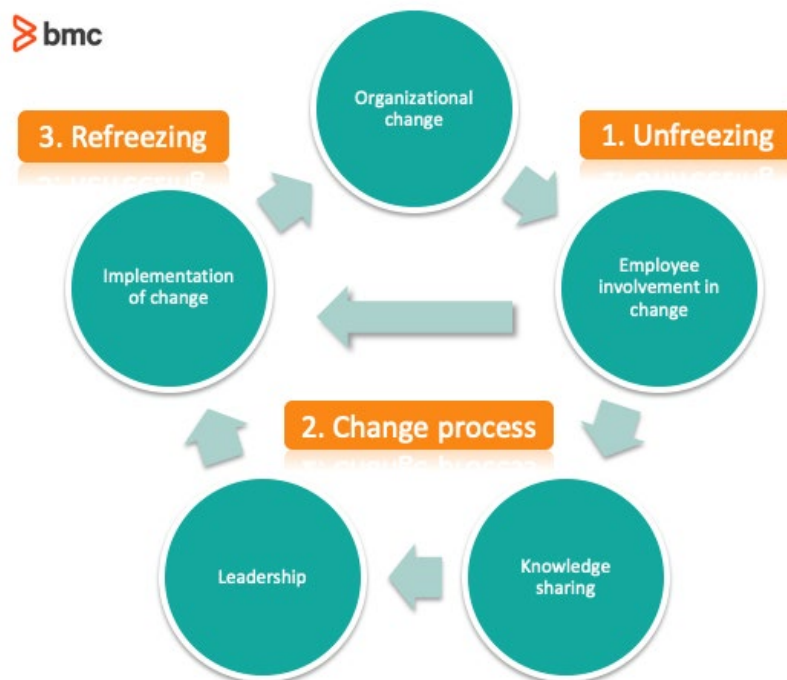
Figure 1 BMC Blog on Lewin's Change Theory (Raza, 2021)

and freezing takes place in the change process. In a situation such as mine, with teachers taking the place of the employee, they must still be involved in the change, and take ownership.

I have collected and told stories, relate events, and describe changes that have allowed me as the researcher to propose a theory for others to better understand and explain the affordances and constraints of online learning. COVID-19 has affected

pedagogy and holistic education in Osceola County, Florida, the school district in which I work. I tell the story and explain my findings. Here are some definitions that help to understand many of the concepts in this dissertation.

Definition of Terms

In this study, I use certain vocabulary found in my research and the literature discussing autoethnography, administration, and loss/grief. In this section, I attempt to make clear the terms used to better inform the reader and ensure the highest degree of understanding from my story. As the overarching theme, autoethnography (Adams, Ellis, & Jones, 2017; Adams et al., 2014; Douglas & Carless, 2013; Ellis et al., 2011; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Ellis & Bochner, 1996; S. H. Jones et al., 2016; Pensoneau-Conway, Adams, & Bolen, 2017; Wiley, 2019) should be best understood as a form of research in which the reader is given an insider's look into a culture. Another term used in this paper, Social Emotional Learning (Clements-Cortes, 2014; Edgar, 2013, 2014, 2015; Edgar et al., 2020; North, Hargreaves, & O'Neill, 2000; Varner, 2019, 2020; Yanko, 2020), explains the importance of holistic teaching and guarantees a student's needs are met not only musically or educationally, but emotionally. Project-based Learning and Student Centered Learning (Blair, 2009; Cremata & Powell, 2015; Hansen & Imse, 2016; L. Jones, 2007; Kelson & Distlehorst, 2000; Leat, 2017; Mihić & Završki, 2017; Watson & Reigeluth, 2008; B. Williams, 2018; David A Williams & Kladder, 2019) also make their way into this dissertation as the shift from face-to-face learning changed quickly to digital learning, forcing students to become autonomous in how they learn. The teacher was no longer on the podium so to speak. This opened the door to various teaching strategies and pedagogical methods not previously attempted.

Autoethnography

Autoethnography, has become a legitimate research method using storytelling to share the ethnographic landscape from the perspective of the writer. "When researchers do autoethnography, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity" (Ellis et al., 2011). The authors explain that autoethnography is a tool to help explain their views and epiphanies. Furthermore, It provides a way for them to consider ways to allow others to experience these epiphanies. Pratt (1991, p. 35), describes autoethnography as a "text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them." This definition pulls the lens of research away from the culture and onto the researcher themselves. While an autoethnography may be a story of one's own journey, the ethnographic lens should still be of importance. One of the purposes of autoethnography, as explained by Adams, Ellis, and Jones (2017), is to inform readers about certain aspects of cultural life that readers might not know as intimately as the researcher/writer has lived it.

Social Emotional Learning

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) "is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions" (CASEL, 2020). In short, SEL is an intervention technique that is universal in that all students may benefit from an awareness of their emotions and their social settings, and learning how to manage their emotions within

these settings (Edgar, 2013). The implementation of SEL into a music classroom directly supports creativity and achievement, and as the amount of time a music student spends with their teacher is exponentially larger than with a counselor or general classroom teacher, the music teacher is in the best position to support students and their emotional health. Looking at the following figure from the CASEL website, one can see a visual representation of how Social Emotional Learning fits into the classroom at a very general and organic level. Towards the center of this SEL graphic are the competencies in which we want our students (or teachers) to be proficient.

According to CASEL (2020), "SEL instruction is carried out most effectively in nurturing, safe environments characterized by positive, caring relationships among students and teachers." While it may seem redundant to include the school and classrooms in the graphic, it is important to understand the other contexts in which a student is at school outside of the classroom, the hallways, cafeteria, media center, and music room. Families and communities are all part of broader systems that shape learning, development, and experiences for the students as well.

Figure 2 Social Emotional Learning Overview (CASEL, 2020)

Project-based Learning

Many classrooms may be content specific, or content-oriented, but in a project-based classroom, the needs of student comes first (Norman & Spohrer, 1996), whereas content is taught through problems or projects that are created to fit the students' needs and abilities. Authenticity is also an important factor when implementing a Project (problem) Based Learning (PBL) classroom, if the students are not interested or don't find the projects necessary, they do not take ownership over their own learning. Gardner (1989) also highlighted the importance of relevance to the child in education, whereas children should learn concepts in relation to art projects they are already engaged in and intimately connected to. Arts courses need to be presented by those who are themselves immersed in the arts, "If the area is music, the teacher must be

13

able to "think musically" – and not merely introduce music via language or logic," (Gardner, 1989). Furthermore, educators who do not possess these skills should find ways to develop these unique cognitive skills.

Student-Centered Learning

Dewey (1897, p. 9) states, "The teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child, but is there as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist him in properly responding to these influences." The definition of student-centered learning or learner-centered pedagogy, very basically, puts students at the center of their own learning. Students are actively participating in teaching each other as well, at their own pace, using strategies that work best for them (Crumly & Dietz, 2014; L. Jones, 2007; Wright, 2011).

Norman and Spohrer (1996) discuss 3 dimensions of instruction in student-centered or project-based learning. The first, engagement, pertains to the importance of motivation and the use of technology to encourage interaction and feedback immediately in the lives of students. When students are engaged, they are motivated to excel and are more likely to spend quality "time on task" with their work. The second dimension is effectiveness—whether students are retaining lessons being taught. In SCL, the effectiveness lies within the student's ability to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge of the subject at hand. The culminating event in traditional classrooms is a test, where students are required to recall information given to them by teachers. Conversely, in the SCL classroom, projects are the culmination of education. The third dimension, viability, pertains to the success of the project (in the case of this dissertation, technology success) in terms of student reception and

14

integration into the classroom. Without the possibility of success for both teacher and students, there is no good reason to continue with a lesson.

While PBL and SCL classrooms may have similarities, there are differences needing clarification. A project-based lesson may be student centered or teacher centered, not taking away from the goal of students working towards a goal and taking ownership over the project. Student-centered learning may involve projects and problems, but the most important factor is student autonomy and student leadership. The students are in control of their learning regardless of the lesson, SCL allows the students to work independently from the teacher to better understand a concept through play or exploration, an idea often mentioned in elementary music pedagogies.

Distance Education

Distance education is institutionally-based, as it is different from general online study where a student (or learner) obtains information on their own. Distance education can be defined both geographically and by time. Learning may take place in two different locations, synchronously, or they may be in two locations at different times, asynchronously (Simonson & Seepersaud, 2018). The main difference between synchronous and asynchronous learning is through interaction with other students and teachers. Synchronous education allows for teachers to work with students in real time, providing immediate feedback and the opportunity for dialogue, whereas asynchronous learning takes place over time and does not provide an opportunity for live conversation. The following graphic (Scheiderer, 2020) best explains what online education looks like through both asynchronous and synchronous delivery.

Figure 2 shows the similarities and differences between Asynchronous and Synchronous online classes. In Asynchronous classes, students are able to complete work on their own schedule, receive immediate feedback on quizzes embedded into the curriculum, and have the opportunity to schedule group projects at any point that works with everyone's schedule. With a synchronous class, students attend class with the teacher and other students virtually, they participate in real time conversations, and may present "live" to students in their class, improving their skills for real world opportunities. Both asynchronous and synchronous classes provide students the ability to attend class from anywhere with internet connection, students are able to communicate with teachers through learning management systems and email, students may network and connect with likeminded students within their classes.
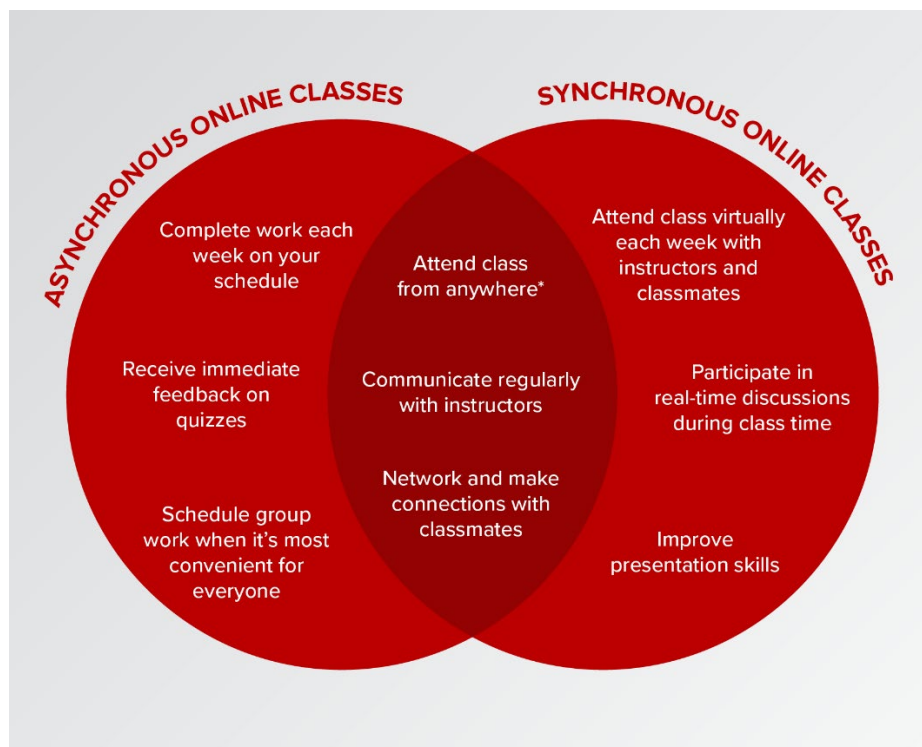
Figure 3 Conceptual Model of Distance Learning (Scheiderer, J. 2020)

Chapter 2:

Review of Literature

In this next chapter I review the literature on topics relative to my journey as a music educator and district arts coordinator, as I consider the ways that I have had to change my path due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I begin this literature review by discussing autoethnographic writings and the place that they serve in the pantheon of research methodologies, and then move to unpacking the literature on music administration. I continue from there with the topic of loss and grief in music education, finishing with new research on music education during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the final section of this chapter I focus on how the aforementioned subjects relate to each other. I explain how the literature does and does not compare to this study on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on music education at all levels.

History of Autoethnography

"History, like any other story, is subject to amendment, development, alteration, expansion and change—forever re-written as new insights, stories, perspectives, contexts or understandings are uncovered" (Douglas & Carless, 2013, p. 84). The history of autoethnography does not have a specific starting point, and doing autoethnography is still a relatively novel method of research in higher education, with one of the first references to the term "auto-ethnography" coming from Karl Heider's (1975) "*What Do People Do? Dani Auto-Ethnography.*" In the article, Heider describes a study of Dani schoolchildren responding to the question "*What do people do*?" The

children were asked the question about their own world while their answers were being

recorded by Heider. He received approximately 50 responses from each. What

transpired resulted in an understanding of the Dani people from their own perspective,

the collecting of qualitative data, and the discovery of patterns and themes to address

specific research questions. A few years later, Walter Goldschmidt (1977) stated, "in a

sense, all ethnography is self-ethnography" (p. 294) while David Hayano (1979)

discusses writing ethnographies of one's own people, though it "is not a specific

research technique, method, or theory" (p. 99). Although these authors introduced

autoethnography as a method of research, they did not fully grasp the function of the

approach. In *Autoethnography* (Adams et al., 2014, pp. 1-2), the authors lay out six

concepts of the aims of autoethnography:

1. Uses a researcher's personal experience to describe and critique cultural beliefs, practices, and experiences

2. Acknowledges and values a researcher's relationships with others

3. Uses deep and careful self-reflection-typically referred to as "reflexivity" – to name and interrogate the intersections between self and society, the particular and the general, the personal and the political

4. Shows "people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live, and the meaning of their struggles"

5. Balances intellectual and methodological rigor, emotion, and creativity

6. Strives for social justice and to make life better

While Heider, Goldschmidt, and Hayano describe many of these autoethnographical

characteristics, reflexivity was not mentioned. There needs to be self-reflection and

reflective give and take among the researcher and the researched in

18

autoethnographical research. The authors reflect on the cultures studied and, while Hayano touches on "intimate familiarities" and "permanent self-identification with a group and fully internal membership, as recognized both by themselves and the people of whom they are a part" (1979, p. 100), he also mentions (p. 103) that the research being done is for the purpose of analyzing "one's own life through the procedures of ethnography. These studies are not only auto-ethnographic, they are self-ethnographic," distancing autoethnographies from a notion of self-ethnographies. A decade later, Adler and Adler (1987) explained a similar history, including a description of the nature of researchers in early autoethnographic research. They state that researchers in this tradition have a similar master status to those whom they study, a deep understanding and familiarity of those whom they study that reaches a unique and elevated status. These researchers were very much insiders to the way of life of the people groups they were studying. This breakdown was used to describe what Adler and Adler call CMRs or "Complete-Member-Researchers" (1987, p. 67).

Similar to previous definitions, Pratt (1991, p. 35), describes autoethnography as a "text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them." Over the next decade, the use of autoethnography as a research method began to increase dramatically (Ellis, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1999; Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Gabriele, 1997; Gravel, 1995; Key, 1992; Koivu-Rybicki, 1996; Unser, 1998) as more researchers attempted to discover themselves through ethnographic study. Stemming from her own loss and grief, Carolyn Ellis has written numerous books and articles within the autoethnographic sphere (Adams et al., 2014; Ellis, 1995, 1999), becoming a leading voice on the subject.

Through her writings, and those of her contemporaries, Ellis has "made an effort to deepen our capacity to empathize with people who are different from us" (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 274). She further explains that it is through autoethnography that researchers produce "meaningful, accessible, and evocative research grounded in personal experience."

As a research method, autoethnography has recently "made a place for itself in one of the main academic databases for business studies and the social sciences" (Au-Yong-Oliveira, 2020, p. 10). Moreover, "autoethnographic texts demonstrate knowledge of past research on a topic and seek to contribute to this research" (S. H. Jones et al., 2016, p. 23), and seek to increase the readability of research findings for the people who might benefit most from the results of the work. Researchers utilized autoethnography to allow both the reader and the researcher "to reconsider how we think, how we do research and maintain relationships, and how we live" (Adams et al., 2014, p. 8).

Music Administration

Music Administration has taken on a different role in the past 100 years (Andrew, 1956; Boska, 1970; Glenn, 1927; Heller & Quatraro, 1977; Justus, 1955; McQuerrey, 1972; Normann, 1959; Porter, 1994), sometimes due to the general classroom teacher also being the music teacher, and sometimes due to there being a "supervisor" supplying ideas and lessons for the classroom teacher. In many school districts there is now a supervisor (or the equivalent) in addition to the general music, band, chorus, or orchestra teachers in the district. These positions are now falling away due to budget cuts and the amalgamation of departments within districts leaving music teachers

without a support system (Luebke, 2013). One of the earliest accounts of music supervisors (Glenn, 1927) begins with a definition of the position as one teacher traveling to various schools to both teach students and classroom teachers, teaching students themselves only 1 out of 20 instructional days per school year. In an effort to define the role of a music supervisor, Glenn writes "The fundamental purpose of supervision is to increase the efficiency of the classroom teacher and supervision is worthy of the name only when it results in such an increase" (p. 37).

In one study, Justus (1955) noted that the music supervisor was expected to visit classrooms and assist general teachers in their music instruction. The researcher goes on to define an elementary music supervisor as "those special teachers who have the responsibilities concerning the regulation of the music program in the elementary school and the supervision of the teaching therein" (p. 3). In this case, there were no music teachers in the schools, and the supervisor provided guidance, and in some cases curriculum, to the classroom teacher. Although not ideal, it did guarantee music instruction (whether at a high quality level or not) was given to every student. Even as recently as 1972 (Dawson), a study indicated some confusion as to what the expected role of the music supervisor was supposed to be. Where some districts may have considered the supervisor as the "educational leader providing stimulation and inspiration to the rest of the music, setting guidelines for teachers' professional growth" (p. 397), other districts considered the role of the music supervisor as the person "assisting non-music specialists in the elementary classroom."

A similar study from the same year by McQuerrey (1972), shows the same lack of clarity in the role of the music supervisor. "The time allotments of the elementary

music supervisors and secondary-unified supervisors were similar except that elementary music supervisors were more involved with classroom teachers and with actual teaching, and secondary-unified music supervisors spent more time in community and professional involvement" (p. 380). Of the 153 supervisors surveyed in California, 64 were not full time and also an active classroom teacher, while half of those were involved in a curricular area outside of music. McQuerrey further explains that issues in the diversity of supervisory roles and the abundance of titles indicate a need for clarity of the music supervisor position and their role.

However, another study (Boska, 1970) showed, in Florida, music supervisors were thought to be responsible for the recruitment, selection, and placement of instructional personnel in order to build the quality of programs. It has been shown in the data of this study that, even in 1970, principals were still the deciding factor in who was hired due to their better understanding of specific school cultures and whether or not a teacher would be a good fit for a particular school. The role of the supervisor was still vague and not specified in any way. This trend has continued through a study of Georgia music supervisors (Porter, 1994), where the researcher states that "the findings of the existing research consistently indicate that this role is in need of definition and clarification" (p. 5), and "unless the duties and responsibilities of the music supervisor are clearly defined and the skills and tasks delineated for the person in the position, the kinds of supervisory services which can and must be provided within the schools may be neglected" (p. 118).

Recently, evaluating has become more important in the role of the music supervisor along with the multitude of responsibilities defined previously such as

curriculum, budget, marketing, and others. Recent studies (Katz-Cote, 2016; Luebke, 2013; O'Neil, 2018) expose a feeling of isolation for music educators and a need for professional development for both teachers and supervisors. As teachers are often islands within their school, especially new teachers, content supervisors often feel a need to give extra support and create "knowledge communities" (Katz-Cote, 2016) within their districts for these teachers. In doing so, supervisors then become isolated from their own knowledge communities as well. Finding that balance to assist not only in curriculum and pedagogy, but as a social-emotional support system proves to be difficult.

Pedagogical Creativity

According to Powell and Burstein (2017), "music, like language, is best learned in conversation with others who have already achieved some level of fluency and in such a way as allows for uncorrected musicking." The authors discuss the difference between a course such as Modern Band utilizing a "Music as a Second Language" approach, which places music-making first, and the traditional American music classrooms which emphasizes note reading and analysis. The Music as a Second Language (MSL) pedagogical approach to music education was developed by David Wish (Powell & Burstein, 2017), the founder of Little Kids Rock, and associates the acquisition of musical knowledge to that of a second language. Similar to how children learn to speak their first or second language, the early stages of language acquisition are usually nonsensical or babble, and through conversation with those more adept at the language, children begin to better understand and better use their language. This approach to music learning is similar to that of Kodaly and Suzuki where students are

making music before they understand how to read or write it (Byo, 2018), and similar in some regards to Edwin Gordon's music learning theory approach to music instruction (E. E. Gordon, 2013).

In contrast to a traditional music education where the teacher stands in the front of a classroom lecturing or conducting a group, the MSL approach and popular music pedagogy place the onus of education and learning on the students and the teacher becomes only a facilitator. In a band class, a director may expect students to play uniformly and perfectly as the culmination of rehearsals at a festival or concert. These performances themselves mimic the classroom, where one entity bestows information while the other receives the information. During the COVID-19 pandemic, where many music rooms are either digital or hybrid, this pedagogical method does not work as well. In a popular music or modern band class, the culmination of rehearsals may result in an informance or a concert in which the audience may sing along. This may be done virtually from the classroom or in a pre-recorded virtual concert format. Within an encouraged autonomous classroom, like those advocated by Little Kids Rock and others (David A Williams & Randles, 2017), students are able to learn in any environment, face-to-face, or digitally. Cremata (2017) likens this facilitation to approximation "through a process in which the learner is encouraged rather than discouraged," mistakes are accepted, and students are directed towards self-discovery and autonomy.

With the influx of digital learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, students and teachers have been placed in unfamiliar territory as far as delivery of information is concerned. Many teachers have turned to online videos to supplement their instruction

24

using websites such as Vimeo and YouTube. Other examples of using YouTube in education include digital storytelling, "in which digital stories interweave different media to support the art of telling a tale" (Dreon, Kerper, & Landis, 2011, p. 5). Students (or teachers) share their stories by uploading videos on to YouTube, connecting to their peers in a way they are used to consuming information, thus allowing for review of information and concepts within a story. In an *Introduction to Engineering Thermodynamics* class, Liberatore (2010) showed students a video on YouTube of a man walking on water, which excited students and instigated a discussion. "Seeing the interesting problems their professor works on piques their interest and motivates them to get the most out of their studies" (Liberatore, 2010, p. 216).

One meta-analysis of online, blended (or hybrid), and face-to-face learning suggested "that in recent applications, purely online learning has been equivalent to face-to-face instruction in effectiveness, and blended approaches have been more effective than instruction offered entirely in a face-to-face mode" (Means et al., 2013, p. 35). Another study on the effect of instructional videos on performance achievement (Selfridge, 2018), showed significant positive effects on student performance compared to normal practice with no video, when students watched the videos at home. There was also more consistency in the scores of the post-test for those who watched the videos than those in the control group who did not. The pre- and post-test performance was scored based on pitch, rhythm, fluency, and articulation on an "etude" for elementary band composed by the researcher.

YouTube has opened the space of music learning throughout the world by connecting people with online videos. Educators may post lectures, slideshows, and

more to allow students the possibility of learning outside the classroom in a blended or

hybrid pedagogical approach. Also, students are able to upload video responses and/or

their own videos for assignments (Armstrong, 2012; Ashraf, 2009; Crawford, 2017;

Jackman, 2019; Jenkins, 2007; Jung & Lee, 2015; Means et al., 2013). In music

education, teachers may supplement their classroom pedagogy with listening/watching

examples for students outside the classroom in order to spend more time in the

classroom evaluating and discussing (Webb, 2007). Another possibility is for students to

create a "portfolio" of compositions and post them on YouTube for other students to

critique (Waldron, 2013). YouTube also builds communities through music (Armstrong,

2012; Cayari, 2015; Cremata & Powell, 2015), and in one instance, a viral video of

vocalists (Cayari, 2016) performing in virtual ensembles. Eric Whitaker's Virtual Choir

singing *Lux Aurumque* was a virtually mediated group of amateur singers, building a

community from across the world for the purpose of a musical performance (Cayari,

2016).

In a study of the Online Academy of Irish Music, Waldron (2012) discusses the

website of the organization, highlighting a list of instructional videos on YouTube

featuring their instructors playing on specific instruments. The site allows learners to

purchase "tokens" and then upload videos of themselves playing for the instructors to

send feedback and critique student performances. In this way, the site combines formal

music practices (lessons on a one-to-one basis) with informal practices (group learning

at a student's own pace) using the online platform. As Hansen (2018, p. 152) states,

"The potential value of YouTube and sites like it for facilitating early experiences in

instrumental music deserves greater recognition." Hanson continues explaining the

capabilities that YouTube has to supplement early instrumental instruction such as portability (YouTube can be watched on phones, tablets, and laptops), instant guidance (with an internet connection, students may search through thousands of videos for information), and the wide reach of the internet (through YouTube, students and teachers are able to learn about cultures from around the world as well as share their own). Armstrong (2012) explains it fairly well:

> "As opportunities for computer-mediated social interaction increase across cultures and traditional boundaries, users around the world will build communities unlike those which have come before. It is this capacity for creating cross-cultural linkages that articulates what I believe to be one of Internet technology's primary social benefits" (p. 113).

Including YouTube in and out of the classroom presents many opportunities for educators. By using blended or hybrid learning, they can better facilitate learning for their students. The sociality of YouTube is not only restricted to either online or offline (students share and discuss videos not only online, but in person as well), so it is important to not separate the two (Markham & Baym, 2008). Having students view videos at home or outside the classroom and then analyze and discuss the videos in the classroom provides a deeper conversation. Webb (2007, p. 159) explains that "by drawing on the non-formal ways in which students listen and respond to music, cross-media listening can assist in making classroom music analysis a more multidimensional, imaginative and vital educational experience."

Loss/Grief in (Music) Education and beyond

The demands of teachers (and supervisors), both in music and general education, grow every year with added educational evaluations such as standardized testing, deliberate practices, common core requirements, and other "quantifiable" identifiers of what constitutes growth (Katz-Cote, 2016; Sears, 2019). Added to these demands are those desirable outcomes that are much more difficult to quantify—the social-emotional needs of students. The majority of articles found in this literature review focus on how educators can assist students in dealing with loss and grief (Hanser, ter Bogt, Van den Tol, Mark, & Vingerhoets, 2016; McDermott, 2020; McFerran & Hunt, 2008; Myers-Coffman, Baker, & Bradt, 2020; Roy, Devroop, & Getz, 2015; Skidmore, 2016; Varner, 2019, 2020; Willow-Peterson, 2016; Woodward, 2015), but not quite as much on educators dealing with loss (Kivisalu Hickey, 2008; Oliver, 2019; Sears, 2019).

According to Oliver (2019, p. 15), "educators exhibit three elements which frame the issue of disenfranchised, or hidden grief for teachers. The first element is the need to be human and have personal and connecting interactions, the second is the personal belief that teachers need to control their emotions and exhibit traits of a leader, and the third was to care for young people." Oliver further explains a sense of engagement loss, performance loss, and a lack of mental fortitude following a loss in students regardless of the amount of support and sympathy from those around them. There tends to be a disconnect from work expectations and personal loss where work is seen as the needed distraction during a time of grief. In her study of the effects of loss and grief on

educators, Oliver noted, "being forced to be present and in the moment in a highly demanding job helped in some ways to center them" (p. 123).

In her article on using language to respond to death, Beckelhimer (2017) explains the lack of support for teachers to prepare and deal with the inevitable situation of death in the classroom. She goes on to explain that the ability to respond to death comes not only from educating yourself on the situations, but from learning from experience. These experiences are often firsthand and can also come from shared stories. One way for educators to cope with loss or grief is through autoethnography. As stated by Adams (2012, p. 184), one of the joys of autoethnography is "the ability for a person to use writing or performance to navigate pain, work through confusion, express anger, and come to terms with uncertainty." Although doing autoethnography may not allow for the author to completely overcome pain or loss, Adams continues, it allows for the bereaved to "help manage some pain and confusion, anger and uncertainty, love and loss; it can help us, as writers and performers, write through and interrogate sad, disturbing, and/or complicated experiences" (p. 184). Another coping mechanism for loss or grief is music therapy; music therapists use "the properties of music to motivate health-oriented behavior, facilitate insight, and promote communication and expression, and are trained in this model by registered institutions" (McFerran & Hunt, 2008, p. 44).

Through music therapy, students better understand themselves and form a musical identity which then may allow them to create a narrative where they may overcome or lessen feelings of loss and grief. In a study by Ruud (1997), 20 students were asked to provide a tape of music that has had a "significant impact" on their lives and were then were asked to provide a commentary on the music. Although this study

was focused on musical identities, Ruud (p. 12) goes on to explain the "knowledge of how music may help to construct an individual's conception of oneself may help music therapists choose the right music for their clients, as well as choose the proper music to empower people within their own cultural context."

"I looked at the process of writing the narrative as a healing exercise, a way to come to terms with my experience and perhaps gain some perspective on the process of recovery" (Parke, 2018, p. 2969). This narrative appears quite often when concerning autoethnography, particularly the work of Carolyn Ellis. She explains how doing autoethnography led her "to begin keeping notes on my relational and personal experiences of grief and loss, which eventually resulted in some of my first autoethnographic writing" (S. H. Jones et al., 2016, p. 17). From these notes, Ellis was able to work through the loss of both a family member and a partner, eventually published as her first autoethnographic book (Ellis, 1995). As autoethnography is grounded in personal experience and stories, "we write, dance, paint, and perform the ways we have lived" (S. H. Jones et al., 2016, p. 24). This permits the writer to convey their feelings in a way that quantitative and some qualitative research does not.

Music Education During COVID-19

In March of 2020, the 4 major school districts in Central Florida closed all buildings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this was also typical of school districts across the United States, and even earlier around the world. Schools were forced to quickly navigate the online world of education and music education specifically found itself in very new territory. In a performance-based classroom, presenting information and facilitating online performance online would prove to be difficult for many educators. In

the United Kingdom, schools officially closed with lockdown measures imposed on March 23 (Daubney & Fautley, 2020), allowing only children with specific learning needs or those of essential workers to attend school. "Over the course of just one weekend, schools needed to shift significantly from their established models of learning to a hybrid form, including online learning and sending home learning packs" (p. 107).

The switch to online learning models presented opportunities for creativity and new ideas regarding what music education experiences could involve. Many articles in music education journals focused on the "how" of music education during a pandemic (Austin, 2020; Bernstorf, 2020; Edgar et al., 2020; Grogan Iii, 2020; Igra, 2020; Kaschub, 2020; Morrison, 2020; Shaw, 2020) and offered ideas for music educators to become "future ready." The majority of these articles emphasized having fun, as if music education prior to the pandemic was not. Another emphasis of these articles was a push for Social Emotional Learning (SEL), a construct providing students with the skills to take on the challenges presented to them (Edgar et al., 2020). Edgar explains the need for SEL to be embedded within the curriculum and not a separate entity, causing students to feel it is forced or scripted. Through reflection and discussion, students are able to understand and process the world around them not only through language, but through music. This practice also clears the way for students to take ownership over their own learning.

Shaw provides insight into the future of education post-COVID with a positive outlook writing, "Educators may have found that their approach to assessment has evolved in positive directions during Covid-19" (2020, p. 5). By individualizing instruction

through an online platform, teachers can better assess students and may find that these assessments don't necessarily have to be tied to grading.

Summary

This chapter has highlighted many areas of research and concerns that are important and necessary in preparation for understanding the journey through the COVID-19 pandemic that I have experienced as a district specialist. Music education is at a turning point, both pedagogically and emotionally. How teachers are supported by district supervisors directly relates to how teachers may then support their students during times of loss and grief. Much of the previous research on doing autoethnography, understanding loss and grief, the role of the music administrator, and creativity involved in music pedagogy existed as isolated topics. Very little research, though, existed that connected these topics, and even less research existed about these topics as they were experienced by those professionals who lived and worked during the COVID-19 pandemic (a point highlighted by the fact that as of this writing, we as a nation are still living through the end of the pandemic). This supports the rationale behind this dissertation and further supports the need for more research on teachers and students in music during times of upheaval.

This dissertation may provide beneficial knowledge regarding the challenges and sacrifices that faced music educators during this time of crisis, and direction regarding what music education may look like post COVID-19. Current literature suggests a need for change in music education from a teacher centered-approach within the four walls of a classroom to a more student or learner-centered approach expanding beyond the classroom through online learning. Introducing or including technology in the music

classroom supports this pedagogical shift and assists teachers in their approach to a change in music education.

Chapter 3:

Method

As an educator, I have always been interested in the possibility of making music outside of my classroom, as well as bridging the gap between the ways society makes music and the ways students make music within the schools. Early in my career, I began to "flip" my classroom, introducing concepts to students that they were to work on when they were not with me. I shared information through various online sources, asynchronously (synchronous learning was still somewhat novel) through various sources such as YouTube, Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, and a school-based website. During this time, I would also ask students to share their projects and/or assignments with me using these same digital pathways. With the introduction of the iPad and cost effective DAW's (Digital Audio Workstations), I was able to add more composition into my curriculum as the students could extend the reach of their education and music-making more easily with pre-installed high-quality sounds. iPads give students an opportunity to bypass an immediate need for technique and years of practice when composing music or being creative with applications such as GarageBand and Soundtrap. These applications also allow them the ability to create ostinatos or accompaniments to perform on their traditional instruments, or allow an iPadist (Randles, 2013), a cellist, a vocalist, and an electric guitarist to perform in an ensemble together.

Researcher Lens

My journey as a student at the University of South Florida began, and remains, online as one of two students testing the waters of a synchronous online PhD in music education degree. Many classes I attended started with fixing microphones and video issues or sharing screens and audio with a learning curve on the part of both professors and students along the way. When I would present as a distance learner, I would need to make sure my audio was working and that the screen that I was sharing was not lagging. While presenting, I would rarely have the opportunity to read the room, a quality that would normally assist me in a face-to-face scenario. This previous experience provides me with an important lens through which to view what students and teachers are experiencing now with the use of online synchronous learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the COVID-19 pandemic began, the idea of online learning was well within my grasp and I believed that I had been afforded an opportunity to make the most of a dire situation as someone charged with helping other people navigate the difficult times. Students and teachers have had to navigate distance learning quickly without proper professional development or learning strategies as we were thrown into the situation almost immediately starting in March of 2020. As most music classes are performance-based, this online learning divide creates an issue for music teachers with purely traditional face-to-face teaching methods exclusively. Loss of large and small ensembles alike created a widespread mood of defeat throughout the school district where I work as many teachers were unsure of how they would return to normal classroom activity. At that point, it was my job to assist them in reaching their students

and ensuring that a viable and quality curriculum would be given for instruction to those students who were attending school remotely.

As a resource specialist in Osceola County, a large school district located in the Southeastern United States, I have also had a chance to discuss with and assist teachers were then dealing with the effects of the pandemic on education. Many teachers I worked with were dealing with the loss of their programs as they knew them due to circumstances such as limited performance and practice opportunities, limited students attending school face-to-face, scheduling conflicts due to the many variables found in sharing a face-to-face and digital learning situation, and students simply not feeling safe in such large ensembles (many Band, Chorus, and Orchestra programs fit double the number of students in their classrooms as normally seen in other classrooms in the school). The story of how all these factors played out and what that meant for music education is featured foremost as I write and reflect through the use of autoethnographic method in this dissertation.

Study Design

Autoethnography offers knowledge on the "particular lives, experiences, and relationships" (Bailey & Bailey, 2017) concerning people as they live their lives. This study invites the reader to "engage in the unfolding story of identities, experiences, and worlds" (p. 35), while working through (with the researcher) what the experiences mean. I attempt here to contribute to the (minimal) existing literature in this area by using personal experiences to challenge and better understand the cultural beliefs of what music education was before, during, and after COVID-19 from the perspective of an administrator who was then working through it. In this study I address the research

questions through the use of personal narrative. Using Lewin's Change Theory (Lewin, 1947; Schein, 1999) as a framework, I sought to understand how music education was changing in scope, delivery, and pedagogical foci as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The virus had forced music education to engage with change from ideological as well as practical perspectives. This change was sweeping and dramatic.

Themes run through this work. I tell the story of why there was (is) a need for change (COVID-19 pandemic), how the change was (has been) implemented through professional development and intentional teacher interaction, and the effects of change on the implementation of new pedagogical methods such as technology use and learner-centered pedagogy. This autoethnography, my story, looks at the experiences of teachers I work with, what they mean, and how they affect change. Their experiences have been rich with meaningful data. I have been a conduit for that data as I oversee curricular guidelines and actively help teachers work through these difficult times. My experiences run parallel with and at times dramatically intersect with theirs. I use autoethnographic methods to powerfully tell this story, situate as best I can this. work in the language of my actual lived experiences, with the voices of participants (including myself) as a foremost priority.

Participants

The participants in this study include music teachers and administrators within and surrounding the School District of Osceola County. The first and main group in this narrative is the K-12 music teachers in the aforementioned school district. The disciplines taught by the music educators range from General Music at the K-5 level as well as Band, Chorus, and Orchestra at the 6-12 level. There are a few itinerant strings

37

teachers with student populations ranging from K-12 as well, and some keyboard and theory classes in a few schools. As a geographically large school district, there are students living in both suburban and rural communities, as well as a large population of families in transition (those without permanent addresses). This diverse group of students creates a divide in the programs the music teachers represent and therefore changes the approach to music education at their schools. As I am early in my career at the district supervisor level, the administrators in neighboring districts served as a support for me throughout this process. Weekly meetings served as an important method of learning as well as a support from others in similar situations with more experience in the field.

Procedures and Data Collection

The stories I present in this dissertation were gleaned from conversations, both in-person and on the phone, as well as classroom visits and walkthroughs. Although no formal interviews were conducted, correspondence with teachers serves as the basis for my stories on various events just prior to the COVID-19 shutdown (March 2020) as well as the events and directives put in place during the pandemic. The term *data analysis* may not fit precisely the character of this autoethnography as analysis most often denotes a breaking down into smaller chunks (Hycner, 1985). In fact, Hycner further explains that there is not a method that "can be arbitrarily imposed on a phenomenon since that would do a great injustice to the integrity of that phenomenon" (p. 280). Drawing from the situations and events of my peers and contemporaries, as well as my own loss and grief during the pandemic, I attempt to bring the reader along

this journey as I have experienced it in order to better understand what I have worked

through as a district resource for music educators during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data is not analyzed by traditional means in autoethnography. The terms

explication (Hycner, 1985) and explicitation, "an investigation of the constituents of a

phenomenon while always keeping the context as a whole" (Giorgi (1975), better fit

what I seek to do with the data collected throughout this process. While I am using data

to inform my stories, I have to bring some literary and artistic sensibility to the telling to

bring the most meaning to it. Each individual in this story has walked their own path, but

we are all walking together through this pandemic, removing one story from the others

does not paint the whole picture as each story is intertwined.

My position within the district grants access to these conversations in a way that

is natural and unique to each individual in their place. While this data was collected

arbitrarily and not through specific survey questions, it was very close to the worlds that

these teachers and their students and communities were actually living in, as they were

not answering how they may feel I wanted them to, or how they were expected to. In the

next section I discuss the various forms of data that I have been able to access over the

period of March 2020 to January 2021.

<div align="center">Forms of Data</div>

Research data for autoethnographical research can come from diverse sources.

In this section I discuss briefly the forms that have most importantly impacted my ability

to tell the stories that I tell here. Within the district there are 47 schools with music

programs and 73 music educators. Of the various data collected, E-mails were by far

the most often used form of correspondence, with well over 8,000 emails between March 2020 and March 2021 related to COVID-19 issues.

E-Mails

At the beginning of the pandemic, I received numerous e-mails from teachers worried about their programs and how they might continue their instruction through digital means. Another large portion of e-mails pertained to what the district plan was for students returning to the classroom and their safety. Though much of my correspondence was sent through mass e-mails, there were many instances where individual responses would be necessary. While some teachers were worried about teaching in the classroom, "I am also trying to posture myself to remain teaching online as I would do most anything to avoid being in a school setting until we have a safer-to-work-in environment," some teachers took on the challenge with levelheadedness and excitement. As one teacher wrote: "I'm actually looking forward to implementing some new teaching techniques through technology, especially since next year, in the new building, I'll be getting some technology in my classroom that I've not had the opportunity to use before now!"

Observations

While students and teachers returned to classrooms, having administrators and coaches return to observations was still up in the air in August 2020. Shortly after the school year began, my position required me to once again travel to various schools and observe teachers in both their face-to-face settings as well as their digital and hybrid settings. The first few observations became listening sessions more often than not, with teachers discussing their concerns over safety issues and students being placed in their classrooms at any and all times. In one classroom, the teacher was given a difficult set

of circumstances with multiple levels of the same course during the same class period. On top of this situation, many students this teacher expected to return to their ensemble did not due to either scheduling conflicts or their not attending school in a face-to-face manner. What was once one of the largest and strongest groups in the district, quickly became one of the smallest groups with a mixture of mostly beginners and a few advanced students. Situations such as this required discussions with administration at both the school level and the district level and, in most cases, could not be resolved by the end of the first semester. As a resource and a liaison for the teachers, it was very difficult to return to a classroom when changes had not been implemented.

Performances

With the speed at which schools were closed in the Spring of 2020, many schools were forced to cancel Spring performances as well as state level Music Performance Assessments (MPA). Though performances in the traditional sense were all canceled at the beginning of the pandemic, teachers began asking what the expectations for performances were and how they may hold them. While we removed any expectations for traditional performances at the district level (teachers were required to hold 2 performances a year, 1 of which could be MPA), teachers were encouraged to have students show growth in some way. At various points in the semester, I was required to update teachers with documents determining the safest ways to return to classroom playing/singing with performances. These documents were updated as information was presented by both the Center for Disease Control and a study on the effects of the performing arts on the return to the rehearsal hall during COVID-19 (Chairs & Weaver, 2020). Many teachers decided to hold small concerts

outdoors with social distancing, while some teachers created digital performances of students and then sent the video out to parents.

Text Messages and Phone Calls

All teachers in my district had my personal cell phone number for any time they need to reach me outside of office hours or if I may not be at the desk when they needed me. The pandemic opened the floodgates of text messages and phone calls to my cell phone as teachers felt more comfortable at times discussing issues they may have over a non-district device than through e-mail. One specific example of a teacher not being comfortable asking questions on a school owned forum was when I received a text message asking, "Are schools going to make us sign waivers to come back?" In which I felt obligated to respond from a district standpoint but also wanted to respond in a personal way, as I sensed the teacher had worries about returning to the classroom.

Organic Conversations and Meet-ups

Around the end of March 2020, I decided to start what I called "Happier Hours" in which I would meet digitally through a platform (usually Zoom) with teachers in my district as well as teachers in other districts from across the country. These digital "hangs" were meant to provide an environment for teachers and friends to discuss anything related or unrelated to the classroom during a time when leaving the house was not possible. I found that these meetings not only helped with the emotional needs of some of my teachers as they felt free to vent about their perceived issues in both classroom settings and in their personal lives, but it also helped me as I was unable to discuss any hardships I was having in my first year at the district. Prior to the pandemic, I would have had the opportunity to meet with other supervisors or other administrators

to ask questions and receive affirmations about my decisions at the district level, but COVID-19 put a quick end to these necessary face-to-face conversations.

Ethical Considerations and Limitations

In this dissertation, I use a variety of writing techniques to tell the stories that mark my journey as a resource for music teachers, a member of the music education community in my area, and a doctoral student during the pandemic. I often change the setting and point of view of some stories to protect those I work with. As a researcher I have an obligation to protect the privacy of those individuals and groups that guide the narrative within this autoethnography. Although individuals within the observed culture and society may identify with certain aspects of the story and some specific conversations may appear, all individual correspondence and conversations have been given gender-neutral pseudonyms. It is difficult to take such a significant event such as the COVID-19 pandemic and compress it into one dissertation. More work will have to be done in this area. However, the themes that I am able to uncover in telling these stories should be helpful to all who follow in music education who are interested in curricular change, online teaching and learning, and the role of technology as a mediating factor in all of this. As I submitted for IRB approval through the University of South Florida, I was told this was not human-subject based research and therefore did not need IRB approval.

I am limited to only the information I have seen and the stories I am told, however as Ellis et al. (2011) suggest, through the variety of stories, I may help implement a change to better the situation for both my teachers and myself. In short, the authors go on to explain that an autoethnographer must take their own epiphanies and explain

them in a way that others may experience these same epiphanies. As with other qualitative research, this autoethnography does not provide results that may apply to every other situation. It is very specific to MY situation and MY story. There may come recommendations based upon my story that will help others in similar situations or are going through such loss and grief both personally and professionally. As the storyteller and researcher in this journey, I am speaking not only for myself, but for others in my story as well. Adams (2008, p. 28) explains, "I embrace the assumption that in speaking for and about myself, about my experience, I speak for and about others, about cultural experience. Culture flows through me."

Summary

As a district resource in music education, I am in a unique position to not only help shape the curriculum and pedagogical methods used by music educators, but to be an advocate for the teachers during their best and most difficult times. Having been quickly moved into digital learning at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, my teachers (and I) were at a loss for what and how to teach our students in a way that is both viable and of the highest quality. My experience in online learning from both my Master's program and working towards my PhD at the University of South Florida proved important in assisting my creation of online curriculum for the school district.

While designing curriculum, there are also stories of grief and stress that come from teachers at the ground level dealing with the human aspect of education. Social Emotional Learning for our students and our teachers is also a major facet of the curriculum. It is one thing to design and develop curriculum. It is quite another to design and develop curriculum that teachers and students are ready and prepared to receive.

As stated earlier, there are five components of SEL: self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills (CASEL, 2020). These components are not only designated for students, but for teachers as well. My job is unique in that I hear the stories of every music educator in the district and then I must choose what to do based on those stories and my understanding regarding the most appropriate way to react.

By using these stories to describe and make sense of my journey through the pandemic, I am looking to find ways to support better pedagogy during times of loss (and not) at both the professional and at the personal level. It is my intent to keep all stories and events as generic as possible to ensure the privacy of the teachers in my school district. It is my desire that they will still be comfortable sharing them with me after this process is complete. By collecting stories and not being concerned wtih specific data points for coding, it may keep the whole picture of the COVID-19 pandemic within this school district complete and not truncate any parts of the story. As Hycner (1985) points out, it is important to be true to the phenomenon and not do a great injustice by imposing a specific method that may analyze specific data using specific steps (as more traditional qualitative methods do). And so, with great caution and enthusiasm, I give the reader a window into this world, my world and the world of these participants, in the next chapter. The journey truly begins there.

Chapter 4:
Dazed and Confused

<u>Friday, March 13, 2020.</u> This day would remain etched in my memory for many years to come, as it was the last day of normalcy in a year that would bring the world to a halt. Though it seems like a decade ago, it was only a short time ago as I sit now writing this dissertation. It was this date, Friday, March 13, 2020 at 6:15pm, when the entire school district received a message via email (figure 4) outlining the superintendent's plan to keep schools closed for two weeks, extending spring break. Although this information was startling news for our district, there were conversations and e-mails leading up this day that hinted that something profound could be imminent. A week prior I had received an e-mail with information regarding my worksite and the COVID-19 virus. In this correspondence (figure 5), we were told we would have to create lessons (known as Instructional Continuity Plans or ICPs) for our K-12 teachers in the event of school closures. These lessons would need to align to our current curriculum, still be viable and rigorous, and also be accessible to those students who may not have access to digital workspaces (much of our district was Title I and many of

our students did not have access to computers or internet other than their cell phones).

Osceola School District COVID-19 Update

Based on further developments in the state-wide effort to control the spread of COVID-19, the Osceola School District is enacting the following changes to our school district operations:

1. Spring Break for students and nine-month employees will be extended by one week. We expect school to resume on Monday, March 30.
2. All extracurricular events and activities, including athletic competitions, scheduled through March 31 will be canceled. If possible, we will work to postpone and reschedule, but no extracurricular activities will resume until we receive additional guidance from state leaders and state and local health officials.
3. Important end-of-year activities, such as proms, grad-bash, awards night, concerts, and graduation ceremonies, scheduled after March 31 will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as soon as we receive additional guidance.
4. State testing, slated to begin on April 1, will be delayed by two weeks.
5. The Osceola School District has developed an instructional continuity plan that will be implemented in the event this situation extends beyond two weeks. Parents and students should continue to watch for district messaging and monitor the district's website and social media for updates and links to critical learning content.
6. All 12-month employees are expected to return to work on Wednesday, March 18, if not taking vacation or personal time during the original week of Spring Break. Decisions about return to work status for teachers and other 10-month and 11-month support staff will be made next week, as additional information and guidance becomes available about the need to implement an instructional continuity plan. Please monitor district communication carefully.
7. School and district offices will reopen on Monday, March 23, as originally planned, and administrators and other 12-month employees should plan to report to work until further notice. Please contact your direct supervisor if you have questions or specific concerns.

Please remember that this situation is evolving day by day, hour by hour, and minute by minute. The most important priority for the School Board Members and Superintendent Pace is for all of us to stay well, and the district will continue to keep the well-being of students and staff front of mind as critical decisions are made. Individuals are asked to continue to practice the healthy habits and watch for updates as this situation progresses. ###

Figure 4 March 13 District Email

Parent, teachers and staff communication:

1) The health and safety of everyone in our school district is of extreme importance to us. We are working closely with the Dept of Health and Emergency Management to monitor the status of COVID-19 locally, in Florida as well as in the US.
2) We will continue to post information as it is made available to the district. Please refer the website for updates.
3) We will work closely with FLDOE, Dept of Health and Emergency Management in the event COVID-19 cases are confirmed locally. They will assist us in the event it affects school operation.
4) The Curriculum and Instruction team is working on creating lessons which will be completed online or taken home in the event school closures are necessary.

Figure 5 March 6 COVID Response for Curriculum Team

I

Osceola County School District
March 10, 2020 ·

COVID-19 Update as of March 10: All Central Florida school superintendents continue to carefully monitor the COVID-19 situation. Following a call with the Florida Commissioner of Education this morning and based on his strong recommendations, all student fieldtrips involving air travel will be suspended immediately through the end of the current school year. District and school staff members will work with parents and travel companies on appropriate cancellation arrangements.

While we have been advised by experts that the risk to young people remains low, we encourage everyone to continue to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines and to follow healthy habits. Hand washing with soap and water remains the best prevention.

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Information For Parents and Students

Figure 6 SDOC Facebook Post March 10

It is important to note that in this email, the very first bullet point stating "The health and safety of everyone in our school district is of extreme importance to us" as there were many parents already voicing their safety concerns on social media for various reasons as well as teachers asking me what the plan was for a safe return. While I work at the district office, I am not involved with decisions of this magnitude so I had to remind my teachers that I am receiving the same correspondence that they are and virtually the same moment in time that they do. I would continually check my emails and the district social media pages for more information as I was still working in classrooms and with teachers. During these walkthroughs, I could tell many of my teachers were nervous as they either had elderly parents they took care of, were/are immunocompromised, or were/are elderly themselves. When the following post (figure 7) was made on the district website, many parents responded both negatively and positively with comments such as these—two parents indicating their beliefs on the social media platform. The arguing did not stop with these two posts, many more posts followed with similar rhetoric about what seemed to be two very different positions on the topic.
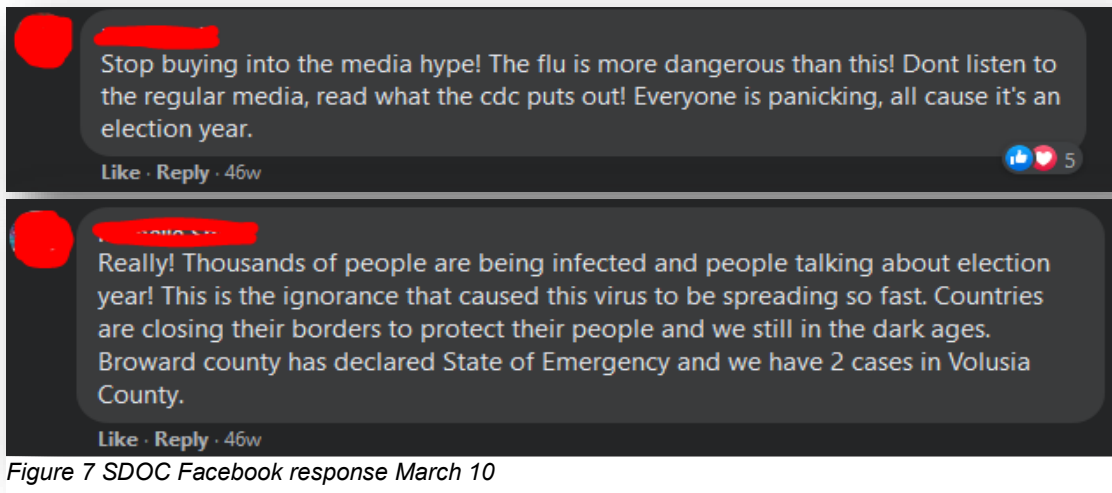
Figure 7 SDOC Facebook response March 10

As a district employee, I must constantly remind myself to not interject in these conversations as I am aware of my position, and the information I am privy to, as well as who and what I represent. It is difficult to withhold my opinion on these posts, and I constantly found myself holding in my own fears and worries as I was myself in a difficult situation due to high risk members of my family. If I had known then what I know now about COVID-19 and the many ways to slow the spread of the virus, I am not sure I would have been as calm and composed at work, in close quarters with students and teachers most of the time. I have an immunocompromised parent over the age of 65, and at the beginning of the year we found out my wife was pregnant with our third child, who would be born during the pandemic. It would have been reckless of me to continue walking through classrooms with that knowledge without a mask observing bands, orchestras, and choruses in rooms that did not properly cycle the air.

Shortly after the previous post, a message was sent to parents and students through Remind, a platform used to communicate to large groups, outlining what we could expect in the coming days and through spring break. All air travel was canceled in

the wake of new information, including a jazz band trip from our school of the arts to Savannah, GA, for the Savannah Music Festival.

Tomorrow, Thursday, March 12, signifies the end of the 3rd nine weeks' grading period, and we look forward to seeing our students and staff members in our schools and offices for "business as usual." Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Governor of Florida, and the Florida Department of Education as it relates to K-12 public schools remains the same: the threat of Coronavirus remains low in our community, particularly for young people. The best prevention is continued practice of healthy habits, including frequent washing of hands with soap and water; covering coughs and sneezes; avoiding travel or contact with individuals who have traveled to the high risk areas of China, Japan, Italy, South Korea, and Iran; and staying home and contacting a medical provider if you are exhibiting flu-like symptoms including cough and fever above 100.4. Individuals who do travel to these areas must self-quarantine for 14 days upon return, and contact with elderly individuals will be restricted to protect their more sensitive health conditions.

Spring Break begins on Friday, March 13, for students, and runs through Friday, March 20. District staff will continue to carefully monitor the situation, and we are prepared to implement an instructional continuity plan in the event that the situation worsens and temporary school closures become necessary. We will continue to update you via our social media messages, Remind text messages, through call-outs, and the District website. I encourage you to have a safe Spring Break!

Figure 8 March 11 Remind message for Parents and Students

As more information began to emerge from the news and the CDC, we received more information from our district. A March 12th update revealed (figure 9) the idea that school would remain open following spring break with a "business as usual" mindset. As an educator, and as far as I am aware my district feels the same way, school closures are and will always be a last resort when it comes to any major events such as this. We never want our students to miss an opportunity for quality education in a safe environment, so keeping the schools open if it is still considered safe is the foremost priority.

Thank you for your continued patience, dedication, and commitment to serving our students--Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day--as we work through the Covid 19 Pandemic. Please read this message in its entirety, as it includes important information about several questions and concerns.

First, our annual Education Awards ceremony will proceed as planned this evening at Championsgate. This is our opportunity to recognize our teachers and school-related employees of the year, and School Board members and I look forward to celebrating with you, your family members and friends, and members of our community. We will, however, encourage everyone in attendance to practice healthy habits, including social distancing, so fist bumps or elbow bumps will be the preferred form of greeting, rather than shaking hands and hugging. Hand sanitizer will readily available. IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL, please do not attend. The virus spreads when those exhibiting symptoms (dry cough and fever of 100.4 or higher) do not follow the self-isolation guidance provided by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Florida Department of Health. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. at ChampionsGate--this is a ticketed event, and I look forward to seeing our invited guests.

Second, Spring Break begins for our students tomorrow, Friday, March 13. Schools and offices will be closed Monday and Tuesday of next week, but at this time, we anticipate opening for "business as usual" on Monday, March 23, and I look forward to welcoming you back to work and our students back to school. In the event that school closures become necessary, you will be informed through our normal communication channels-call-out, email, Remind, social media, and the district website. A district instructional continuity plan is being finalized and will be made available to ensure learning continues, if necessary.

Please recognize that school closure decisions are not made in isolation or taken lightly. School closures greatly impact all of you, all of our students, and most of our community members. I work closely with leaders from Osceola County, the City of Kissimmee, the City of St. Cloud, the local Department of Health, and the Emergency Operations Center (members make up the Executive Policy Group or EPG) to ensure we're using the latest information to make these decisions and mitigate impact across the community. The same is true for event cancellations; in fact, the EPG met this morning, and with guidance and the latest information from our local Department of Health, we determined as a group that widespread cancellation of community events (mass gatherings) is not necessary for Osceola County. Currently, we have 0 confirmed cases of Covid 19 in our community, and the Department of Health will continue to keep all EPG members informed as this situation develops to inform our decision-making process. Decisions about sporting events and other special activities and event will be made as appropriate based on the latest guidelines from the Department of Health and the CDC.

Finally, Board Members and I recognize that many of you have travel plans for Spring Break. Please continue to monitor the CDC and Department of Health guidelines regarding self-isolation. If you are planning to visit one of the high risk countries--Iran, Italy, China, Japan, South Korea--you will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days when you return. You will need to immediately notify your supervisor if you are planning this kind of travel so that alternative arrangements can be made to cover your current responsibilities in service to our students.

If you are planning travel to a level two area--states and/or communities where Covid 19 is prevalent--or if you are planning to travel on a cruise ship, you will need to check the guidelines carefully before you go and when you return. Self-isolation and/or monitoring for 14 days may be recommended or may be required. Again, please inform your supervisor of your plans before you go, and please contact your supervisor when you return so that we can plan appropriately.

Finally, the best prevention remains the consistent practice of healthy habits. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water; if soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with greater than 60% alcohol; cover your mouth if you cough or sneeze; and stay home if you are exhibiting symptoms including a dry cough and/or a fever. If you are over 65 and/or have an underlying health condition, avoid mass gatherings. Contact your medical provider or the Department of Health if you are not feeling well and may have come in contact with someone who has Covid 19. Continue to monitor district communication channels for the latest information.

Thank you again for everything you do!

Figure 9 March 12 COVID 19 Update through email

On social media, there were many questions stemming from the unknown. What will happen? Why are schools considering staying open? Why are schools considering closing? Many other relevant questions to the situation spread like wildfire. I made it a

point to share any and all information with my teachers, but I prepared for the worst-case scenario which would be students staying home and learning digitally. I felt that I had been preparing for this with my background in technology integration. Through working on my PhD in an online synchronous format I already knew about digital meeting platforms, and from my experience in the classroom with flipped classes I was ready to push learning into the TEAMS platform for our district. I did have reservations about the digital literacy of the teachers in my district and whether or not the district could support every student in an online platform at the same time.

There was a major shift in the narrative at this point; in Central Florida where tourism rules all, the major theme parks had announced they would be closing on March 15th. There is no direct correlation to the theme parks making their announcement and the local school districts closing for an extended spring break. However, it is important to note that in the previous email it was expressed that an "instructional continuity plan is being finalized and will made available to ensure learning continues, if necessary." It was at this point that I was instructed to begin writing digital and paper plans for the possibility that students may not return after spring break. These plans would need to be accessible both on the Microsoft Teams platform, as well as in paper format for those students who did not have access to a computer or mobile device. Many of the students in my district did not have sufficient internet access either, which required them to be provided paper packets to complete their work.

During spring break of 2020 I received an email with a continuity plan and strategy explaining how our teachers would produce content and curriculum as well as how my teachers would be trained further on a platform we had been previously using. Teachers were told that spring break would be extended, but that students would be returning to class on March 30. The redacted items in the following email (figure 10) are to ensure that no names are used.

The majority of teachers will use TEAMS to build classes, provide assignments, and give feedback to students. They may engage in video lessons, link to virtual resources, etc. in this platform. Teachers will use REMIND for regular communication with students.

Teachers currently using Edginuity and Canvas will continue.

By Monday, we need clear expectations for student learning in all subjects, all grade levels, with ESE and ELL support identified, VPK-5, 6-8, 9-12. [REDACTED] and their designees)

On Monday, we will finalize the distribution of this information to teachers, and the professional development and tech support we'll offer on Tuesday. ([REDACTED] and [REDACTED])

On Monday, all instructional personnel will be guided to prepare for virtual instructional planning. A checklist will be provided with making sure they pick up and prepare any necessary resources ([REDACTED])

On Tuesday, instructional personnel will train on TEAMs and ePLC's and where to access key curriculum expectations and instructional resources. Teachers will set up class structures in TEAMS and Remind.Tech support will be available throughout the day on a schedule ([REDACTED])

Wednesday: e-PLC's collaborative planning
Thursday/Friday, lesson planning
Monday, 3/30, lessons launch

Figure 10 March 18th ICP and Strategy Planning email

We had not yet received word that schools would shut down, but it was imminent. Many questions began to arise about what would be happening if and when we went digital, and how our students would work from home if schools closed. I received the following text (figure 11) from my administrator on March 18, explaining the plan to

provide lessons for ALL arts teachers. On March 20, the superintendent sent out the

following email (figure 12) to the entire school district outlining the plan with

expectations and instructions for staff and students. Highlighted in red was the

instruction that the district would provide lesson plans for "core classroom teachers" and

more information for "non-core/special area teachers" would be received at an

informational meeting. Personally, I wasn't sure where that left music education, as she

stated that we are neither core nor are we non-core instruction. Digital device rollout

would begin on March 30 along with paper packets for those students who would not

have access to a digital device in their home, which further emphasized the disparities

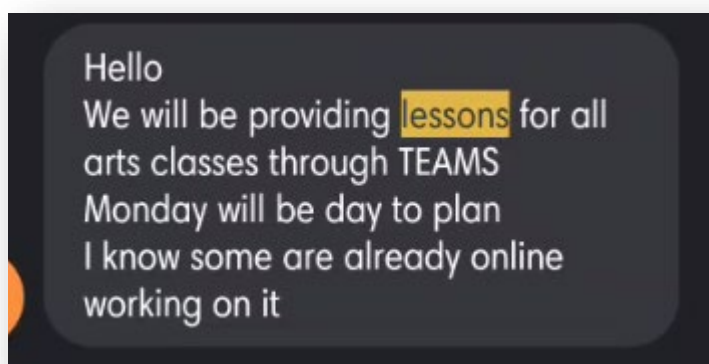between the have and have-nots in our district.

Figure 11 Text message March 18

Thank you for your continued support and patience during this rapidly changing time; with COVID-19, the situation has been changing day by day, hour by hour. Here is the latest information for all employees:

- All employees will be paid their normal compensation, minus any leave taken, through April 15.

- Please see the attached chart which outlines reporting expectations for all employees for the period of March 23 – April 15.

- Unless instructed otherwise, all instructional personnel may work remotely through April 15.

-
- On Monday, March 23, all instructional personnel will begin working remotely from home to prepare for implementation of the district's Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP). On Monday, educators may come on to their campuses only to go to their classroom, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., to pick up any materials necessary to provide and support distance learning for all students. While on campus, please log in to your district device and verify with your school tech that you have administrative rights on the device.

- On Tuesday, March 24, the district will provide teachers virtual training on how to use TEAMS as the platform to implement the ICP. (Teachers currently using Edugenuity and/or Canvas will continue to use those tools. Check with your principal or supervisor for training needs on the platforms.)

- **Core classroom teachers will be provided daily lesson plans built from the CUPS and incorporated into the Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP). Because of the broader scope of curriculum options and courses offered, non-core/special area teachers will receive additional direction regarding lesson and activity development during training on Tuesday. There is no need to develop individual lesson plans as you will be provided virtual collaborative time next week for that purpose.**

- Beginning March 30, paper packets for students without internet or digital devices will be delivered to each school and available for parent pick up in your front office. Please keep a master list of the names of the students and their grade level receiving paper packets.

- Additional guidance for teachers, counselors, social workers, academic coaches, and deans

Figure 12 Districtwide email March 20 School Closure 1

have been developed in collaboration with OCEA. (Please see the attached Letter of Understanding.)

- Any employee who is exhibiting signs of the COVID-19 virus (fever, cough, shortness of breath), who has traveled out of the country (not including Puerto Rico) or on a cruise, or traveled to a high-impact area, or come in direct contact with an individual who has tested positive for the virus must stay home, self-quarantine for 14 days, and contact their medical provider. If you have any questions about the high-impact areas, please check the CDC website for the latest information. Employees will use sick leave, personal leave, or vacation leave if they have to self-isolate.
- Employees who are scheduled to report to work but have concerns about child care or exposure to the virus due to their age or another physical condition may use sick leave, personal leave, or vacation leave.

- All employees working in our schools and departments should practice social distancing: gatherings/work teams of no more than 10 people (schedule any larger meetings virtually), stand/work six feet apart, cover coughs and sneezes, and wash hands frequently with soap and water. Bathrooms will be well-stocked, and we will continue to make hand sanitizer readily available.

- School and district offices will be closed to the public, effective immediately. Parents and visitors will be encouraged to call the front offices or use other electronic communication, such as email and Let's Talk, as communications measures with us.

- The expectation is that all school and district phones should be answered during the regular posted office hours, and all electronic communication (email, Let's Talk) will be responded to within 24 hours.

- The district will pilot a new online registration process starting Monday, March 30. If parents contact schools or departments regarding new student registration while schools are closed, please refer them to Student Services.

- Effective immediately, all special events, athletic events, and special activities scheduled through April 30 will be postponed and rescheduled or canceled. This includes use of our facilities by outside entities. Schools should begin the process of seeking reimbursement of any funds already paid for activities and events and begin processing refunds to students and families.
- Parents will receive important information today, as well, regarding the transition to digital learning. Please see the district website for this information.

- Some of you may be questioning why you are scheduled to work during this extended closure period, while other employees are being paid without having to report for duty. First of all, our first priority this week and next week will be to ensure our instructional continuity plan (ICP), or digital learning plan, is right--we want to make it as easy as we can for teachers and students to transition to this new way of teaching and learning, recognizing that it will be an adjustment, and it is imperative that we are able to engage ALL students in learning during this closure period. It is also important to your Board Members and me that we protect all of our employees and their families to the best of our ability. Over the next few days, we will be analyzing areas of need where we could use the talents and skills of other employee groups,

Figure 13 Districtwide email March 20 School Closure 2

and we have reserved the right to call employees in to work as needed. But in times like these, we are going to display compassion and grace and take care of all of our employees, while demonstrating our commitment to our students and our professional duties and responsibilities.

- Please continue to monitor our communication channels for updates. This is a new way of work, and we will approach it with our continuous improvement mindset, getting better at it as we go.
- If you have any questions, contact your supervisor. Thank you for your continued commitment to serving Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day.

Figure 14 Districtwide email March 20 School Closure 3

I immediately began receiving messages and emails from my teachers with questions on how they would be teaching, what they would be teaching, and who they would be teaching. One of the first messages I received (figure 13) was from a high school chorus teacher, reaching to ask about keeping our students engaged but not overloaded on "written assignments" in a class that is performance-based. This teacher wanted to make sure we were not taking the fun out of music. As I was tasked to write these plans, I did not want to "take the fun out of music" either; and I began writing curriculum that would be both viable and enjoyable. I was feeling pressure from both the district and the educators that I support. It was difficult for me to handle the everyday issues with my family as well as the issues facing my fellow teachers. Through my own stress and internal thoughts, I realized that many of my teachers were feeling just as lost and worried, I sent out an email early in the morning of March 20 with the following (figure 14) information hoping to calm what seemed to be an emotional storm coming.

Figure 15 Facebook message March 18
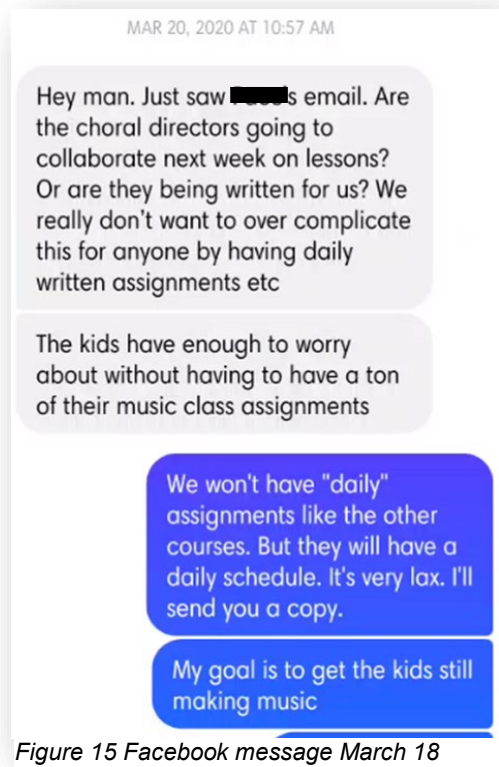
Hello everyone! Hopefully you are taking care of yourself and your family (2 footed, 4 footed, and beyond) during this incredible roller-coaster of events! I am sure you have many questions stemming from the email we all just received from Dr. Pace and I assure you Pam and I are working on answers. This experiment in education is going to make us better and stronger teachers in the end and may even bring us closer to our students as a whole!

I encourage you to create a schedule for yourself and do your best to stick to that schedule. Set that alarm and get yourself out of bed. Plan to "go to school" at a specific time and don't be late. Find that space in your home where you can work and begin your day. Follow your schedule as if you were going from class to class and go to that class. If you have an "open" block, use it like you would any break. Take lunch and follow that schedule. You will be more efficient and find a rhythm that works for you and your household. It will help you get through this successfully. You'll need time to be alone to do work and be sure to also try and have fun. This unprecedented time may help you find a passion you didn't know you had, like playing ukulele, or underwater basket weaving.

Please know that Pam and I are here for you and we are working diligently to make sure you are supported and our students are successful during the next few weeks. We are getting guidance for elementary teachers and their expectations with student contact given the number of students they serve. I implore you to get comfortable with Teams and be open-minded in the coming days when it comes to lessons and learning. Thank you,

Figure 16 March 20 email to district arts teachers

The implication that this is new for everyone assisted my impetus of the last sentence of this email. Elementary teachers were worried that they had upwards of 1000 students to grade and teach digitally, while attempting to provide quality differentiated instruction. At the secondary level we were also dealing with instruments and uniforms needing to be returned and/or rented beyond the original timeline of a school year. My teachers were scrambling to try and figure out how to receive these items from students in both a safe and effective ways. As music educators, we were asked to show compassion and grace (these were the key words given to our educators from the district) when it came to having students participate in school during a novel pandemic, more specifically in grading assignments. My teachers were still asking what was expected of them (figure 15), but I had no definitive answer to this question, as the situation was changing daily.

Hey, I hate to bother you and I know you are overwhelmed, I'm sure. I'm just wanting to know what I need to get from my classroom besides paperwork and office essentials. Should I be bringing home instruments? Will we be teaching through video, blues clues style? I have no idea what I'm to prepare for as a music teacher.

Figure 17 Teacher email March 23

Not only were teachers confused, students and parents were confused as well. Some schools had a quick rollout of technology and many schools, specifically those that were Title I (students and families within a lower income level), had issues getting devices into the hands of families. If equity was the goal, we were not meeting it. Students with internet access were receiving a much better education than those without, and those taking home the paper versions of assignments did not have a clear plan as to how they would be returned or graded. What concerned teachers the most was how students were going to learn (figure 16) and what teachers were supposed to do to initiate the learning process. I am very lucky to work with many teachers who were

willing to take the lead on getting ahead of the game and assisting in curriculum writing. One such teacher wrote to me with the intent of helping in any way they could with the following email (figure 17).

> On Monday when retrieving resources, what will we need? I know not all our students have their instruments; will they be allowed to come get them? I've seen a billion online resources posted through facebook and such, but what are we allowed to use? (usually youtube is a no no - I know our students can't access it on school devices). Do we need to prepare worksheets? How will we get them copied or disseminated?
>
> A little bit of guidance would be helpful so that we can plan appropriately for the planning.
>
> Thank you!

Figure 18 Email from band director March 20

> I have lots of workbooks and materials I will bring home Monday. I have something for all the grade levels. I also have a scanner at home.
>
> I am sure you are getting plenty of questions. Let me know if I can assist in any way.

Figure 19 March 20 email from elementary music teacher

I had to quickly get the first few weeks of plans ready and had to work with administrators on their plan for instruments and uniforms. Recruiting teachers to assist in the lesson writing was key to my survival at the beginning of this "new normal." I had a handful of teachers meet with me digitally after sharing the template of Instructional Continuity Plans to discuss how best to administer these lessons and how they should all be organized to support vertical alignment. As lessons began coming into my mailbox, I found the best way to put them together was in an excel spreadsheet with built-in curricular necessities such as play, read, and critique. It was important for me to ensure some level of creativity in each week's lessons, allowing for students to still take part in *musicing,* described by Elliott (1995) to mark music as praxis, something people do.

In my mind, students would work from home and participate in all music activities by following the simple plans I had written for teachers. At first, I believed there was this utopian situation where all students had access to quality internet and the supportive home environment that would provide a safe space for students to learn. My naivety lasted less than 24 hours as I spoke with teachers who have students of their own at home, in situations better off than the majority of our students in the district. If a household with a high school band student and elementary music student have only 1 device to work on, and if the parents are working from home as well, the amount of quality music-making is greatly diminished. Parents cannot attend zoom meetings while a trombone is running through etudes and a 4th grader is singing folk songs into an iPad. It was hard enough for me to work from home while my son attended virtual Pre-School at his small table next to me and my wife dealt with our 1-year-old while also working from home.

It was important to make these lessons accessible as well as practical, but still keeping the idea of quality music education at the core. I began to think back to what I would do with my students as a supplement to their education in the flipped environment. I would create or link to videos for them to explore and think about. I created projects in which they would make music using "found sounds" around their environment. These found sound lessons worked for all of my students, as there were no limitations for what was presented as an instrument. The lessons I compiled with other teachers would work in digital and analog environments, they would get the students playing, singing, and moving. Students would respond with either paper and pencil, or in the TEAMS platform, set up for each teacher and their classroom.

The following chart (figure 18) shows a breakdown of a lesson for elementary

music in the first weeks of distance learning. The blue, underlined text on these pages

were clickable links that would take students to a YouTube video to watch for a listening

example or reading example. It was important that we aligned any lessons we created

with the Florida Music Standards (FLDOE, 2016) to maintain a viable and quality

curriculum while students were at home. Within these elementary lessons, students

were creating, listening, and playing. As I continued compiling and writing, elementary

teachers began to test the plans at home on their own computers and tablets and

complimented the holistic approach taken in the ICP. During this time, a few digital

music companies were opening their platforms for free use by school districts who were

closed due to the pandemic. I reached out to these companies and secured access for

those teachers who had students with internet access already. Specifically, at the

secondary level, these platforms allowed students to create and play music digitally

without the need for their instruments as many had left for spring break without their

instruments and were unable to retrieve them immediately or at all.

SDOC Instructional Continuity Plan: Grades K-5 Virtual
Timeline: April 13 – April 15, 2020

K	1	2	3	4	5
Video/Reading (5-10 min) MU.K.O.1.2	**Video/Reading (5-10 min)** MU.1.O.1.1	**Video/Reading (5-10 min)** MU.2.O.3.1	**Video/Reading (5-10 min)** MU.3.O.3.1	**Video/Reading (5-10 min)** MU.4.O.3.1	**Video/Reading (5-10 min)** MU.5.O.3.1
Read and listen to Freddie the Frog the Mysterious Wahoo	Read and listen Freddie the Frog the Mysterious Wahoo	Read and listen to Freddie the Frog the Mysterious Wahoo	Find two pencils Play along with the rhythm in the video Read and Play the Rhythm	Find two pencils Play along with the rhythm in the video Read and Play the Rhythm	Find two pencils Play along with the rhythm in the video Read and Play the Rhythm
Play (10 min) MU.K.C.1.1	**Play (10 min)** MU.1.C.1.1	**Play (10 min)** MU.2.S.3.2	**Play (10 min)** MU.3.S.3.2	**Play (10 min)** MU.4.S.3.2	**Play (10 min)** MU.5.S.3.2
Tap along with the rhythm of Hall of the Mountain King Video- Hall of the Mountain King	Tap along with the rhythm of Hall of the Mountain King Video- Hall of the Mountain King	Tap along with the rhythm of Hall of the Mountain King Video- Hall of the Mountain King	Tap along with the rhythm of Hall of the Mountain King Video- Hall of the Mountain King	Tap along with the rhythm of Hall of the Mountain King Video- Hall of the Mountain King	Tap along with the rhythm of Hall of the Mountain King Video- Hall of the Mountain King
Critique (5 min) MU.K.C.2.1	**Critique (5 min)** MU.1.C.2.1	**Critique (5 min)** MU.2.C.1.2	**Critique (5 min)** MU.3.C.2.1	**Critique (5 min)** MU.4.C.2.2	**Critique (5 min)** MU.K.C.2.1
Describe the Tempo- (Speed of the Beat) of Hall of the Mountain King	Describe the Tempo- (Speed of the Beat) of Hall of the Mountain King Can you describe the tempo of Hall of the Mountain King?	Describe the Tempo- (Speed of the Beat) of Hall of the Mountain King Can you describe the tempo of Hall of the Mountain King?	Describe the Tempo- (Speed of the Beat) of Hall of the Mountain King. How does it change?	Describe the Tempo- (Speed of the Beat) of Hall of the Mountain King. How does it change?	Describe the Tempo- (Speed of the Beat) of Hall of the Mountain King. How does it change?
Can you describe the tempo of Hall of the Mountain King? Question for the Lesson: Please respond on the page for your class on TEAMS	Question for the Lesson: Please respond on the page for your class on TEAMS	Question for the Lesson: Please respond on the page for your class on TEAMS	Use music vocabulary words. Question for the Lesson: Please respond on the page for your class on TEAMS	Use music vocabulary words. Question for the Lesson: Please respond on the page for your class on TEAMS	Use music vocabulary words. Question for the Lesson: Please respond on the page for your class on TEAMS
Learn Something NEW! (15 min) **MU.K.C.1.2**	**Learn Something NEW! (15 min)** **MU.1.C.1.2**	**Learn Something NEW! (15 min) MU.2.C.1.2**	**Learn Something NEW! (15 min) MU.3.C.1.2**	**Learn Something NEW! (15 min) MU.4.S.1.1**	**Learn Something NEW! (15 min) MU.5.S.3.4**
Watch the Video – Household Percussion Jam Find your own instrument in your house. (Can, cup, paper roll, water bottle...) Watch again and this time play your instrument with the Video	Watch the Video – Household Percussion Jam Find your own instrument in your house. (Can, cup, paper roll, water bottle...) Watch again and this time play your instrument with the Video	Watch the Video – Household Percussion Jam Find your own instrument in your house. (Can, cup, paper roll, water bottle...) Watch again and this time play your instrument with the Video	Watch the Video – Household Percussion Jam Find your own instrument in your house. (Can, cup, paper roll, water bottle...) Watch again and this time play your instrument with the Video	Watch the Video – Household Percussion Jam Find your own instrument in your house. (Can, cup, paper roll, water bottle...) Watch again and this time play your instrument with the Video	Watch the Video – Household Percussion Jam Find your own instrument in your house. (Can, cup, paper roll, water bottle...) Watch again and this time play your instrument with the Video

Figure 20 Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP) April 2020

After posting lessons for the secondary teachers including the many forms of technology prepared for them, I began to receive emails and messages of technology burnout and the feeling of sensory overload with so many options for students and teachers alike. One of my teachers mentioned there was too much novelty with everything we had presented (figure 19), and the teachers wanted to feel confident in teaching online, and not figuring it out along the way with their students. This teacher is tech savvy and was willing to be a test pilot for just about everything suggested to him. If they were feeling overwhelmed, I had to find a better way to ensure they felt supported and did not add more to their workload. If a teacher is unable to teach at their best, their students would not get their best. I made the tragic mistake of assuming that my teachers were not only as technologically literate as I was but that they had the history of working in a flipped environment like I had.
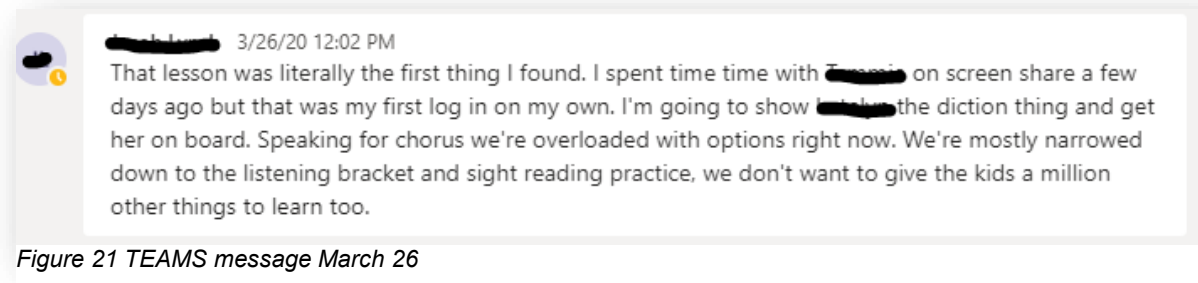
Figure 21 TEAMS message March 26

One of my major faults at the beginning of this process, and even before as I came into my district position, was an assumption that my teachers taught like I did. I repeatedly addressed the notion that we all have students that learn differently, and we need to differentiate our teaching, but I was not differentiating with my teachers. This caused a major shift in the way I needed to present information to them and the way that I prepared for giving them material that could really use and get behind.

65

Chapter 5:

Good Times Bad Times

Although the term Social Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2020) was not explicitly used at the beginning of this process, what we as educators were implementing tied directly into this framework. It has long been a part of my philosophy—I educate the whole child through music. Since I began teaching, when people asked what I teach, my response was always "I teach people." Teaching music is just my way of reaching every student with the support that they need to further their growth as humans. I do not recall ever having a good name for this style of teaching other than "holistic" until SEL became part of my education terminology a few years ago. This framework supports teachers and students in developing healthy relationships with themselves and each other.

SEL is an approach to education where we recognize loss and grief as necessary steps in the healing process. Events were being cancelled (figure 20) such as Music Performance Assessments, Thespian Competition, and All County events. These cancellation notifications led to many students and teachers questioning the rest of their year, specifically seniors who were looking forward to prom and graduation. My teachers who had been preparing all year for their Music Performance Assessments (MPAs) now had to tell their students there may be no more band or chorus for the rest of the year. Teachers were dealing with great amounts of stress from the idea that everything that they had worked towards and everything they knew in the world of education had instantly changed.

In response to recent developments and precautions surrounding the COVID-19 public health crisis, guidance from the Department of Education, and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), please kindly take notice that effective immediately, all special events, athletic events, and special activities scheduled through April 30th will be postponed, rescheduled, or canceled.

Cancellation includes use of our facilities by outside entities (i.e. religious organi~ations). Schools should begin the process of seeking reimbursement of any funds already paid for activities and events and begin processing refunds to students and families.

Thank you for your continued commitment to serving Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day.

Figure 22 Event cancellations from district

Add to this stress the feelings of loss and grief when a family member is lost to COVID-19. By the first week of April 2020, Florida had reported over 200 deaths from COVID-19, just a fraction of the over 10,000 deaths nationwide (NCHS, 2021). This number however was enough to convince teachers and students that there was in fact a rising problem, which increased the worries of everyday life. One of my colleagues drafted a letter (figure 21) to our teachers that exemplifies the need to remind everyone of our role in supporting their endeavors as well as realizing our students need to engage in curriculum, but the grade is not the most important aspect of education.

Dear High School Teachers,

Thank you for your continuous hard-work and dedication to meet the needs of our students at this time. We understand that digital learning has been a new learning experience for our teachers, students and our community. Additionally, we must work together to support one another in order to help provide the best online learning environment for our students.

As we move forward with digital learning, we recognize that our students are in various situations at this time with diverse accessibility to devices. ICP plans have been created to provide content for students to engage with curriculum every day. It does not mean that everything needs to be grade, but the Student Progression Plan requires 2 grades be recorded each week. As professionals, we should continue to be compassionate, flexible and utilize common sense in regard to grading and providing due dates for assignments.

Figure 23 Email draft to teachers

Up to this point, schools were closed and most of the district was working remotely from their homes. We had not been in our office since the Friday before spring

67

break and were unsure when we would return. Many colleagues had set up home offices, and I too began the process of setting up an office in my garage. Having two young children proved difficult when attempting to have digital meetings while they run around the house having fun and playing. The district superintendent sent out the following email highlighting the plan to return to work either from home or, in certain cases, to the work site. Teachers and non-essential school personnel were asked to work remotely while district employees and administrators were required to report to their work sites. In my specific department, we were encouraged to find a school site (if close to our home) where we could work far from others or report to our office.

This attempt to mitigate the spread of the virus was a first step for the district in keeping our students and teachers safe but would prove difficult for district employees with children with the closure of schools (figure 22). Personally, my family was lucky in that, while I was at work, my wife was able to stay home with our children as her employer, a local theme park, had closed and she was working from home. As the stressors continued to build for myself and our teachers, my administrators sent emails (figure 23) supporting and encouraging our work during the beginning of the pandemic.

> Based on the recommendation of the Florida Surgeon General in his messaging on March 28, 2020, employees scheduled to report to work tomorrow, March 30, 2020, who are over 65 or who have an underlying medical condition that puts them at greater risk from exposure to the Covid 19 virus, do not report to work as previously scheduled. Call your direct supervisor in the morning to discuss your telework options.

Figure 24 Email from Superintendent March 29

68

Figure 25 Email from Assistant Superintendent March 30

Shortly after beginning our "first day" back, we received an email with some frequently asked Questions and Answers from district administration. This email (figure 24) outlined expectations of both teachers and students. Many teachers were asking how to take attendance specifically with students who may or may not log in to take part in assignments. One of the many issues teachers were discussing (figure 25) was the need to "record for on-demand viewing" all of their lessons and "attempting to reach students/parents through Remind, TEAMS, or email at least twice weekly" or once a week for secondary. In an elementary general situation, a teacher might have had 18 to 20 students in their class, twice as many if they are compartmentalized (teaching only ELA or only Math). A music educator may have upwards of 1,000 students in a school, and while secondary does not see as many students, they are still looking at over 200 students in a general music program. As a district resource, I was starting to witness firsthand how the arts may take a back seat to other curricular areas without an advocate. It was of the utmost importance that our lessons were both viable and of the highest quality possible while maintaining rigor in a world where students may or may not have instruments, may or may not have access to technology, and may or may not have the opportunity to learn in a safe environment.

Teacher Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What happens when students don't log in or engage at all?

·   Teachers are responsible for attempting to reach students/parents through Remind, TEAMS, or email at least twice weekly (elementary) and once a week for secondary (one of the advantages of online learning is flexibility of scheduling).

·   If a student is not responding, teachers should inform an administrator, with the student's name, so a counselor, dean, or social work can follow up.

Q2: Do students have to log in every day?

·   No, some students may work ahead for the week or double up on assignments. Teachers are encouraged to post lessons a week at a time to allow for flexibility with student efforts. This will be especially supportive of families with multiple students.

·   Teachers can reach out to any student who may have a paper packet to encourage them to stay on pace as much as possible.

Q3: Do teachers need to take <u>attendance</u>?

·   Teachers do NOT have to formally take attendance in FOCUS but are accountable for knowing students are engaged with the work or reporting their lack of participation.

·   Teachers are accountable for knowing if students are engaged in the work (see Q1).

·   Teachers should inform administration if they have had no contact with a student to determine if the child picked up a paper packet.

·   Counselors, deans, and/or social workers will reach out to the parent to check on students who have not been engaged in classwork.

Q4: Why do I need to follow the ICP?

·   The expectation is to follow the guaranteed and viable curriculum which is the ICP. As we work through this new way of learning, the ICPs will be adjusted to meet the pacing needs based on your feedback.

·   The ICP is the Tier 1 instruction.

·   Teachers may access additional resources through CUPs and ClassLink to differentiate as needed.

Q5: How can I put my students' and parents' minds at ease that we are aware that there might be technological issues that may get in the way?

·   Be flexible and understanding as you explain that technology is not always reliable, and it requires our patience.

·   Put students' and parents' minds at ease by being flexible with <u>how</u> and <u>when</u> work is turned in. Some examples include: emailing assignments, taking a picture and uploading the work product, turning in assignments at the end of the week, or other creative ideas.

Q6: Do elementary students have to do an assignment for every block class each day?

·   No, students may choose one block class each day.

Q7: Are students required to tune into my LIVE lessons?

·   No. Lessons should be recorded for on-demand viewing. This type of flexibility ensures the success of all students.

Figure 26 District Q&A April 3

Figure 27 Message from teacher March 27
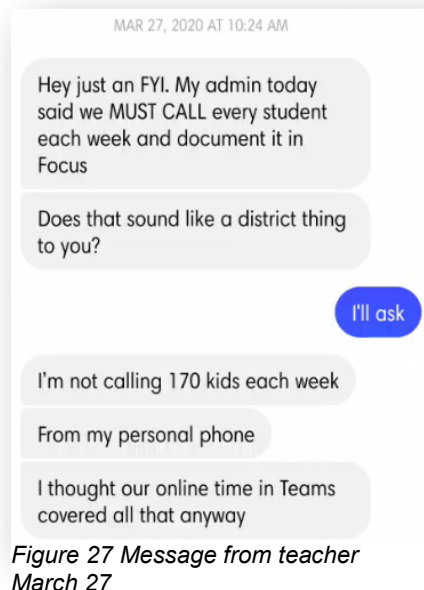
As teachers became more frustrated with their working environment, I began to field questions and issues with what was expected in their daily schedule. While this again pertained to general classroom teachers, it was not ideal for music educators. Teachers were expected to teach for 3 hours online and then be available 4.5 hours for other duties as assigned, but a music educator rarely teaches the same course all day. One example of a schedule for a chorus teacher may see AP Music Theory for their first period, Chorus 3 through 6 for their second period, Chorus 1 and 2 for third period, a planning period, and then Men's Chorus for fifth period, Women's Chorus for sixth period, and finishing the day off with World Music. There was no conceivable way to follow the prescribed schedule laid out in the contract for the coming weeks.

Figure 28 Email from district admin April 8

My teachers continually felt forgotten and left out by the district. The feeling of not mattering and being lesser than general classroom teachers was piling up and they were tired and stressed. I began to concentrate on the little wins. One of my teachers began using an online platform to work on sight-reading with their students and sent me the following message (figure 27) which became the catalyst for what I considered a great day. The baseline had to move, and all the little wins were celebrated, even something as nominal as creating lessons on a digital platform. When teaching elementary students, and even those students who are older, we differentiate our pedagogy to best accommodate the students in front of us. Although I thought I was already differentiating for my teachers, it never occurred to me the level at which differentiation was needed in certain areas such as technology and social emotional learning. Some of my teachers may have needed less direction and support than

others, which I should have recognized, especially older teachers who would not have had courses in college specifically focused on technology.
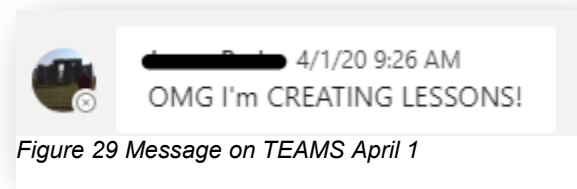
Figure 29 Message on TEAMS April 1

In an attempt to support the teachers during this technological adventure and to increase collaboration between music teachers, we began to implement weekly ePLCs (electronic professional learning communities). Through the TEAMS platform, teachers would log into their meetings (figure 28) and our discipline chairs would share information from the district and facilitate discussions as well as assist with any hot topics of the week. These meetings were helpful for my teachers who lived on an island in their schools, with no other teachers sharing their subject or discipline. Chatting with colleagues also provided relief from the daily stressors of grading and planning. Although still digital and through a camera, I personally felt better after talking with music teachers about their wins and ways to improve their communication with students. Much of the discussion the first few sessions focused on emotional well-being, making sure we were all doing well and staying safe. From a blog I follow called *Teaching With Orff* I found "Self Care Tips for Quarantined Music Teachers" (Pridmore & Kumagai, 2020), where the authors listed several suggestions on being intentional in our daily lives. The authors state, "It would be easy to slip into hibernation right now, but we know that being intentional with our days will serve us better." Practicing Mindfulness, Moving Everyday, Hydrating, and Reaching Out were a few of the

examples of topics discussed within this blog forum that I shared with my teachers.

On Wednesday we will have a short PLC group meeting with Chris at noon. After that we can break off into smaller groups. Please let me know if you are willing to lead a PLC with the day and time and I will update this list.

Figure 30 Email from elementary music chair March 31

Another very specific example of self-care that I learned from this post and others was to set a schedule and stick to it. I found it easy to just exist some days, whether from bouts of depression or just laziness, there were days I would wake up and not want to get out of bed or get dressed. Although having children made this difficult in general, creating a specific schedule allowed me to feel purpose and intention in every day. The authors posted an example schedule (figure 29) that I would use to create my own, and I shared much of this information with my teachers to assist them with their daily focus and purposeful living.

5:30-7:00	Wake-up Routine (ex. meditate, journal, breakfast)
7:00-8:00	Movement/Exercise
8:00-8:30	Regular Chores
8:30-10:30	Project 1
10:30-11:30	Project 2
11:30-12:30	Lunch
12:30-1:30	Project 2
1:30-3:30	Project 3
3:30-4:00	Movement/Exercise
4:00-8:30	Dinner and Family Time

Figure 31 Daily schedule posted on teachingwithorff.com

While this schedule is not exactly what I was doing in my days, I was able to adjust what was written to better meet my needs. I set my alarm clock as I normally would on a workday, and I made breakfast for the family. I would get some play time in with the kids and then set my son up for his virtual pre-K classes. I had scheduled meetings and scheduled time to create lessons and ICPs. I scheduled movement breaks (both my son and I need to move) and lunch breaks. I was very specific in sharing my schedule with teachers to show that I too needed to be intentional with my days. Allowing myself to remain vulnerable and open to my teachers was important to me, I did not want to let them feel as if their depression and difficulties with normal activities was only affecting their lives. They were not alone. I needed to let them know this.

An additional focus of these sessions was ensuring teachers who were preparing for the weeks to come whether digital or in person that they were doing the things that they needed to do and clarifying their understanding of the lessons that we were preparing. Unfortunately, not all teachers were able to attend these sessions at the specific times, and although they were recorded, they missed the meeting and information pertinent to the lessons that they would be required to teach. This presented several issues as they may have been unaware as to what was expected of their students and what was expected of them.

In these ePLCs and through emails, I discovered that my teachers were facing pushback from parents not understanding the platform and/or not willing to try to understand. Parents seemed to misinterpret how lessons were to be turned in and how their student was to participate online. As the only music teacher in a school, which is

many times the case at the elementary level, the problems many teachers were facing were much different than those in the general classrooms, as can be seen in this Figure (figure 30). There was no one on campus who could answer the questions that they had or similar ICPs to work from. This teacher was not alone however, as many parents across the district were asking the same questions of teachers and could not best support their children in learning the music lesson of the week. The digital lessons were made to provide a musical experience for our students that touched on the many areas of what they may receive in the classroom, and parents were getting to see just how much we as music educators truly teach in one lesson, even if these examples were just a segment of a general day in music.

Good morning!

So, I don't understand why, but soooooooooo many people are confused about what to do with the lessons! I've made videos, I've posted step-by-step instructions as an announcement, I've individually answered dozens of questions. Not counting the craziness with Teams and files yesterday, I have parents saying that the lesson itself is too confusing, problems with Flash, how is a kindergartner supposed to blahblahblah.

Is this happening at other schools? or am I somehow being confusing? Seriously, it seems like few people are watching the Welcome video I made, or the Quaver tutorial, FAQs page, or any other resource to help themselves. Do you have any suggestions? Or just keep on keepin' on...

Hope you are doing well! Thank you again for all you have done!

Figure 32 Issues with lessons March 31

Reaching out to my colleagues around the state, similar issues with parents existed regardless of the area and digital platform used. The novelty of digital education for all was too much to push out in such a short window. Teachers, parents, and students were not equipped or prepared for the sudden change in their education and unfortunately, many parents were not willing to support their students' education while

at home for a multitude of reasons. Phone calls and emails with other District Supervisors proved to be helpful in realizing that I was not alone either. The difficulties we saw in Osceola County were not unique to us. Having the opportunity to speak with others in analogous positions provided a great resource for coming up with plans and solutions for the coming weeks and year.

The supervisor organization, Florida Music Supervisors Association (FMSA) began meeting twice a week to discuss best practices, digital implementation, and any other concerns that were beginning to arrive around the state. This group of like-minded supervisors and specialists were integral in creating plans and documents reinforcing the importance of the arts during COVID-19 as well as ways to return to the classroom safely. We were in constant communication with representatives from the Florida Music Education Association (FMEA) and the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), providing us with updates from both the state and national level and we were able to relay this information to our teachers. While our districts are different in many ways, and our roles differ as well, these meetings provided support and information in a position that may not have like-minded individuals or partners to discuss implementation with. As previously discussed, music supervisors have not held a clearly definable role in the past 100 years (McQuerrey, 1972), and many of our "supervisors" are not only over music, but other areas such as Physical Education, Driver's Education, World Languages, and other unrelated disciplines. Many of my colleagues in this organization are not supervisors, but resource teachers or coaches, and some remain in the classroom as well while also being a liaison for their district in the arts.

Discussing our concerns with each other and having a group to share ideas with was paramount to finding various ways to ensure that our programs remain open and safe. These meetings also assisted with the implementation of guidelines for quality arts during the pandemic, and held a level of high importance to helping provide social and emotional support for those of us on a metaphorical island. In my particular situation, I was in my first year at the district when schools closed down and there were many aspects of the position that I was unaware of. This group alleviated some of the stressors associated with the job in a normal year as well as those coming during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Along with my local colleagues, teachers from around the country were seeing stress levels rise and participation diminish in their classrooms. Much like the months and years prior to the pandemic, many teachers were reaching out to each other on social media, but with COVID-19 forcing everyone to stay indoors allowing more time to surf sites such as Pinterest, Instagram, and Facebook, teachers were searching for answers. One of the many resources I found helpful during this time were the various educator and technology groups on Facebook. Teachers and lecturers alike shared their knowledge and wisdom in these groups with the intent of helping one another, usually free of charge. This variety of kind and thoughtful gestures were commonplace among the Music Education Facebook groups.

Many groups shared ideas for "arts-on-a-cart" which was helpful as most of our elementary music teachers would be teaching on a cart at the beginning of the next school year. Many administrators were attempting to limit movement on campus as well as students crossing paths in hallways during the day if unneccessary. Other posts

included videos of virtual choirs and virtual bands or orchestras, an idea that at first seems exciting and something every teacher would like to try, but once the planning and implementation begins, it proves to be difficult for the average music educator. Many educators shared best practices in their districts and at their institutions, focusing on what works and how they are preparing for the future of music during the pandemic.

One post that assisted me in my dissemination of lessons and helped me to better understand a phased approach to what we were trying to do was found in the E-learning in Music Education group (figure 31). When I first saw this chart, I was able to better lay out how our district would present information to both teachers and students. The most important section of this chart was Possible Pitfalls, which helped me realize how I was trying to do too much too fast and not focusing on the tasks at hand.

	Phase 1
Possible Timeframe	Weeks 1-3
Educational Activities to consider	- Ensure student tech skills - Build community online - Include music that brings joy and comfort - How music can be part of their new routine?
Strategies to simplify	- Create the same "theme" for your grade levels/courses (ie "Music in My Home Learning Routine") - Use the same lesson/worksheets, etc for multiple grade levels or courses
Tech to focus on	- The **main** online learning platform your school already uses and supports (Google, Microsoft Teams, Canvas, Schoology, etc) - Screencasting (Screencastify, Loom)
Possible Pitfalls	- Thinking home learning will be the same as in-class learning - Trying to do too much too fast - Using too many fun apps (see "tech to focus on" above) - Trying to teach too much content

Figure 33 Nyssa Brown Phases of Implementation, musicedforward.com

It was in these groups that I also found solace in knowing it was "OK to not be OK" and that things are not normal. We were stuck in our homes, unable to visit our friends and family as we once had. It had been a month of being stuck in our homes, and although at the time we had no idea how long we would be in a pandemic, I was feeling alone and separated from those whom I had seen on a daily basis.

Some of the organizations I belong to and follow on Facebook began having happy hours online as a way to meet up virtually with colleagues and friends, outside of the constructs of a conference or scheduled school meeting. These happy hours were for anyone to join in and discuss any topics, not just classroom related, and allowed us to see each other and just enjoy each other's company when we were stuck in our homes. I decided to begin a virtual happy hour (figure 32) for the arts teachers in my district, very specifically to discuss anything NOT related to our school district and teaching, but any other daily happenings. Teachers (and colleagues from around the country in some cases) shared their wins and losses outside of the classroom, I learned more about my teachers in these meetings than I could learn in a normal year of observations in classrooms. After each Happier Hour, I felt a sense of release and felt refreshed, and the teachers participating let me know how much they appreciated the "virtual hangs," that it was great to see others outside of the professional environment they were used to.

Happier Hour

Tonight!!!! 5pm

If you are interested, I will be hosting a happier hour. Feel free to drop in and hang out with other Arts people of Osceola County. This social distancing gathering is not related to SDOC Arts and we will NOT be discussing anything school related. I will post a link to the meeting on Tuesday morning if you are interested in attending.

Please feel free to relax and discuss things like the new Trolls movie, what color your hair is (if you have any), when the last time you showered was, and other lovely topics. I will not be provided any food or drinks, 'cause social distancing.

See you then!!!!

Figure 34 Happier Hour announcement

While students were participating in their "digital schooling" at home and music classes were taking place in a simplified form, these students were missing out on opportunities to perform. I wanted to find a way to keep the interest of our students in the arts programs we offer and take advantage of the platform in which they were learning. It was around this time that I conceived of a digital conference for both educators and students. With the digital divide, I saw an opportunity for bringing voices from across the country into our classrooms to provide knowledge, pedagogy, and fresh ideas for Osceola County. My colleague and I discussed how to bring educators, performers, and professionals from around the country into our classrooms to excite our students about their possible futures in the arts. I emailed our administration (figure 33) to ask their thoughts on the conference and if it were something we could move forward with.

Good Morning,

█████ and I had an idea to add to the enrichment of our students as well as take advantage of the digital world we are now living in.

We are thinking of having a digital arts conference for our teachers and our students.

It would take place the first and/or second week of May and we would bring in artists and lecturers from around the country to expose our students to various techniques, career options, and ways to better themselves through the arts.

As of now we currently have about 18 individuals who have committed to participate and share their love and passion for the arts with our district. This would take place either in Teams, or through Live Music Tutor (which we would need to discuss this with them as well) and would allow our population to digitally attend workshops of their choice.

Student focused workshops will be roughly 30 minutes including q&a and teacher focused workshops would be 45 minutes with a q&a.

Is this something you think the district would be ok with us putting together?

We are calling it "Going DARC"

GOING DARC
digital   arts   conference

Have a safe day!

Figure 35 Going DARC first email April 7

Ultimately, we received positive feedback and were told we could move forward with the conference (figure 34). They expressed excitement for the conference and we asked to further the discussion to include the opportunity for funding to compensate those presenting at the conference. Planning for this conference, we reached out to our teachers to find out what they and their students would be interested in learning and listening to. A week before the conference was set to begin, we completed the Going DARC program with information on the sessions as well as the biographies of each presenter.

I LOVE this idea and I cannot imagine anyone would see anything wrong with it. Is Live Music Tutor approved? If so, you could go either way. IF not, we could try to push it through the software committee quickly. I will double check on permissions, but I think it is awesome. I'll let you know.

Figure 36 Response to Going DARC April 8

Having participated in many virtual meetings and classrooms at this point, it was important to make sure that our students and teachers had an understanding of the platform as well as digital expectations. On the first page of the program, we explained why we created Going DARC, "With the unfortunate news in March that our school doors were closing, we wanted to make sure the drive and passion for the arts that you bring to school every day did not diminish," and what we expected of our attendees, "Most sessions will be on Zoom, and as such we will require a password to each session. This will ensure the safety and privacy of both our presenters and you our guests." The sessions would take place during the school day and over a two-week period. We wanted to make sure ALL students were afforded the opportunity to participate and were able to record each session for teachers to share with classes not active during a specific session. Although the following session would take place at 2:00pm (figure 35), teachers could access the recordings and share them with their students. Some students who were unable to attend session would watch recordings on their own schedule in the evening or over the weekend as well. We kept these session recordings active through June 1st of 2020 to allow students and teachers the opportunity to discuss at length any of the topics presented during the conference.

Figure 37 Going DARC session example

As the conference progressed, the excitement of our students and teachers was evident as we attended sessions with upwards of 75 people and were able to see students actively involved in making music, dancing, acting, and drawing. Once the conference had finished, we sent a survey out to all students and teachers who had participated. The response was overwhelming in appreciation and enjoyment. In an attempt to lighten the load on teachers and bring the arts into the homes of our students, we had also produced positive engagement and provided a space for our students to create and participate.

Following the Going DARC series, we had to prepare for another event that was moved to digital due to COVID-19, Arts Alive, a scholarship showcase normally in person with student performances in various arts disciplines. Rather than cancel this showcase, we made the decision to change the entire event into a pre-recorded fundraiser to support student scholarships. We recruited former scholarship winners and created an Arts Alive promo video (Coalition, 2020) with the intent of spreading the word and building hype for student work. With everything being canceled, we wanted to make sure they were given an amazing opportunity to show their talent. With a few Broadway stars on our judge's panel lineup sharing information on their own social media (figure 36), we were able to garner a greater number of viewers for the event.

Figure 38 Arts Alive Facebook Flyer

While much of our work was spent assisting students and attempting to make the best of a terrible situation, specifically for the seniors who were missing out on the normal end-of-the-year events, we were not doing as much for our teachers. In hindsight, I personally could and should have done more for the teachers I work with. Students were treated with compassion and grace, given extensions, offered opportunities not traditionally granted in the classroom. They also received social and emotional support throughout the end of this semester. Conversely, teachers were provided deadlines, ultimatums, trainings, and negative experiences. How could I have better supported these teachers? How could we as a district have better supported these teachers? Of all the texts, Facebook messages, and emails I received up to this point, the fear of the unknown was probably brought up the most of any other need. Not knowing how we would progress, not knowing how we would teach, not knowing how we would get out of this pandemic. As I have stated earlier, I am blessed with many teachers who are forward-thinking and always looking for the "AND" in a situation.

Instead of dwelling on the negative and things that we cannot control, these teachers were accepting what was "AND" changing it for the better. When moving to digital learning, one of the teachers who I support, while knowingly deficient in technology, wanted to support planning for the coming year and continue learning about the technology being used as well as others being offered (figure 37).

Hello!

I've been thinking about how General Music is going to work if we go back to school, and/or if we continue distance education next year. Also, I would like to help out this summer if there is the opportunity as you mentioned. Virtual music definitely lends itself to Listening and Composing elements, Instruments of the Orchestra, and Vocabulary - but it is challenging to incorporate the Performance part. I love the play-along activities that have been part of the lessons, and I hope we'll be able to incorporate more Doing activities next year.

I've been recording 25 min lessons in addition to the district lesson plans just to keep some semblance of face-to-face instruction, especially for the younger grades. I personally don't do a lot of notation activities with K 1 & early 2, so one curriculum that I have found helpful for literacy during this experience is First Steps in Music because it is singing and movement based, without the need for instruments. It is adaptable to older grades if different songs are used, but I think video instruction is quite doable and I've had positive feedback from kids & parents. I also do some Conversational Solfege with older grades for the same reasons. Another thing that popped into my head this morning is something like Dalcroze or Bal-a-Vis-X type activities that use movement to teach rhythm but it's more than just body percussion. Are there individual movement activities that the Dance teachers are doing that can be incorporated into our classes since we can no longer do folk dancing and stuff? Last thing, if summer PD is an option, could we do several on the various programs (flipgrid, acapella, zoom, etc) that are available and what types of activities they would be best suited for? As a lower-tech person, I'm seeing and hearing a lot but it is so out of my wheelhouse... and intimidating to try to dive in and explore on my own.

There's so much to consider - especially since we don't know what next year will be like - but I love to think about these things just to have a bank of ideas for when the time comes to make a plan 🙂 I hope you are doing well and staying sane there at the district level. You are doing such an amazing job and I'm so happy that YOU are person in that position!

Stay healthy!

Figure 39 Teacher concerns April 26

Planning for the coming year required a major revolution in pedagogical methods and implementation. Finding new ways to engage and support students through technology as well as looking at all possible scenarios assisted in securing a successful first day back. Meeting with some teachers over the summer in ePLC's promoted

correspondence such as this, which offered many ideas to bring to administration and plan ahead for what scheduling issues we might face with the new school year.

School's out for Summer

Throughout the summer we began writing curriculum for the 2020-2021 school year with the assistance of many of our lead teachers. Writing and organizing these Curriculum Unit Plans (CUPs) for our district helped give me purpose during a summer that was wrought with what-ifs and how's. The CUPs were a way to align all arts classes across the district to the Florida standards in a way where students from any school should be learning the same concepts within the same time frame. What this document did not do was tell teachers how to teach, or what to teach when addressing the standards. The document provides examples for the many arts disciplines we have in our district but allows for space to grow and to be amended. While the document may support our teachers in their lesson planning and their instruction, it is also a measure of accountability for teachers and their administrators. The end of the 2019-2020 school year focused on reaching our students and staying afloat at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic; however, it was important that the 2020-2021 school year focus on bringing our students back safely and ensuring they are not missing out on any educational gains lost in the previous year.

The CUPs would also outline what music may look like whether they were face-to-face, hybrid, or online synchronous, with links to webpages outlining best practices which I and other music teachers vetted as well as links to better understand SEL competencies as they apply to music education and alignment to what our district calls Read, Write, Talk, and Solve (RWTS). The "Read" portion of our Learning Cycle Tool is

explained as "Student evidence of reading complex texts (content-specific, standards-based reading representing an appropriate level of challenge for students) is aligned to the learning target(s)." In a music class, this may be demonstrated when students are engaged in sight-reading or reading a difficult piece of music, as it demonstrates higher level cognition and it is content-specific. When looking for "Write" in the classroom, defined with such language as "Student writing, aligned to the learning target(s), is grounded in evidence from texts or shows student reasoning," our students may demonstrate this by composing or writing in listening journals that are guided by the instructor. The element of RWTS that is least seen in music classrooms is "Talk," defined as "Student evidence of talking is rich, varied, subject-based, and aligned to the learning target(s)" which could easily happen in a Project-based or Learner-Centered classroom. As the teacher stands on the podium, the likelihood of allowing students to participate in the educational discussion is slim, though many general music classrooms are showing an increase in my district of having students engage with each other on the topics presented. Lastly, "Solve," is often seen in music classrooms with "Student evidence of solving problems is aligned to the learning target(s)." By playing, singing, active listening, and writing, students are actively solving problems aligned to the curriculum and learning targets presented.

While the CUPs provided a skeleton for teaching and learning, there were also embedded safety guidelines for the arts during the pandemic as well as SEL competencies embedded within the curriculum. One of the major worries that the band teachers brought up was with PPE, specifically face masks and bell covers (figure 38). In a district that is primarily Title I, with free and reduced lunch at most schools,

purchasing separate masks for band students as well as the bell covers is a large expense. Our district supplied each student with 5 masks at the beginning of the school year, but many did not want to cut into those so many band directors purchased disposable masks themselves and also made their own bell covers with fabric. The beginning of the new year was upon us and there were still so many variables within single classrooms, programs, and the district that were unknown. While I was unsure of how our students would respond to the guidelines, I hoped our teachers would do their best to support the documents we had presented.

I looked everything over for Secondary Music and it looks good. My biggest concern and this going to be sticky...who is responsible for providing PPE for students and staff that are specific to woodwind/brass instruments and gloves for percussion? School or district? That needs to be answered quickly so that we can order appropriate materials for the start of school.

Figure 40 PPE concerns

Preparing for the new year, teacher trainings had begun with the idea of implementing Microsoft TEAMS as the platform to disseminate curriculum to students in both digital and face-to-face ways. The week before school begins was slated to have classroom days for teachers, where they could setup their classrooms and prepare for the school year. We would provide a Professional Development day for aligning our CUPs and preparing for the year by discipline. There were many doubts about the way the PD was being presented, as the original plan was face-to-face in small groups, and then it was moved to all digital. Teachers were also worried they would not have enough time to set their rooms up for spacing, nor would they have adequate cleaning in their

spaces. The pandemic had other ideas for the start of school however, and the school board made the decision to move the start date of our students back by one week (figure 39). This new start date provided teachers with two weeks of planning and would assist in the rollout of technology for students prior to their first day.

Good Morning Friends!

I'm sure you either watched the board meeting last night or have heard by now that the opening of school will be delayed two weeks. We don't know a lot as it was a surprise to all! Know this is fluid until the Assistant Sups have a chance to wrap their heads around the timeline. What we do kind of know...

- Teachers return on August 10.
- Discussion on what the two-week preplanning timeframe will look like will be discussed this morning with details to follow as soon as they are confirmed.
- The week of August 3 for resource teachers will be discussed this morning.
- COMPASS and the July 27 virtual training will be discussed this morning.
- Realigning and changing dates in CUPS will be discussed this morning, but the suggestion will be to provide just a one-page addendum of sorts to pace out the new calendar rather than go in and change every date.

I promise to keep you in the loop with updates as they flow in! Always call if you have questions, concerns, ideas...

Figure 41 School delayed email

Chapter 6:

Over the Hills and Far Away

By the end of the summer of 2020, many of our teachers had questions as to what school would look like in the fall and what would be expected of them (figure 41). I was charged with designing a Return to the Arts document for our district which would provide guidelines for our teachers to return safely to their classrooms and what it may look like as they begin the school year. Included in this document was information from a landmark study through the National Federation of state High School Associations (NFHS) out of the University of Colorado at Boulder (Spede & Weaver, 2020), which would determine the perceived risk level that exist on route to creating best practices for reducing infection risk from the spread of aerosol in band and chorus. In this study, aerosol spread was measured for wind instruments and vocalists, showing the effects of not only masking the musician, but specific instruments as well.

Good Morning!

I have a quick question about Band and Chorus. Are we good continuing to offer these courses, with COVID concerns. By concerns I mean students to blowing into an instrument and/or singing in an "enclosed" room? I believe that Dr. Pace shared that the district was looking into concerns about Chorus, and that we may have to have students wear masks while singing. We are still offering both, so I wanted to double check.

Figure 42 Email from principal July 21

With these data, I was able to work with colleagues around the state and provide my teachers with the best available information for safe practice and performance conditions. Upon sending this document to our teachers, we began receiving questions based on the "gaps" on these pages (figure 41). Though some of the questions contained comments that were from a place of grief and anger, the underlying issues remained regarding what was perceived as a double standard between sports and the arts. While marching band was being told they would not have the opportunity to perform at games, specifically halftime shows, football teams were practicing outdoors without masks. With the first round of data coming from the previously mentioned NFHS study, I was able to post an initial set of guidelines for Marching Band which presented

possibilities for participation mostly outdoors and with masks.

- Does "wearing masks at all times" apply to band? If so, why is removing a mask for eating allowed? At ▮▮▮▮▮, lunch is a longer period with MORE students than band rehearsal.
- Can you provide a recommendation for the cubic space needed per person? I get the 6 foot social distancing, but band room are different sizes and typically have higher ceilings. As a result, the dissipation rate is much faster - and potentially effects spacing.
- Are air purifiers readily available?
- Is it a best practice to have ALL students take their respective instruments home every night for cleaning instead of just storing them in the school lockers?
- Are crowds allowed at football games?
- Are Pep/Marching Bands allowed at football games?
- Practice rooms? Will we be supplied with wipes and sprays to disinfect these?
-
  How far apart can students play in orchestra with masks on?
-
  How far apart can students play in band with no masks (possible covid devices) but masks for double reeds...no
-
  How far apart can students sing in choir with masks on?
-
  (We need to watch numbers in the room because our room sizes differ.)
-
  Concerts?
-
  Field trips? (if sports can than we should be able to do s & e or all state if it happens)
-
  Ratio with instruments 1:1?

Figure 43 ePLC questions from teachers August 3

While I was actively working with our athletics department staff on designing a clear and unifying idea in our district of what was safe and acceptable, the state and local government had a different idea as to how sports were allowed to resume with precautionary measures in place, which did not, in my opinion, follow the guidelines set forth in any peer-reviewed study.

As teachers began to return to the classroom, a major paradigm shift in the way our educators had to teach began to appear, scheduling students who were returning face-to-face as well as students returning digitally proved to be difficult. Many of the

teachers who I serve found themselves teaching three ways, face-to-face, digital, and hybrid. Fortunately, those teachers having to teach hybrid were compensated, slightly, with CARES act money from the district, but the amount of time needed to plan for these three very different teaching models was not built into the schedule for many of the teachers and they began to immediately feel anxiety about the "new" school year.

Many of my teachers were worried due to the way elementary schools' specials courses (art, pe, music, dance, or drama) were placed in the schedule (figure 42) as digital classes. Although students were rostered to the specific teacher, that teacher may or may not ever see those students if their schedule was full with face-to-face instructional time. Elementary was specifically not allowed to teach hybrid courses. Those digital students could then have music class through video lessons created by a district resource specialist.

I know we've spoken in the past, but I want to reiterate my concerns with how the synchronous students are being planned. I have questions about the legality of students being on my classlists and not taught by me. I have issues with students being taught by someone else (the virtual lessons provided by district) and then my being held responsible for the grading. Grades should only be assigned to students on my classlists, students I have taught. The grades reflect my assessment of their progress based on what we have done. If I am not teaching, I can not assess. I do not understand how I could be held legally responsible for their progress, their safety, their education, if I am not the one who is teaching them.

Figure 44 Return to arts concerns August 3

For K-5 music students, I was asked to create these digital lessons, as the majority of students in the elementary schools were returning digitally and as I mentioned, some elementary music teachers did not have enough time in their schedules to teach those students. Some schools were building digital times into their schedules to allocate future face-to-face times when students return, but some schools

94

were not placing any time into teacher schedules for digital students other than planning

periods (figures 43, 44).

[REDACTED] and many schools teach a class and a half and double classes for each special area teacher. Not many classes have a one to one ratio of classroom teacher to special area teacher. If we move to the "special area going to the classroom with one class at a time" model there will need to be some significant changes.

1-The master schedules have no time between classes for a teacher walking across campus transition. This of course will have a domino affect on reading, math, and triple i minute requirements. This could be fixed if teacher planning minutes are reduced, but that then becomes a union issue.

2- We also don't want to assume we could teach virtual classes if we have less students on campus. If my calculations are correct based on last night's numbers, we would be able to modify the schedule to teach one special area in person class at a time, but the special area teachers would be teaching in person all day with a planning period only. There would not be any open periods for teaching digital classes. This could be solved if there were extra staff added to special area blocks at each site and a waiver in the PE minute requirement for every student.

I am sure there are more issues and possible solutions. I would just like us to take a close look at these items before the school year starts and not be surprised by unintended consequences. I am always ready to be part of the solution. Let me know if I can help in any way. A little work now can have a big pay off for the kids latter 😊

Keep us in the loop as you hear more about carts, Quaver ..... The more we know the more we can help teachers and students through this transition. We will make this all work and it will be Awesome!!! The kids need us to be !

Thank you so much for all you do!!!!!!!!!

Figure 45 Teacher ideas July 1

Hello,

I just read this email from Christopher Burns, the music resource specialist from the district. He says that online students are my responsibility, with similar guidelines/assistance as in March.

I wanted to know how this affects my class schedule, as I will be teaching online classes as far as I am aware.

Thanks!

Figure 46 Return to arts concerns Aug 10

Before the 2 weeks of planning for teachers, the superintendent sent an email

outlining her appreciation for our teachers and staff as well as the intent on harboring

change in the new year. Maybe not by name, but she understood the opportunities for "creative, flexible, and innovative" teaching and learning for the coming year as it coincides with Lewin's Change Theory with an unfreezing, change, and then refreeze that can only come about with a major social change such as the COVID-19 pandemic (figure 45). The district would also stay active and on the forefront of change as it related to research-based decisions for students in school and CDC guidelines. Having sent out both the Return to Arts documents and the Marching Band guidelines to teachers prior to the school year starting, our teachers were somewhat prepared for their first day pedagogically, but there were sure to be other issues such as technology, logistics, and scheduling that would provide us with complicated scenarios to work through.

Good morning and welcome back to all of our educators and staff!

With all of the uncertainty that 2020 has brought us, I know for certain that this upcoming academic year will be unlike any we've experienced before. The spring of 2020 was difficult for everyone, particularly because we were abruptly thrust into a new way of living and learning. Despite the challenges, I am so very proud that our educators and employees rose up and delivered for our students so that learning never stopped.

Although things in the Osceola School District continue to look different than they have in the past at the start of school, we have had the benefit of more planning time and experience as we prepare for the reopening of our schools in a few short weeks. I know many of you likely have a long list of questions, and I am hopeful that the two weeks of pre-planning will allow us all to be ready and set to Start SMART when our children arrive.

Your help is needed as we dig down into the details of our established plans for what, specifically, digital and in-person education will look like this year; on how we strengthen and refine our shared culture of hygiene and safety for the health of our employees and students; as well as how we handle the new logistics for transportation, meals, and more.

This also is an opportunity for all of us to be creative, flexible, and innovative. I am confident that we will come out the other side of this experience stronger and with best practices around technology, learning, and safety for students and staff that will change the look of education forever. And our district will be better for it.

We will continue to analyze the latest research on all things COVID very carefully, and I recognize the fears and concerns many of you are experiencing about coming back to school and work. We remain in regular communication with local medical professionals and our local Department of Health to ensure we have the latest local data and research on which to base our decisions. We remain committed to doing everything we can to protect the safety of all of our staff members and students, and we appreciate your dedication and service.

Figure 47 Email from superintendent August 10

Still, the main focus of my teachers was their own health and safety as well as the safety of their students. Although the district was implementing best practices based on CDC guidelines, there were teachers who were just not comfortable returning to schools that they did not feel were safe. Certain areas of my county are more likely to wear masks at all times, and follow the set guidelines while other areas may not be as strict. Teachers in the less strict areas of the county were more likely to request certain affordances to ensure their own safety, while others attempted to make the best of a situation by offering alternatives to art-on-a-cart (figure 46).

Listen, I am not sharing all this because I just want to be comfortable and not have to deal with change. Many things I will HAVE to change about how I teach. This is a pandemic. This isn't comfortable, but I can adapt. This has effected us all in many ways. Personally, it has wrecked havoc on my mental and physical health. I suffer from depression, chronic headaches and migraines, and now, apparently, panic attacks and seizures--a new fun surprise addition that sent me to the hospital in May.

In addition, my cousin passed away just two weeks ago from COVID-19. So, I understand the severity and the need for precaution, especially with my current conditions. Which is why, on Monday, I suffered another panic attack just returning to work. After I left the great hall (which was packed with people) to grab my lunch, I had to escape to my room, take off my mask and start breathing exercises. It's honestly embarrassing to admit (and I know it shouldn't be) but I'm doing my best here to adjust, and I want you all to know where I am coming from.

I am thinking of our students health, and I'm also thinking of my own health. I do not want to go into every single elementary classroom, where the children have sat in there for HOURS with stifled air and be breathing that in myself. I don't think I should have to when my classroom is adequately ventilated. It doesn't make me feel safe. In my classroom, I know I can control how safe and clean I keep it. That gives me peace of mind I don't have in someone else's classroom. Some hours, there will be zero students due to the digital learning option, giving them room even MORE time to adjust. Teaching music in my classroom is what I wholeheartedly believe is the SAFEST option, in addition, it is the only option that allows adequate space needed to teach music to the level and quality that I am being asked to. In addition, we have often used the grassy area directly outside the classroom (in front of the media center) for activities in the past. It is right there, close to the classroom, and will definitely be something I use frequently.

Thank you for reading and considering my thoughts.

Figure 48 Teacher concerns August 14

When secondary teachers received their rosters and schedules before school began, there were many discrepancies with what teachers expected to see and what they were given. One school created an environment in which the choral and band directors felt their voices and subjects were not considered important by the administration. Seniors were told they would not have the opportunity to participate in their chosen electives if they were not needed for graduation (figure 47). Face-to-face students who may not have an elective chosen or have specific periods open were placed into band or chorus without their consent and both classes became "dumping

98

grounds" while simultaneously removing students with preference for participating in those courses. Digital students were also placed into courses without meeting pre-requisites or requesting band or chorus. One roster observed included students in Band 1 through Band 6 as well as Eurythmics 1 through 4 and Orchestra 1 through 6. This issue resulted in many higher-level students feeling frustrated at the inability of others in their class to perform at the same level. One specific instance included a mute student with autism placed in a digital choir course with level 3, 4, and 5 students.

I'm getting tons of texts from students/parents saying the school is telling seniors that they are only being scheduled into core classes. Chorus isn't on their schedules and will only be given if there is room. Meanwhile I'm having random kids dumped to fill my classes and my advanced kids are being shafted.

And the school sent this

Class Of 2021: Good afternoon, Seniors: Due to concerns relating to COVID 19, seniors will be scheduled only into the classes needed for graduation. Any requests for additional classes should be directed to your counselor and will be filled based upon availability.

Figure 49 Message from teacher Aug 17

Through the onslaught of negativity, a few teachers began to find the positives in their situations. One of my teacher leaders sent this email changing her perspective on the situation (figure 48). It was my intent to start the year on a positive note and an email like this was helpful in changing my personal outlook towards finding the good in everything we were planning for our teachers and students.

> Okay, I have sounded like a negative Nelly recently. Yikes! I have been so blessed. Every where I turn the answer has been yes.
>
> The custodian has gone another school to get me buckets for drumming.
> The custodian has installed a hand sanitizer station in front of my room.
> My media specialist is giving me a bunch of table cloths to make scarves.
> My media specialist took the time and set aside a bunch of books that she thought I might like and left them on my desk.
> I was able to use box top money to get a class set of Kala Waterman Ukes.
> The art teacher keeps helping with ideas and supplies.
> My principal has purchased 5 more Ukes to make sure I have enough.
> My administration is always going out of their way to make sure we are okay and have what we need.
> You have supplied us with the lesson plans I need to make digital learning possible.
> You are always available to answer my questions!
> My PE coaches have created our Microsoft Teams for all of us.
> We have an amazing group of music teachers that always help and support each other.
>
>
> WOW!! I am so blessed! It is going to be a great year no matter what!!
>
> Thank you for all you do!

Figure 50 Positive email from teacher Aug 17

The first two weeks of the school year were spent providing support for the teachers (figure 49) while they worked in their classrooms and received site-based professional development along with discipline-specific professional development on the CUPs and Return to Arts Guidelines. We had a fair amount of new teachers as well as returning teachers stressed out about restrictions and guidelines. All of the elementary music teachers were on a cart to begin the year, and we were lucky enough to have a few meetings on what best practices and supplies would look like when moving from room to room. Many teachers began making music kits for students including egg shakers, rhythm sticks, and other small instruments for individual use. At the secondary

level, a few schools began designing masks specific to their school and disciplines to provide a bonding experience for their students.
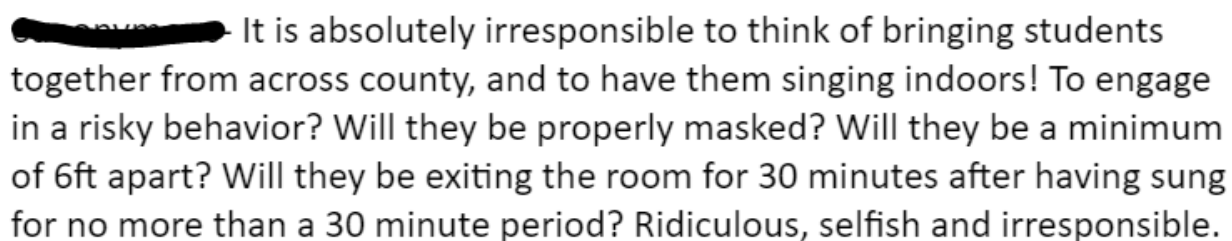
Good Afternoon!

Chris and I wanted to let you all know that we are here for you next week (both in spirit and physically). We have set up an open channel on the SDOC Arts TEAMS general channel and will be available for you Monday through Friday form 7:30 am until 3:30 pm. Please feel free to stop in for support, to get answers to questions, or even just to say hello. The link is below for your quick access - but again, this is in SDOC Arts / General Channel all day, every day next week.

Figure 51 Email from colleague August 21

We began walking classrooms again in early September and immediately noticed a difference not only in the teachers, but especially in the students. As we walked the halls of schools, many of which had a student population at less than half capacity were VERY quiet. They walked with their heads down, socially distanced from their peers, but in large herds similar to cattle or sheep following the arrows on the floor and heading to their next classes. I have never heard such quiet schools, though transitions had music playing over the speakers, there was no chatter among students, no instruments being played in the band or orchestra rooms, and no singing from the chorus rooms. Although we laid out plans to continue music-making, many schools were still very wary of having students participate in band, chorus, or orchestra. One principal I spoke with when walking classrooms explained, "I'm not really worried yet about curriculum, I'm not worried that my teachers are teaching every second of every day, I just want to make sure they feel safe. I want to make sure everyone is okay." As we continued walking other school sites, we saw the same pattern of quiet, obedient students with scared, distant teachers. What we were witnessing firsthand was the forced reinstatement of a

population not ready to be in the classroom. While some students needed the social interaction (some teachers as well), many felt uncomfortable being in a classroom with students who may or may not be following guidelines or want to comply with the district mask mandate.

In the first weeks of the school year, the elementary teachers had to make a decision on All County Choir, a yearly event to gather over 200 4th and 5th grade students together to sing, usually around February. To allow teachers a safe voice, they were asked to anonymously vote and leave comments on their choice to participate in or hold an All County Chorus for the elementary students in the 2020-2021 school year. Some teachers suggested a smaller Orff/Instrumental group while others were ok with moving forward provided numbers were low and students were over 6 feet apart. Some teachers were adamant (figure 50) about not holding an event at all as many schools were not permitted to sing in their classrooms to begin with and there were still worries over following CDC guidelines and suggested performance guidelines.

It is absolutely irresponsible to think of bringing students together from across county, and to have them singing indoors! To engage in a risky behavior? Will they be properly masked? Will they be a minimum of 6ft apart? Will they be exiting the room for 30 minutes after having sung for no more than a 30 minute period? Ridiculous, selfish and irresponsible.

Figure 52 Response to All County Chorus

The secondary band, chorus, and orchestras were struggling with what to do for their students as well. There was no guarantee that students would all be face-to-face by the second semester (they were not), and no assurance that performances would be

permitted by the school district (they were, but with limited capacity). Eventually, band decided not to hold an All County event, but chorus and orchestra both began to move forward. Chorus specifically decided not to have a face-to-face event, but held a conference for students in which many vocal pedagogues joined in a digital platform to speak on their specific situations and what the possibilities after high school are for those who want to pursue any music participation (majoring in or not) in the future. Orchestra decided that their numbers were low enough to participate in an event that is hybrid in the sense that all students would perform together, but a video would be made to share with anyone who may have wanted to attend in person.

As the school year progressed, we began to see more music classrooms starting to participate in music making. One issue we noticed in many of our band classrooms was inconsistencies in mask wearing and bell covers. When I would question the band director or principal on whether or not they read the guidelines, more often than not they looked at me with a confused look, questioning what document I was talking about. Towards the end of September, we were able to push out a 1 page document for Arts Educators outlining the most important points in the previously given Return to Arts document and included updates from the CDC and National studies. This document (figure 51) provided both administrators and directors a clear, one-page explanation of expectations and guidelines for both teachers and students. Unfortunately, as we continued to walk classrooms, a few outliers conveniently forgot their masks or to put bell covers on. To mitigate the spread, we encouraged our teachers to be consistent, the students would follow the lead of the teachers and if the teachers decided to be relaxed with the guidelines, so would the students.

BEST PRACTICES FOR THE ARTS

Masks in music:

Masking – Fit Matters
- Wash your hands before putting on your mask
- Place it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily
- Wear a mask correctly for maximum protection
- Woodwinds and Brass should use a mask while playing which includes a small straight slit in a surgical style mask
- Do not use the woodwind/brass mask outside of rehearsal

Figure 53 Best practices document

In a normal school year, new teachers would be stressed about many facets of the position such as grading, behavior, lesson planning, and technological issues. Aside from behavior, which I explained a bit earlier about the students remaining quiet and separate, these problems were exacerbated. One such teacher was worried about or grading system (figure 52) and making sure their grades were placed in time, there were so many stressors from many different angles, this task seemed near impossible for them. Other teachers stressed about the amount of time they were supposed to sing in their classrooms. The guidelines suggested no more than 30 minutes of singing, and then allowing the room to cycle the air twice before entering again. The further into the school year we went, the more students returned and the larger the classes were getting. Increasingly, the elective classes were becoming dumping grounds for students who were returning from digital learning (figure 53).

Figure 54 New teacher worries with grading

Good morning!

I have a question for you - my classes are growing in size, and one class is now too big for 4-feet distancing. My AP explained that there are no other options, students are choosing to come back to school and they have to fit into classes. I know this is not the fault of my administrators.

With growing class sizes it's becoming increasingly unsafe to sing. As you both know, I'm doing my best to create projects for my students that teach the standards and goals of Chorus class per the state guidelines. This week we did begin singing at a soft volume per the recommendations of multiple studies. Students must have a mask on and sing at a speaking volume. Is the district no longer abiding by the 4-feet policy? Will classes just continue to grow until we're back to regular capacity? I need to have an idea of how big classes will get so I can plan activities accordingly.

Another concern is that all students are wearing masks, but some masks may be too big or not fit correctly. This is kind of a weird middle-ground without much guidance: students are wearing masks correctly but they aren't safe to sing with. It seems unfair to write a student up for a mask their parent made that doesn't fit quite right... but it's also unsafe to allow that student to sing in the classroom. I feel that we need some guidance on this so everyone is on the same page - having all the schools doing their own thing with music right now is becoming difficult, fielding questions like "my friend at so-and-so school is singing all class, why can't we?" I'm feeling a lack of support in this regard. What are your thoughts about it all?

Figure 55 Teacher concerns September 20

Many decisions for the music rooms would also come from the school administrator. If the administrator was not comfortable with singing indoors, we would point to the guidelines and let them decide what was best for their school. Having older schools with poor air circulation created difficulties with music classes as well, increasing the amount of time needed between playing and singing, whereas the new schools had a refresh rate of roughly 20 minutes. Unfortunately, not all teachers or

administrators read correspondence in regard to our COVID-19 guidelines and I had to field many individual questions (figure 54). Some newer teachers, overloaded with various work issues did not take the time to participate in ePLCs and did not respond to emails offering help. One such instance found a teacher missing out on important information and their administrator sought clarity

> Good morning,
>
> There are three items ███████ and I need help/clarification on. These items came up as we were going over his Growth Plan and getting ready to schedule his first observation:
>
> 1.) Are there any already-made scales available to use for music standards? Per "Identifying Critical Content" ███████ should be utilizing learning targets and scales with his students. He states that he has no idea about these and hasn't heard of any that have been created for music teachers.
>
> 2.) ███████ said that he has heard nothing about the pre/post tests for 5th grade music. I have not heard that this has gone away. What is this year's procedure for music pre/post tests?
>
> 3.) ███████ also said that he has heard nothing further about procedures for singing. When is this information going to be available for music teachers?
>
> Thank you for your time and have a great weekend.

Figure 56 Administrator questions October 3

An unfortunate consequence of COVID-19 for some of the teachers in my district was an even more intense feeling of isolation. This self-inflicted stressor came from the over-whelming idea that there was too much to do and they would forget about resources at both the district level and with their colleagues around the county. I found this specifically true with newer teachers who had not yet built relationships with other music teachers. Most of these teachers were elementary music teachers, who unlike at

the secondary level where there may be both a chorus and band director, were alone in their music education workplace endeavors.

In early October I was able to draft a document with updated Marching Band information (figure 55), opening the opportunity for students to perform in full at football games. While I assumed this would make the band directors happy, I believe the time spent without performing caused a rift in the group with some not having participated in any marching activities and some having created percussion ensembles in lieu of marching band. A few of the schools formed pep or stands bands to participate at games, but it was suggested for groups to set up at the end zone to minimize people in the stands and allow for proper spacing. Responses from the band directors varied (figures56, 57), some negative responses focused on the inability to put a working band together or a group of quality, while others were worried about the optics of changing the rules mid-season, and some believed they were too far in the season to start at this point.

Good afternoon friends,
I have attached an updated document for Marching Band (and band in general) for your perusal. Your administrators will be receiving this same information from Dr. Evens.
A few key highlights to be aware of:

1. Bands are approved to perform at home football games starting this week, with the understanding that they will adhere to the safety and social distancing requirements identified on the flyer.
2. Bands are **NOT** required to perform.
3. Finally, directors need to coordinate with their AD if they want to proceed with performing for Pre-game or Half-time.

Please reach out with any questions you may have.
Thank you,

Figure 57 Return to marching October 7

I see this as a problem. My kids have not rehearsed as a "marching band". We've only done percussion. I feel it is extremely careless to now say, "Bands can play, YAY!". Admin (and crowds) will now expect to have the same quality bands at the games as we all had last year. It's been a battle to get my admin to realize my best kids are homeschooling and that less than 1/3 of kids signed up last Spring are F2F. This new clarification doesn't help. I hate changing the rules once something has started. It makes us (directors) look incompetent or "the bad guy" for not following along what other schools in the District are doing. It's been a long week, my apologies if I'm coming off rude. I don't intend it. I am just playing out the inevitable Principal/AD meeting in my head.

Figure 58 Band director concerns October 8

I would like to make it clear that I have always been following district protocol regarding this. Just like many of you all, I chose not to field a traditional show when they made the announcement about the cancellation of marching MPA. I then went to planning for a "park and play stand tunes" show. When the district made the announcement about the cancellation of Marching Band, I had a group of VERY angry parents that felt this was unfair, and at first, starting attacking me and going behind my back to my principal. When they found out this was out of my control, that's when they started the Facebook hashtags and what not. At no point was I still planning to do a traditional show after the July 8th email from FBA. I was encouraged by my admin to record our stand tunes so they can play them at the games for the cheerleaders to dance to, and this was the plan until now.

Figure 59 Band director issues with parents October 8

While I did not fault my band directors for their concerns, I was disappointed in the lack of enthusiasm for playing music, whether at a stand-still or moving. Band directors also had to look out for themselves, as their band parents had a voice in the matter as well. Schools with long standing traditions of excellence and large bands were receiving communication from parents about their frustrations with the football teams being on the field with no masks and breathing face-to-face while the band was not allowed to play with/without masks.

While high schools were dealing with marching band issues, elementary schools were facing a dilemma with an annual event for Fifth-Graders and the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra. Traditionally, all Fifth-Grade students in Osceola County attend

a concert by the Orlando Philharmonic titled the "Young People's Concert" in which they learn about the instruments of the orchestra through song and story. This year, face-to-face concerts were not an option, and as a committee with other district leaders and members of the Orlando Philharmonic team, we made the decision to go virtual with the concert (figure 58). This was a huge and costly undertaking, but something we felt necessary in the current climate. The event would take place during the third week of November and students would have the option to attend at home or in their schools (some schools went with small assemblies while others showed the video in their individual classrooms), and we encouraged the music teachers to treat this as a field trip and have the students dress up for the event.

(Wednesday, October 28, Orlando, FL) – The Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra is pleased to bring the annual **Young People's Concert** virtually into homes and schools this November. Conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, including limited capacity on school buses and the closure of venues, made this the right decision for the times. Throughout the 28-year history of the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, the annual presentation of the Young People's Concert has been a highlight for students and teachers alike. 2020 marks the first virtual presentation of the concert that ordinarily reaches 60,000 Central Florida grades 3–5 students in Bob Carr Theater, Osceola County School of the Arts Theatre, and Peabody Auditorium, Daytona Beach.

Figure 60 Press release for YPC October 28

One of the high school chorus and theater programs was invited to participate in an event at a local theater with other high schools in the surrounding areas (figure 59). This event was the first "performance" for any of our schools other than at a football game, and both the teachers and students were excited to finally get a chance to perform. The event was a concert of the musical "Hunchback of Notre Dame" and was

socially distanced with masks in the large auditorium. It was the catalyst for more events to come shortly after, including school performances and outside events.

Good Morning!

I wanted to share a short preview of what ████████, myself, and 30 of our ████ students are working on at the Dr. Phillips Center.

Over the past 3 nights students were working in the production at Dr. Phillips, but still had time to study, work on homework and even tutor their peers.

We are so fortunate to have this opportunity for our kids to perform and create beautiful music in such challenging times as this. Because of this 4 students received full scholarships to perform in their December production of Ragtime!

Figure 61 Student performance October 29

Another event taking place that brought normalcy to the classroom was in theater festivals, what was canceled the year before. Our students were selected to perform at the state festival (figure 60). The perseverance of teachers to continue quality and standards-based pedagogy during the pandemic was proving fruitful. Students were once again performing, the overall morale of teachers was increasing, and classroom visits were showing more students and teachers following CDC guidelines with face masks and bell covers.

In the midst of everything, we wanted to share some good news from the Theatre department – we just completed our (digital) Regional Festival where several students entered their digital performances to be assessed. Normally, only superior rankings qualify to move on to the State level, but this year, judging was especially critical and so the State Director decided to invite Excellent ranked performances to compete at State as well (which is unprecedented). Even, with all the challenges facing them, our students SHINED and EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM qualifies to compete at the State level this year for theatre performance assessment. A big shout out thank you to ▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮▮for her expertise and support of the musical pieces – the students who worked with her received glowing comments on their musicality! **PLEASE CONGRATULATE THE FOLLOWING STUDENTS ON THEIR AMAZING ACCOMPLISHMENTS!!!**

Figure 62 Students selected for competition November 18

The Orlando Philharmonic Young People's Concerts were happening in the elementary schools and were proving successful as well. As I attended a few of the virtual showings, students were engaged and seemed to enjoy the presentation. With the fall break (week of Thanksgiving) approaching, I was looking forward to my first day off since the pandemic started. I longed to spend the time with my family, however, that excitement was short lived as I began feeling ill. I had a slight tickle in my throat and a runny nose, but no fever (figure 61). Upon contacting my administration, I was told to get a COVID-19 test as soon as possible. Less than 24 hours after exhibiting symptoms, I tested positive for COVID-19 (figure 62). At the time, I was music-directing a local show and one of the cast members came into rehearsals with no symptoms. Seven other individuals tested positive that week in the cast and the show was shut down until further notice

In case you didn't see it. Still no fever, a little soreness, a little nausea. Looking for a rapid test somewhere close by.

Figure 63 Message to administrators November 20

Saturday, Nov 21 • 10:36 AM

I found a place doing rapid tests. It came back positive. I am so sorry I was in the office

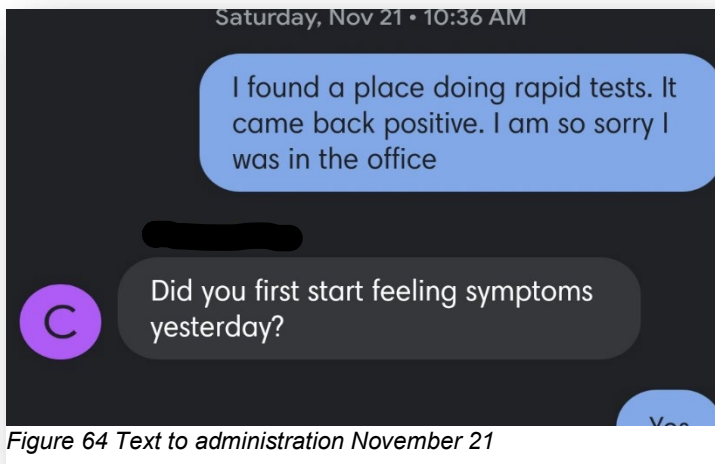C   Did you first start feeling symptoms yesterday?

Figure 64 Text to administration November 21

Along with having to quarantine myself, I had to build a timeline of events in the 48-hours prior to symptoms (figure 63). I had been in contact with two other music teachers, and even though masks were worn the whole time, they had to be contacted and told to keep a close eye on whether they displayed symptoms or not. I immediately locked myself in my room, my wife and three children slept downstairs for the remainder of the break, and I began to count the days until my quarantine would end.
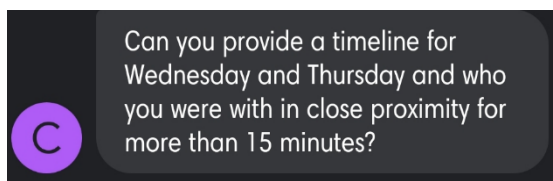
C   Can you provide a timeline for Wednesday and Thursday and who you were with in close proximity for more than 15 minutes?

Figure 65 Timeline for contact tracing November 21

112

For the first few days, I was not exhibiting any severe symptoms, I still had no fever, only an inconvenient cough, and no pain or headache. Self-pity set in when I had to miss two money-making opportunities to perform with a colleague the first weekend, one of which was a very lucrative offer. On Monday morning, three days after the onset of symptoms, I began to feel the effects of COVID. My lower extremities were sore. Any movement, large or small, produced pain that I can only relate to the impact of a hammer striking an anvil. My hair hurt, my cough was intense and generated more pain in my body causing me to grimace, which instilled more pain. My fever had spiked to 101.4 and body shakes from my chills increased the pain. Along with the physical pain produced by the virus, I was unable to see my wife and children, the youngest of which was 2 months old. The original feeling of pity over missing opportunities to play became pity from the emotional distress and physical pain.

In order to eat, my wife would bring food to the outside of my bedroom door and then quickly walk away. Unfortunately, my family too had to quarantine as I could have exposed them to the COVID-19 virus prior to my quarantine. They too were stuck in the house but were able to take walks and play outside in our yard at least. I was then upset, I questioned my decisions as a father and husband to put myself in a situation that allowed for the transmission of the virus to potentially infect my family. I did everything I was supposed to do, I stayed six-feet away from people, wore my mask, did not sing indoors for more than 30 minutes, and generally did not go anywhere other than work. My parents had just moved to the area a month prior and we had planned to celebrate Thanksgiving dinner together outdoors, which we had to cancel. I became so overwhelmed with grief and the feeling of loss that I broke down in bed a few times from
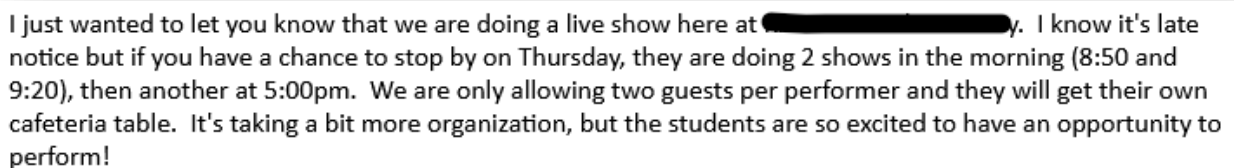
the stress I had caused my family. I was worried I had given them the virus, and I was worried I had given the few colleagues I had been in contact with the virus. I was worried that I had made my wife's life more stressful, having to take care of three young children AND a sick husband.

Around day 7, I began to feel better, physically, and decided that I needed to take a walk outside. My family had not yet shown any signs of COVID-19 and would take "nap rides" in the middle of the day, allowing for me to leave the room and head outside for much needed sunlight and movement. As I began to walk the area by my house (living at the end of a street, there are no neighbors to the south of me and I can walk without being in contact with anyone for hours), I began to feel a sense of release and relaxation. Walking by myself, with the warm sunlight shining upon my cheeks, I was able to reflect on the week and the events that led to what I was living through. I began thinking of how I would be received in my office and at the schools that I visit as well as the possibility of being ostracized by those near me because I had the "virus" that those in my circle were trying so hard not to get. My attention then moved to those who still believed the virus was a hoax and a plot for government overreach. The gamut of emotions ran deep that entire week, whether from the virus, the lack of sleep, or the amount of time I had to reflect.

I sent my son to school the day I returned to work, I had no symptoms or fever for over 48 hours and he had no symptoms, so I believed the timeline for his return was the same as mine. I was wrong, he had to quarantine for 14 days from my positive test and not the 10 days from symptoms like I had to. The looks I received when I picked him up from school were intense and I felt horrible. I was that dad who sent his kid to school

when they were supposed to be quarantined, with everything the district was telling parents and teachers, I broke the rules. The embarrassment was real and ran deep, it was a harrowing experience that left me feeling as if I had lost credibility with the administrators at his school and those at my office.

When I returned to work, there were no glaring looks, nobody was excluding me, and in fact, everyone was making sure I was feeling well and asked how they could help. The support system I had was incredible and allowed me to continue work without worrying about personal issues and grief. I was fortunate to work in this environment, but not everyone is as fortunate. Most of my teachers do not have a support system such as this and would feel left out as they returned. Normalcy would resume, but the feeling takes time to dissipate. Despite the rough Thanksgiving break, the few weeks left before the holiday break were joyous in that we were able to see performance groups preparing for their winter concerts. A few of our schools were able to set up socially distanced and safe concerts at their schools (figure 64).

I just wanted to let you know that we are doing a live show here at ⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛y. I know it's late notice but if you have a chance to stop by on Thursday, they are doing 2 shows in the morning (8:50 and 9:20), then another at 5:00pm. We are only allowing two guests per performer and they will get their own cafeteria table. It's taking a bit more organization, but the students are so excited to have an opportunity to perform!

Figure 66 Holiday performances email December 15

Amid the live and virtual concerts, I received an email from the general manager at the Osceola County Fair, one of the leading fairs in the state of Florida, expressing interest in performances. He had asked for a Battle of the Bands and a Battle of the Voices (figure 65). This event was a way for our students to perform on stage, live, and receive prizes. While I don't wholly agree with competitions and their purpose, this event

was a great way to get our students up on stage with a professional audio/visual company at one of the most well attended events in Central Florida (close to 80,000 in a non-COVID year). Having the prize money as a carrot was a great way to get our directors excited again and get them to put their best groups forward.

Here's how it would work. They want 8 or so "bands" (think jazz bands or small groups) The tent they are performing in is socially distanced and the stage is far from the audience. There are 30 minute time slots, but your performance can be as little as 15 minutes. They will provide power and microphones.

There will be 3 or so judges that will announce a 1st ($1500), 2nd ($1000), and 3rd ($500) place winner to be used as you like for your program. Each participant will receive a shirt, and 3 total tickets to the fair (good for 2 days I believe).
The bands will participate on February 13th or 14th

Figure 67 Battle of the voices email December 15

A few groups had to drop out of the competition as COVID-19 made rehearsals difficult with quarantines and teachers still unsure how to rehearse (or unable to rehearse) because half of their students were still digital. The event took place during the second weekend and third weekend of February, and the students were excited and nervous for the performances. The Battle of the Bands was a two-day event and most groups were Jazz Bands while one act was a Jazz Percussion Ensemble, who happened to take home the winning prize. The following weekend was a Battle of the Voices, with the winning group coming from the same school as the winning group from the previous weekend. I truly believe this school was most successful due to their teachers' approach to the pandemic and their pedagogical methods. When walking the classrooms of these two teachers, they were always making music, writing about music, talking about music, or listening to music, there was never any downtime or self-pity about their programs being smaller due to the pandemic or worry about performing with

116

masks. They made sure their students felt/feel safe in their classrooms, and work more on the whole child than on the notes on a page. This is not to say other teachers do not focus on the students and their well-being, but walking through classrooms, I notice which rooms feel more like a home and which feel like a classroom.

While normalcy was not set to return in the foreseeable future, performances and participation were starting to return in most programs. There were still a few teachers and administrators hesitant about returning to the level set from district and CDC guidelines, and I believe this choice was in the best interest of their students at their school. To assist our teachers in learning more about the future of music education and best practices, I was able to procure Title IV funding (grant funding from the federal government to supplement student and teacher education) and register every teacher in my district for the National Association for Music Education Conference in February of 2021, and the opportunity to earn 16 points towards their recertification (figure 66). Many teachers in my district speak on the joy they feel when attending conferences and speaking with like-minded groups, and while this is a digital conference, I felt it important that cost was not a prohibitive factor in participation. The future goal is to get our state conference, FMEA paid for so every music teacher in the district may attend in person, without the worry of the lofty registration price.

> You should have received an email from NAfME in the past week or so giving you access to the National Conference starting tomorrow. If you haven't, please let me know! If you can attend live, GREAT! We have spoken to most of your admin about this and their ability to find coverage for you for at least half of a day. If they can't find you coverage (subs are hard to find!) ALL sessions are being recorded and will be archived until June 1st. Please make it a point to attend at least one session, I worked extremely hard to get funding for this from Title grants and although I wanted to pay for FMEA for everyone, we received the funding later than expected. I will try to get everyone's FMEA conference dues paid for next year, but I don't have a leg to stand on if you don't attend this one at least a bit.
> Thank you for all you do and I hope to see you tomorrow, Friday, and Saturday!!!!

Figure 68 Email for NAfME participation February 24

Though the school year is not complete, the transformation from March 13, 2020 into what has become the new school year has been, to quote a recent politician, huge. The drive and determination of my teachers has been incredible during this entire pandemic. From early mornings to late nights and working under extreme conditions, family and friends passing, and students genuinely fearful for their lives, nothing could have prepared any teacher for the year that we have had. I am thankful that many of my teachers chose to work together and step up when they could for others. Moving to online, then hybrid, many teachers found their strengths and weaknesses in technology, as well as their willingness to "step off of the podium" and let the students take ownership over their learning.

Chapter 7:

When the Levee Breaks

Implications for music administrators and educators

Where do we go from here? As I write, nearly a year has passed since the March 13th email announcing the closure of schools that would eventually lead to a complete change in both my pedagogy and lifestyle. This dissertation is a product of that 1-year anniversary. While the pandemic has not yet ended, there must be a stopping point. Personally, I have gained a child, gained family members, lost multiple friends, lost work, lost disposable income, and all within 12 months. I have seen change in the way my teachers reach out for help, and I have seen change in the way I reach out for help. I have had to talk teachers off the ledge when both life and work became so heavy and burdensome, they are ready to quit, and had to say goodbye to teachers who have decided on early retirement. I have welcomed new teachers, and those new to teaching who never planned on a pandemic being their first experience as an educator. Throughout this entire year there has been no constant other than the love for teaching children. Every day that I work, I make an attempt to help at least one teacher reach at least one student that they were not able to reach before. By helping them find a love for music, I help instill in others an appreciation for each other in and out of the arts.

One of the biggest gains professionally this year has been the push for SEL not only in the classroom, but for our teachers as well. Having happier hours, ePLC's, and just taking the time to speak with them on a personal level has helped me to make it

through the year, and many teachers have expressed their appreciation for the personal level of care that I put into the position I hold. The mentors and leaders that I remember most are those who took the time to get to know me and would listen to me, even if I was just venting and did not need a response. I have had the opportunity to implement an SEL in Music Education book study that would commence on June 4, 2021 with the objective of embedding SEL competencies into the Curriculum Unit Plans we are currently using in the district. The goal is to not only teach with SEL competencies, but to work with them to ensure that our teachers are heard and feel supported.

Using COVID-19 as an unfreezing moment

At the beginning of this document, I stated a need for change, using Lewin's Change Theory as a framework for the "unfreeze, change, refreeze" method, and I seek to set forth a framework based on my experience as a district resource for music educators during the COVID-19 pandemic. What I have found is the need for many teachers to "unfreeze" their traditional pedagogical methods and begin a change into more 21st century learning. I don't mean to state that there needs to be use of technology in every lesson, nor does the teacher necessarily need to allow for an autonomous classroom without fundamental instruction, but the previous approach to band, chorus, and orchestra may not come to fruition again over the next few years. Seeing the teachers in my district attempt to hold on to the "old ways" of teaching and watch their programs declining in both numbers and quality is torturous, and to have these same teachers then place blame on others for their program failing is worse still. Many teachers have come to the realization that with new students and new ways to participate in music, a new approach is necessary.

120

There has been a need for change long before the COVID-19 pandemic, Williams (2011) states "As a profession, should our goal be to perpetuate the type of musical experience we enjoyed as students, or should we adapt as necessary to reach new generations of students with musical experiences that might be more meaningful and relevant to them?" There is no better time to make a change than when a catalyst uprooting the entire educational system allows for one. With the COVID-19 pandemic, education as we know it has changed for future generations. So should music education change—in presentation, in scope and in content. Unfreezing comes from a push against the status-quo, and that push is removing face-to-face education for part of a school year as well as limiting the number of students in a classroom. This novel approach to education, while it does not work well in general classrooms, ruins music programs. To unfreeze a traditional or comfortable way of teaching does not necessarily change the entire model but allows for the model to adapt to more differentiation and varying situations. Consider this unfreeze, change, and refreeze as a document shared with students. This document is currently locked and does not allow for any changes to be made, but then the teacher notices issues within the document and would like the students to implement changes. That teacher must unlock (unfreeze) that document to make those changes. Once the desired outcome is achieved, the teacher may then lock the assignment once again (refreeze) to be presented in its newer form.

Though we are (hopefully) nearing the end of the pandemic and schools look to be going back face-to-face in the new year, with masks, there is still time to unfreeze those methods that are locked into the traditional teaching methods that should have been retired long ago. Adjusting the teacher-centered model of music education takes

time and effort on the part of the teacher and the students. Students are traditionally taught to listen, take notes, and not to talk, while sitting in cemetery rows and all facing the teacher, who sits (or stands) at the front of the class lecturing from a book. Warm the students up to the idea that they can share information as well, allow students to work in groups to solve a problem, or have students create their own performances and present them alongside the pre-determined music. Making this change occur slowly supports students and teachers to better adapt and not have any form of whiplash over a new approach to teaching music.

Teachers may find, at first, that the onus of organized chaos falls heavily upon their shoulders when allowing for students to take charge of their own education. The amount of time to prepare for student-centered learning and project-based learning far outweighs the teacher-centered music room we normally see. Whereas the director must understand the score and then bestow the information unto students, in the SCL classroom students must understand the score just as well if they are to make decisions on how to perform the music. Without the proper foundation, projects may not be successful. Similarly, students cannot be expected to write a song if they do not understand form, chord structure, and instrumentation. This gap in student knowledge is discussed by De Graaf and Kolmos (2003), when they explicate the importance of filling these "subject area gaps" in order to succeed in a PBL classroom.

There is no need to completely throw away traditional approaches. Students will need guidance and leadership to better understand their craft. I would not suggest for any band director to start beginning band by handing out instruments and having discussions on how to play without first teaching the basic techniques of each

122

instrument and how to create sounds—the "Think System" only works in the Music Man (1958). The onus of starting students is on the teacher, but once the students are in motion, the teacher should support their learning, providing assistance and supervision along the way. It is important to note that Project-Based Learning and Student-Centered Learning are not binary, in other words it is not "one or the other" within the classroom. These two approaches do not work without the aforementioned foundation of knowledge. Indeed a student cannot play a trumpet if they are not first taught to buzz their lips. Moreover, there should not be either a student-centered or a teacher-centered classroom environment, but as Gordon (2008) states, "a balance between teacher- and student-directed learning that requires teachers to take an active role in the learning process, including formal teaching."

Making the Change

Finding the change that best fits the needs of the students in your classroom is paramount as no classroom is the same, no school the same, and no community the same. The experiences I have had this year may be helpful to others in similar situations, but is not the only way, nor is it the best way. This is the way that worked best for me and my district. This is the way that ensured that my teachers were successful and our students were successful. Change does not happen if teachers are not willing or do not embrace the possibility that either the way they have been doing things no longer works in the new normal, or students they currently have do not learn the same as the students they previously had. Both situations require teachers to take a step back, reflect on their practices, and decide what and how to provide for the best classroom environment possible.

123

In discussing change with my colleagues around the state, differences in demographics, socioeconomic status, and an appreciation for traditional programs varies in many ways. One district in the state was able to provide instruments for every member of a band program in their county to ensure that students were able to participate without worry of contamination or spread of the coronavirus; while another district cut many of the band positions due to declining numbers and no clear way to teach band online. Some districts were very strict about singing in the classrooms. There was a zero-tolerance policy for any singing indoors while other districts, including mine, were allowing students to participate indoors with masks and social distancing—requiring no more than 30 minutes of singing at a time. The rate of change is even more diverse in various parts of the country where they are at this point in time completely digital with no face-to-face instruction, limiting the possibilities for performance-based music making. In these instances where face-to-face instruction is not feasible, or not currently allowed, the use of technology can facilitate change more easily.

Flipped classrooms and hybrid teaching have in the past taken place in those classrooms considered "innovative" or "exceeding expectations" when assessed by administrators. Now that most teachers have had a chance to experience the flipped classroom, I suggest that we continue to use this technology to enhance our lessons when we return face-to-face in the near future. Included in this technology is the use of YouTube videos for exploration and flipped learning. One of the many positives to come from this past year is the abundance of YouTube interviews, tutorials, playalongs, and concerts. Specifically, in the elementary music classroom, YouTube playalongs have become an exciting way to get children to participate in rhythm reading and instrument

124

playing, whether it is on ukulele, rhythm sticks, or body percussion. For the teacher, the opportunity to show various musics from around the world with original sources and quality audio/video replaces cds with children singing atop a midi track from a studio.

Including YouTube in and out of the classroom presents many opportunities for education. By using these blended or hybrid learning techniques, teachers can better facilitate learning for their students. The sociality of YouTube is not only restricted to either online or offline (students share and discuss videos not only online, but in person as well), so it is important to not separate the two (Markham & Baym, 2008). Having students view videos at home or outside the classroom and then analyze and discuss them in the classroom provides a deeper conversation. Webb (2007, p. 159), explains that "by drawing on the non-formal ways in which students listen and respond to music, cross-media listening can assist in making classroom music analysis a more multidimensional, imaginative and vital educational experience."

In situations where iPads and/or computers are readily available, learning about Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) as both instruments and/or recording devices may supplement the curriculum in numerous ways. At the elementary level, students can access instruments without a need to learn the basic technique of that instrument, much like removing bars of an Orff instrument to ensure that the possible notes for performance will "sound good," having a guitar with pre-determined "riffs" to play along with a folk song encourages student engagement by ensuring a good performance product. At the secondary level, students may be presented with their choral music in a digital app that they must then record their part over. This individual assessment allows

both the teacher to assist with any discrepancies in the melody, rhythm, or tone as well as the students to hear only their voice with the music, allowing for intrinsic assessment.

Autonomy in the classroom has been a charge of mine since I began teaching, and even more so since I was given the opportunity to support teachers at the district level. One of the first pieces of advice that I provide new teachers, is to learn from the students just as much if not more than they should learn from the teacher. The teachers that allow students to take control of their education, and share the responsibility of making music are the same teachers who do not burn out as quickly as those who remain in the front of the classroom lecturing or forcing music to come from the tip of their baton. Using a Student-Centered Approach or Project Based Learning provides the students to not only take ownership over whatever the assignment may be, but also brings more than one point of view to the table. This method is also paramount in the effort to better understand where our students are coming from and how they may learn best. While the conductor has traditionally stood in the center of the room with students in a half-circle facing them, the student-centered classroom may have pods of students, sectionals if you will, working to achieve the same goal.

Two of the questions at the beginning of this paper, "What values do music teaching specialists place on music during the COVID-19 Pandemic?" And "What do music teachers feel that they have lost and/or gained during the COVID-19 Pandemic?" are answered in the emails and texts I received throughout the year from worries about program losses and a general feeling of being lost. Music, as a performative practice, was the biggest loss for many of my teachers. While guidelines did not prohibit performances, opportunities were limited with class sizes, group makeup, and digital

hurdles. The teachers that made the best of the situation were still able to perform and their programs, while still showing attrition, did not falter like many others. The largest gain for my teachers was a better understanding of the technology and digital world we have available at our fingertips. The possibility of individualizing assessment through digital platforms becomes easier than previously in a face-to-face situation. Using this in flipped classroom provides more time for students to participate during classroom time.

The next two questions, "What changes have teachers had to make to adjust to teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic?" and "In what ways have teachers had to adapt their curriculum to adjust to teaching in hybrid, at-a-distance, and online teaching situations?" can be answered in part by leaning into what we have learned from our new awareness of how technology can assist our teaching, and how our new understanding can massively impact the lives of our students and the communities that we serve. While many of my teachers had hopes of "virtual choirs" and high-quality performances online, they quickly learned the necessary skills and time requirements for a project like that to be successful. They also learned to adapt to the constant change in the classroom, something I hope we don't continue into the next school year. Students in quarantine every other week make performance and ensemble practice difficult, even with the support of technology.

Recently (Speck, 2021), President Joe Biden initiated a push to have all educators receive the coronavirus vaccine, and with this, my teachers began to breathe a sigh of relief (figure 67). Many of the teachers that I serve have told me that they would be more comfortable in their classrooms once they receive a vaccine, and this would open the door to more music making and engagement in face-to-face settings.

Our district is still unsure as to where we would be in the 2021-2022 school year, but we are unlikely to get rid of masks by then. This leads to one of the last questions, "How do teachers envision these changes impacting their teaching practice, post-COVID-19 pandemic?" A phrase I have used and have heard used often over the past year is that this pandemic has made the great teachers better, and the bad teachers worse. Unfortunately, those teachers that struggled before the pandemic have struggled even more with the issues faced this past year. I have made every attempt at assisting these teachers and have supported them in every way possible, but if they do not accept help or want to change, I cannot force it.
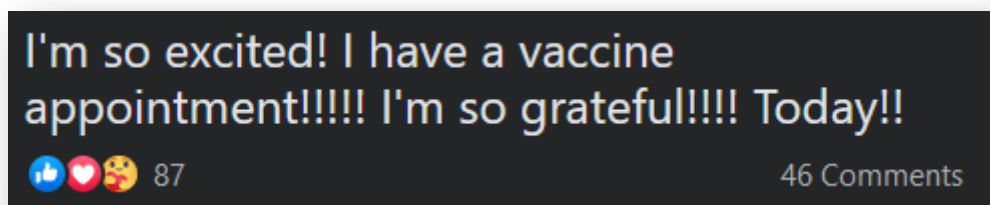

Figure 69 Vaccine Facebook post March 5th

Finally, "How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected my position and my pedagogy now and in the future?" What I learned professionally over the past 12 months is the importance of change and fluidity, understanding that at any moment what I know would no longer be the status quo, and the ability to adjust would keep my head above the water. My understanding of technology and the years of digital and hybrid learning and teaching allowed me to better adjust to the world of pandemic teaching. A philosophical belief that the teacher is not the proprietor of education but should be willing to learn with their students made a change to smaller classrooms and hybrid learning feasible. Imparting this belief to my teachers and helping them let loose of their grip on their baton was one of the highlights of the year for me. Walking into a

classroom and seeing the students taking ownership over their education, working

together to solve problems, and creating as a group is an experience that brings me joy.

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