STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON EXTRA-MUSICAL OUTCOMES OF EXPERIENCE IN A HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAM

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Abstract

Students enrolled in high school music programs learn about music, but there are also extra-musical outcomes. The aim of this study was to ascertain what past graduates of the music program at Point Grey Secondary identify as important extra-musical outcomes of the program and how those outcomes influenced their personal development. Using a phenomenological design, past graduates of the music program at Point Grey Secondary High School were asked:

1. What do they identify as the extra-musical outcomes of the music program?

2. Why do they feel those outcomes are important?

The participant’s responses fell into 6 categories: (1) The Value of Group Work, (2) Self-Confidence, (3) Mentoring, (4) The Role of Teachers, (5) Subject Specific Observations, and (6) General Impressions of High School.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE, AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Introduction

It would be a good guess that most teachers have at one time or another wondered what students are really learning during their years at high school. I have often wondered what students at Point Grey Secondary felt they have learned while in the music program, especially when they have been out of school for a few years and have begun life in the post-secondary world. While it is rooted in a music curriculum, a large component of the music program is built around extra-musical goals. A number of instructional strategies are used to foster extra-musical aspects of the program, such as cooperative learning, and small and large group instruction. Especially in the first term of each year, a good deal of time is spent teaching personal interaction. Creating a group identity and group goal setting activities comprise about 55% of instructional time, with a further expectation that students work in music groups outside of regular class time. For a music program this might seem like an exceptional amount of time, but it does appear to make a difference in musical expression, ensemble performance, and commitment and social bonding of the group. This short-term musical outcome is important, but a further question pertains to how those experiences are viewed when the students have graduated from high school and left the program. With some distance from their experiences in high school, does anything they learned help them in their current situation?
In order to improve a music program, it is important to know what aspects of the program work and which do not work in the longer term so the musical and extra-musical effects can be maximized. Much of what I have done in developing a music program has been trial and error to this point; the feedback on the extra-musical aspects of the program has been informal and it is difficult to ascertain anything but general strengths and weaknesses. By doing a more formal study of the music program at Point Grey, I hoped to learn what extra-musical aspects of the program have been most valuable and then be able to alter the program to maximize their effects, while still maintaining the short-term musical objectives of the music curriculum.

During informal conversations, past students have stated that they feel they have learned some important skills in music ensembles that have helped them in the post secondary world of work and education. There does not appear to be a great deal of research in this area. In a climate where arts education is constantly under threat of extinction, research that supports the extra-musical aspects of music education can provide further justification for continuing to offer such courses, in addition to the valid justifications built on the value of the arts in everyday life.

**Cooperative Learning**

Cooperative learning is one of the most widely researched instructional strategies. When properly implemented, cooperative learning “can contribute positively to academic achievement, social skills, and self-esteem” (Manning and Lucking, 1991, p. 121).
Most music teachers employed aspects of cooperative learning in their classrooms long before it became a contemporary educational fad. Di Natale and Russell (1995) state “the centuries-old tradition of musical performance has, in fact, contained elements of cooperative interplay since its inception” (p. 26). Among other things, performing or rehearsing as a duo or an ensemble requires interdependence among members. While it might seem that putting students into groups and giving them a task would be sufficient for some social development, there is general agreement that some social skills need to be taught directly in order to insure that the goals of cooperative learning do take place. Di Natale and Russell define four social skills that require direct teaching in order to make cooperative learning work in a musical ensemble.

**Basic Interaction.** Basic interaction occurs on two levels. Evaluative feedback must be exchanged between performers in an ensemble as well as between teacher and performer. The teacher must produce a climate where students feel comfortable giving their opinion. Expressing opinions and respecting those opinions leads to having a voice in setting goals for the music ensemble, such as choice of repertoire, and structure of rehearsals.

**Communication Skills.** According to Di Natale and Russell “speaking directly to one another are imperatives for effective communication skills and, ultimately, for successful completion of a musical selection” (p. 27). Teachers and students must be able to verbally explain problems and solutions to one another. In addition to verbal interaction, there is significant nonverbal communication that occurs between members of an ensemble that is specific to music. The
teacher will conduct an ensemble through a piece of music with a series of gestures. This “highly developed sign language” demands “rapt attention” and the “immediate understanding of all performers” (p. 27).

**Conflict Resolution.** Di Natale and Russell are a vague in this area. They contend, “working out rhythmic timing, entrances, and exits is crucial to the decision-making process” (p. 27) and that as students gain “wisdom, maturity, and mastery of their instruments, they are able to resolve the conflicts and challenges unique to the music world”. (p. 27) While I would agree that conflict resolution is important, it should be defined more broadly to include interpersonal conflict as well as musical conflict. There are certainly problems unique to music, as there are to any discipline, but the interpersonal skills required to resolve conflicts between group members are not much different than with any other type of group.

**Team Building.** Team building skills focus on “bonding peer relationships to nurture encouragement, constructive criticism, consensus building, risk taking, and trust for one another” (p. 27). Team building would seem to be the most important of the four social skills cited, as it allows the kind of climate that is supportive enough to allow students to stretch themselves, both musically and extra-musically.

A good cooperative learning environment will “depend not on any one individual, but on how well the team members work together” (p. 27). Glasser (1986) calls this “positive interdependence.” The reciprocal nature of this relationship at its best will not only result in better music, but also has
implications for relationships outside of the rehearsal room. "It underscores the need for interdependence and cooperation and a sharing of common goals." (Di Natale and Russell, p. 28)

Self Esteem

Self-esteem and its connection to creativity in music have not been widely studied, but VanderArk (1989) looked at a number of studies and concluded that "music can be a positive influence on students' self-esteem" and that "attitudes toward music instruction can be a significant predictor of self-esteem" (p.7). This may be based in part on the idea that music is alone as the only form of non-verbal, aural communication, but there is "a need for more descriptive studies on self-esteem in order that a model and a theoretical framework in self-esteem involving creativity and other factors important for music learning can be developed" (VanderArk, 1989, p.8).

Self-esteem gains in cooperative learning situations are commented on frequently. Lyman and Foyle (1989) observe that by encouraging positive interactions amongst students a teacher can "positively increase the academic success and self-esteem of their students" (p. 7). Feeling liked by peers and experiencing academic achievements have been identified as possible reasons for self-esteem gains in cooperative learning groups.

Group Therapy


Irvin D. Yalom described eleven therapeutic factors that outline the process of group psychotherapy. Here is a brief overview.
Instillation of Hope. There must be faith in the treatment if there is going to be success. The therapist must do everything possible to promote a positive attitude toward the group process. While there are many ways of doing this, one powerful tool available to group therapy is the exposure of the individual to others that are at different points along the "coping-collapse continuum" (p. 5). By hearing and seeing how others have coped with similar problems gives hope to newer members of the group.

Universality. Being able to see that their problems are not unique and that others share similar problems is an important part of the group therapy process. The realization that they are not alone can provide the client with a sense relief.

Imparting Information. There are two ways that Yalom describes to impart information. The first, didactic instruction, involves the direct imparting of information. Groups such as Gamblers Anonymous make use of this technique. Clients are given direct instruction that pertains to their problems. Direct advice is the second way of imparting information. Direct advice most often comes from other group members, in contrast to direct instruction from the therapist. While other group members give advice, it is the process of giving advice, rather than the actual advice itself that is helpful. The process implies and conveys "mutual interest and caring" (p. 11).

Altruism. "Patients receive through giving, not only as part of the reciprocal giving-receiving sequence but also from the intrinsic act of giving" (pg. 12). Clients are enormously helpful to one another throughout the group
process and the act of giving to another plays a role in the therapeutic nature of the group experience.

The Corrective Recapitulation of the Primary Family Group. While there are opportunities in individual therapy to recapitulate the primary family group, the group process allows for more combinations and permutations. For example, the therapist or leader can represent a parental figure, and the group members can function as siblings or peers. If there have been dysfunctional relationships in the primary family group, they can be relived correctively in therapy.

Development of Socializing Techniques. Social learning in group therapy can be taught directly or indirectly and the skills taught can vary widely. Some groups explicitly teach social skills, such as groups that prepare offenders for reintegration into society. The skills taught in these types of groups are usually clearly described, such as job interview techniques or anger management skills.

In other kinds of groups, the social learning is less explicit. "Members of dynamic therapy groups, which have ground rules encouraging open feedback, may obtain considerable information about maladaptive social behaviour" (p. 15). Clients learn "about a variety of social habits that, unbeknownst to the patient, have been undermining social relationships" (p. 15). While changing behaviour involves more than just recognition and a willingness to change, these insights are "more than just a minor fringe benefit" (p. 15).

Imitative Behaviour. While not a strong factor compared to the others Yalom describes, there is some evidence that clients imitate the communication style and behaviour of not only the therapist, but also other group members.
Even watching other group members deal with similar problems can be helpful. While many of the "tried on" behaviours are eventually discarded, there is benefit to the client; "finding out what we are not is progress toward finding out what we are."

**Interpersonal Learning.** Interpersonal learning is a broad and complex factor. There are three concepts that Yalom describes in some detail:

1. The importance of interpersonal learning
2. The corrective emotional experience
3. The group as a social microcosm.

The idea that therapy is broadly interpersonal has its roots in many researchers, but Yalom contends that the contributions of Harry Stack Sullivan are "seminal" in their importance. Yalom agrees with Sullivan that personality is constructed almost exclusively by our interactions with people that are significant in our lives. The goals of therapy are changed from "relief of suffering to change in interpersonal functioning". (p. 21)

In order for there to be successful change, there must be a corrective emotional experience. The corrective nature of the experience is broken down in two parts: 1) an emotional component and 2) an intellectual component. It is not enough that there be an emotional experience; while the emotional experience is valued highly by group members, it is not considered a sufficient condition for change. There must also be a cognitive map to frame the experience in order for the client to make sense of the experience.
Much of group therapy is based on the idea that the functioning of the group will become a social microcosm of each participant. There is no need for the members to give detailed information about their problems; "they will sooner or later enact it before the group members' eyes." (p.28) While each clinician may view the interactions of the group through the prism of their own theoretical approach, the problems of each group member will nonetheless manifest themselves. Some group members' problems will be obvious during the first meeting; others may take many meetings and careful observation before their issues become obvious. Whatever the timetable, whatever the theoretical approach of the therapist, group therapy involves dealing with these issues as they become apparent.

**Group Cohesiveness.** Group cohesiveness "is like dignity; everyone can recognize it, but apparently no one can describe it, let alone measure it" (p. 48). It is one of the most important factors in group therapy; its analogue in individual therapy is the therapist/client relationship. Because of the group environment, however, it is much more layered. Group members must relate to one another, to the group as a whole, as well as to the therapist. Yalom cites numerous studies that have studied group cohesiveness in different ways and he breaks it down thusly:

In general, however, there is agreement that groups differ from one another in the amount of "groupness" present. Those with a greater sense of solidarity, or "we-ness," value the group more highly, and will defend it against internal and external threats. Such groups have a higher rate of
Catharsis. Catharsis alone is not sufficient to instigate change. The intensity of the expression of emotion is highly relative and therefore hard for the therapist to judge. While catharsis has figured prominently in psychotherapy since Freud, some form of cognitive learning must accompany catharsis in order for it to be an effective agent of change.

Existential Factors. The existential factors Yalom identifies are the struggles against the givens in life: mortality, isolation, freedom, and meaningfulness. These factors are frequently cited by patients as being very important, yet they are often overlooked. It is easy for these factors to be overlooked or minimized in a group setting. Care needs to be taken so that therapy groups don’t water down existential issues into interpersonal issues. In discussing a group helping a member deal with feelings of loneliness, Yalom points out that it would have been easier for the group members to focus on interpersonal loneliness rather than existential loneliness because a group’s “natural currency is interpersonal theory.” (p. 93)

Purpose

With the aim of improving the delivery of the extra-musical aspects of a music program, the intent of this study is to ascertain the extra-musical factors that past participants identify as important and how those factors have influenced their personal development.
Research Questions

1. What do past students identify as the extra-musical outcomes of the music program at Point Grey?

2. Why do past graduates of the program feel these outcomes are important?
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Educators are becoming more aware of the impact of personal and social development on learning. For example, the introduction of the Career and Personal Planning program from K-12 implies recognition that learning is as much about personal development as it is about subject specific knowledge, yet there is a lack of research pertaining to students' perceptions about the value of their own learning in some subject areas. Within the context of music ensemble instruction, few people have attempted to look at the extra-musical learning that occurs and assess how students value that learning.

Search Procedures
In ERIC, PSYCHinfo, Educational Index, and Dissertation Abstracts:

Experiential learning and music education
Experiential learning and secondary education and music
Experiential learning and secondary education and music education
Learning and experience and music and high school
Social development and music education
Group instruction and music education
Group instruction and self-esteem
Group instruction and self-esteem and music education
Group instruction and experiential learning and secondary education
Adolescent social development
Self-esteem and music education

Cooperative learning and music education

Group development and music education

Group development and secondary education

Social psychology and music education

Related Research

The Johnson Study (1990)

Scott Robert Johnson (1990) attempted to describe what constitutes a musical experience by asking for students' perceptions of events during a series of musical ensemble rehearsals. While much of the study is directed at musical knowledge, most of Johnson's findings pertain to what he terms the "psychosocial aspect of musical experience" (p 87).

Johnson further breaks down the psychosocial aspect of musical experience into five sub-categories as follows:

Playing Music Should Be Enjoyable. Students' responses indicated that there was an intrinsic reward for playing music. Any references to practicing or skill development were viewed as not enjoyable. In addition, the students' responses favoured group experiences over individual experiences.

Desire for Recognition. One third of the students queried in Johnson's study indicated they wanted some form of recognition, either from peers or from the larger community. In addition, there were some responses that "implied
personal or self recognition", (p. 88) such as "orchestra provides an identity" (p. 88).

**Competition versus Cooperation.** Johnson’s organization of this category is unclear. The competitiveness of the orchestra members seems quite clear. There are a number of students’ statements referring to the organization of the orchestra’s hierarchical seating that indicates uneasiness with singling out and promoting the best players. The statements Johnson cites that refer to cooperation are less clear. Johnson’s view of cooperation appears to depend on the hierarchical arrangement of the group and the charity of the better players toward the weaker ones. Absent from the responses are statements about the inherently cooperative nature of playing music in a group and the striving for a collective goal.

**Perceived Attitudes Affect the Experience.** The members of the ensemble deemed the attitudes of other students very important. This included both students in and out of the ensemble. Students seemed concerned about the lack of respect afforded the orchestra by other members of their school community and also the lack of interest shown by some of the members.

**Pragmatic Issues.** Johnson highlighted two points: scholarship opportunities at the post-secondary level related to music, and the relationship between musical ability and academic achievement.

Johnson’s study is interesting in a number of ways. He uses a non-traditional format for his research by letting the emerging data guide his review of the literature. His justification for this approach is very interesting. He states that an
issue of prime importance to his research was ensuring that "the gathering of data about the nature of musical experience ... would be context-dependent" (p. 15). Johnson's methodology allowed him to take advantage of his previous experience as a high school music instructor by giving him an "insiders view". "A qualitative case study would allow his prior knowledge and intuition from a familiar setting to facilitate the fathering of contextual evidence for interpreting student perspectives" (p. 16). His prior knowledge gave him in the unique perspective of being neither an "ordinary outsider" nor an "ordinary insider". One of the strengths of Johnson's study is the way that he chose to maximize this unique status through his choice of methodology.

Another justification Johnson uses for his choice of research methods comes from the "potential for interpreting student viewpoints of musical experience from the cultural perspective of the rehearsal hall" (p. 16). Johnson seeks to answer, "what is happening?" and "what does it mean to the participants?" By immersing himself in the culture of a music rehearsal situation, he puts himself in a better position to answer these questions.

Johnson gathered his data in three different ways: Observation, interviews, and document collection.

Observation.

Johnson kept notes about his field experiences both during and after each observation session to allow him to document the context. In addition, selected rehearsals were audio and/or video taped for later reflection. Johnson says four investigative postures should be assumed:
1) adopt the 'insider's' viewpoint (phenomenological);
2) perceive the big picture (holistic);
3) avoid superimposing one's value system (non-judgmental); and
4) consider the data within the environment (contextualization) (p.22).

This is all good, except that I do not agree that careful observation and recording of field experiences goes any distance in helping a researcher avoid superimposing his or her value system on what they see. The very nature of the observations that Johnson describes and his decisions about what to observe and what not to observe seem completely rooted in his value system. This is a not a weakness in his methodology – except when Johnson attempts to claim that his observations are free of his own values. He goes to great lengths to explain that his observations should be allowed to follow whatever he deems significant from moment to moment, and to be able to change his focus based on reflection and contextual events; this is one of the strengths of his method. But to turn around and claim that he is avoiding superimposing his values on what he sees stands his justification on its head.

Interviews.

Johnson employed four methods of interviewing his participants, each method adding more structure to the exchange, from informal chats to formal interviews. This appears to have helped Johnson by continually allowing him to ask participants about their reactions to what he observed, which then would further guide his observations.
Documents.

Johnson gathered all of the paper that is generated around musical rehearsals, from memos and course outlines, to student bulletins and letters, which enabled him to add depth to the context of the rehearsal.

Summary

There is a great deal lacking in research into the benefits of group instruction in music that pertains to counseling psychology. While there are many studies that examine the benefits of group instruction on musical learning, what Johnson terms “the psycho-social factors” have not been a subject of serious inquiry. It might be true that many music researchers have focused on subject specific learning, while students actually seem to value other learning and experiences as highly, if not more highly, than the musical experiences that they gain. While the bulk of Johnson study deals with a relatively small part of his results, I believe that closer examination of data gained from a student’s perspective will reveal a great deal of interesting material.
CHAPTER III

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY

A phenomenological approach allows the opportunity to further understanding of a general concept. I have attempted to provide “an understanding of a concept from participants’ perspectives and views of social reality” (MacMillan & Schumacher, 1997, p.101). This was an exploratory study as there is not a great deal of research in this area. An interview design was used in order to elicit information about what past students felt they gained from the program. A phenomenological approach allowed the meanings of student responses to be realized without limiting the data collection in a manner that a survey or critical incident design might impose.

This study was not focused enough for a case study. I have sought to find out the scope and depth of experiences in the program. From informal conversations over the years, I have found that past students have provided a wide range of observations about the value of the program. By applying a more rigorous approach to gathering data, an attempt has been made to clarify the diversity of responses into something more comprehensive and clear.

Individual interviews were conducted with nine past students. The past students were contacted by letter, which invited them to take part in the study by telephoning me. The interviews took place at Point Grey Secondary at times convenient for the interviewer and interviewee. Interviews were tape recorded for later analysis and transcription. The study’s data came primarily from the focused interviews, as well as my observations, and other casual conversations. I
was a participant-observer in this study and as such had a perspective on aspects of the emerging data that others may not have. In my classroom practice, I have a strong bias toward participation. Students who are willing to work hard at something – musical or extra-musical – will be supported in their endeavours with encouragement and marks. It was not surprising to me that most of the participants in the study were students who had worked hard and had been strong contributors to the groups they were in while in the program.

Each interview opened with a series of demographic questions in order to help relax the participants, as well as gather the demographic data presented in Table 1. The typical opening question after the demographic information was elicited was “Tell me about you high school experience?” The participants expanded on this broad question, and when mention was made of the music program, a general question like, “Tell me about you experience in the music program?” was asked. Responses from the participants were then allowed to travel wherever was relevant to them. After the interviews had been transcribed, patterns in the participant responses began to emerge. The resulting six categories were given to two individuals, one a secondary music teacher and the other a Masters' level counsellor, to check for agreement on the breakdown of the categories. In addition to the interviews, some of the documents that students received while in the program have been collected.
THE PROGRAM AND THE PARTICIPANTS

A Description of the Program

The music program at Point Grey Secondary School is divided roughly in thirds to coincide with the evaluation terms set out by the school. The program is structured around these dates as well as around performances at Christmas and in the spring. Term 1 of the program runs from September to mid-November, term 2 from late November to the first week of March, and term 3 from March to June.

**Term 1**

In the first term, more time is spent teaching group interaction than in the other 2 terms. Some skills are taught directly and some are taught indirectly. One of the first events that all students in the program participate in is the annual car wash. Ostensibly this event is to raise funds for the music department. It is organized by a well-coordinated group of parent volunteers. The students are asked to sign up in pairs, and then those pairs are assigned to a team that is given a 2-hour shift at one of fifteen gas stations. Two senior students volunteer to head each team. They meet with their team before the car wash to teach them some simple car wash skills, to assign jobs, and to secure supplies from within their group. Once on site, the leaders must make sure the team works efficiently during their shift, and that all members look after the cleanliness of the site after their shift is done. The leaders are taught some simple skills to manage their initial group meeting, as well as given some suggestions about how to manage the two-hour shift with their group. This includes how to make sure everyone in
the group gets a chance to be listened to, as well as the importance of modeling the type of behaviour they wish to see. The student leaders' role is very didactic; they have a simple goal to achieve and they elicit input from the group about how to get the job done. The group leaders receive a basic outline from me about how to structure their meeting and what they should have accomplished by the end of the session. This information is shared with all the students and they are left to decide how best to accomplish it.

For this event, there isn't a lot of time to teach group interaction for the new students, so it is left to the returning students to model it for the neophytes. The groups are purposefully selected to include members from all years of the program, and the leaders are chosen based on their history in the program; the leaders must be good models. This is a good general introduction to the school year and does not involve musical instruments. The task is relatively simple and so the challenge focuses more on working as a team.

Marks and evaluation are part of high school life. In order to engender a climate where students feel comfortable giving their opinions, I begin each year with discussion about evaluation. Di Natale and Russell's basic interaction was discussed previously. The students, in small groups of about 6 - 10, decide on the weighting of the course requirements and present their findings to the class. They have to be able to justify their point of view in a short presentation, and then answer questions. Each group gets a turn to present after which the class engages in large group discussion. After the large group discussion, the focus is changed to discussion about the process. Did everyone get a chance to speak in
the small group? Did one person dominate discussion? How do we make sure everyone is heard? The small groups meet again briefly to discuss whether they want to alter their previous decisions regarding the course weighting or to remain the same, in light of the other groups' presentations and the large group discussion. Shifting between the task and the process allows the students to become aware of aspects of group interaction. This sequence is repeated until there is consensus. Usually consensus is reached after the second large group discussion.

Once the course weighting is decided, there is discussion about the process again. How was the small group discussion the second time? Did everyone get a chance to speak this time? How was your small group discussion different the second time from the first?

The decisions about course weighting are remarkably similar each year, but the process varies according to the number of years students have in the program. Students in their grade 10, 11, and 12 years will typically be in one large group of 70-100. This makes large group discussion difficult, so the group is broken down by grade level. Returning students usually know from experience what kind of course weighting they prefer, so the discussion is usually short and based on how they felt about the weightings in the past. The discussion usually focuses on welcoming new students, reinvigorating old acquaintances in a familiar setting, as well as reviewing group processes.

The small groups for discussion are divided up by instrumental groupings where possible – flutes, clarinets, saxophones, etc. There are typically not many
brass players, especially coming into grade 8, so sometimes all the brass players end up in one group. Instrumental groupings are used as a sub-group many times through the year, so this is a good way of introducing members to one another and to start the small group dynamic that will be developed through the year.

When the course weighting activity is introduced, the students are told that my goal is to have as many people in the class get as high a mark as possible. There is usually some laughter at this statement and the students require some convincing, but once they are assured that the objective is not to be punitive in assigning marks, and that there is genuine interest in getting as much learning as possible to happen, there is a change in the tone of discussions. As the teacher, the role of leader and encourager seems in opposition to the role of arbiter of marks. Grading students can sometimes feel like inflicting a form of punishment, and generally speaking students seem quite obsessed with marks - especially senior students planning on post-secondary studies. Trying to take the focus off marks and onto group process and general learning makes many students uncomfortable.

The course weighting that the students decide upon is made up of 6 components set by me. These 6 components are broken down into two general categories: musical proficiency and participation. A brief description of each component and a rationale follows:
Musical Proficiency

In Class Tests. The students are evaluated in class in small groups of two or three on exercises prescribed by me. These are typically set at a level that most students can achieve a comfortably high mark with a small amount of effort. The rationale for this perspective comes from a belief by me that success is a better motivator than failure. As the term progresses these items get more difficult and require more work to maintain a high standing, but feeling successful at the beginning of the process is very important to future success.

Individualized tests. Students are required to sign up either singly or in pairs for an appointment with me to play some of the music the group has been working on in class, as well as music of their own choice. While the students are nervous about playing in a private setting, most of the time is spent talking about their experience in the program rather than on actual playing. This gives me an opportunity to listen to the students, and for me to listen to group members talk about their experiences. This is an opportunity for students to get out any gripes with aspects of the program, talk about interpersonal problems within their small groups or, frequently, just a chance to talk about the problems in their life.

Theory. Once each term there is a music theory test that is based on the work done in class. This gives students who may not be particularly proficient players an opportunity to add to their mark in a way that is similar to their other high school courses.
Participation

Attendance. Being part of a group means recognizing your responsibility to the group members. One of the ways students can demonstrate this is by showing up on time and being prepared to engage in the group's work. For the ensembles that run on the timetable, skipping is not a big problem, but there are always a few students who have difficulty being punctual. Here, marks are used as a whip: If a student shows up on time and doesn't skip rehearsal, they get 100% for their attendance mark. Skips and lates will reduce their mark. A few lates won't alter a student's mark very much, but consistent lates and /or skips have a large effect. This is one way of ensuring that the group's boundaries around time are respected. When students arrive late, it is impressed upon them that they should apologize to the group for being late, not to me. Their tardiness should never be shrugged off as unimportant. The frequently stated message is that their contribution is important and all group members want them there ready to participate.

Sectionals. The students are required to get together outside of class time to rehearse in their small groups. The students in conjunction with me set the number of times this should occur each term. The composition of the small group can vary during the year, but the basic structure dictated by instrument type doesn't change much. In term one, extra marks can be gained by doing sectionals with whomever they choose. In second and third term, the amount of structure around group composition is progressively lowered, which allows the students to select their own groupings. This helps in building lasting social bonds within
the group, and the small number of structured small groups ensures that the shyer members of the ensemble are included. For some students this is difficult at first, but many students eventually form their own small group to do extra sectionals, and frequently begin social activities with that group outside of ensemble. These social bonds help keep students participating in the program from year to year.

**Class Participation.** This mark is based on my perceptions of the student’s preparedness for rehearsal. Do they have their instrument? Their music? A pencil? Are they disruptive? The message again is respect for the group’s boundaries. If they are not prepared, they cannot contribute fully and therefore the group doesn’t benefit from their input.

I suggest at the outset of the course weighting activity that the students consider weighting the course approximately 50% toward musical proficiency and 50% toward participation. As a music teacher in the public school system, my bias is toward participation for as many students as possible. If a student wants to be in the band, is willing to work at it, and is gaining some enjoyment from the process, then they deserve a place in an ensemble; if they aren’t blessed with natural ability, they should still be encouraged to participate to the best of their ability and be rewarded with a decent mark. For example, if a student achieves 100% in the participation items of their mark and only 50% on the proficiency items, they will still achieve a B standing. At the outset this sounds like easy marks to the students because of the high emphasis on participation, but it is the participation items that provide the most difficulty. As a
consequence, the marks for the class do not fall in a bell curve. There is typically a cluster of marks between 75% and 100% (the ‘A’ and ‘B’ range), a gap in the middle, and then a small number clustered at 40% to 50%. (The ‘C’- and ‘I’ range. ‘I’ stands for ‘Incomplete’.) Over the years as the students’ progress through the program, the number of students in the 40% to 50% range falls off precipitously because these students do not elect to return.

The goal of the program is not to train professional musicians. Yes, the program may prepare some students for post-secondary music study, but the main focus of the program is not to train future professional musicians. The main musical focus of the program is to give the students an understanding of music and instill a love for making music and listening to music.

Once the course weighting has been decided, the group begins rehearsal. With students in the first two years of the program, their rehearsals are part of the regular school day, so when they arrive to class in the second week of September, they begin playing together as a large ensemble. Some important things start to occur during the first weeks. The group usually sounds fairly awful during this time and it is important at this fragile period that they gain a sense they are part of something that will be worthwhile. Technique and repertoire are chosen to allow for a sense of early success, both as individual players and as a group.

Each rehearsal period is divided into two parts: Approximately 40 minutes are given over to skill development on their instrument, and 40 minutes to repertoire rehearsal. The skill development part of the rehearsal is when the
students work on their individual skills. The exercises are eventually evaluated in small groups in front of the class after an appropriate amount of class time is given over to practice. Every year these exercises are different depending on the level of playing demonstrated during the first few weeks. If the evaluated material is too easy, the students don’t gain a sense of accomplishment; if it is too hard, they feel they will not be able to contribute to the group in a meaningful way. Wherever possible, an attempt is made to motivate the students through successful experiences, as opposed to motivating them by punishing them with poor marks until they achieve the delineated goal or goals.

At this point, the goals are set for the students; a description is provided of what is to be learned, and they rehearse the skills and present their work to the class. The process of goal setting and evaluation is out of their hands and dictated by the teacher. As students progress through the program, more of this responsibility will be slowly given over to them, so that by the time they are in grade 11 and 12, they set their own weekly goals and then demonstrate their achievements 1 to 3 times a term to the class and to me.

While it is important that the students improve as individual players during the first few months, it is also important that the students gain a sense that the group is progressing as well. The group’s repertoire must be carefully selected to allow the ensemble to sound good, as well as have some musical merit to aid in teaching musical concepts. Hopefully the students will enjoy playing it as well.
Student enjoyment of musical selections is sometimes difficult and there are many opinions about repertoire selection amongst my colleagues in music education. Not all students can be pleased at once, but hopefully the music chosen will please most of the group most of the time. Students will sometimes reject a piece of music initially, but once they have invested some time in the study of it, they begin to enjoy it more. After the students have been in the program for a few years, the process of choosing repertoire becomes less difficult; their musical tastes have grown and they become more open-minded and discerning about what they like to play. Trust also develops between the players and the leader. Students learn that sometimes they have to live with a piece of music before deciding to reject it; they suspend judgment for a time until the piece has been studied for a while. Once the group starts to sound more accomplished, the beginning of a group identity begins to form. It is very important that the group sees that their collective effort can produce something of quality. 

Around the beginning of October the small groups are challenged to select a piece to work on with the aim of eventually performing the piece for their peers and an audience of parents. The timeline from selection of material to the performance is about 6 weeks. The group is responsible for setting rehearsal frequency and time. They have access to two master classes given by competent professional musicians, as well as help from me. I lead the groups through their first session, as the sight-reading and music selection can be difficult. During this first session, listening and decision making processes are modeled by me and
discussed in each group. In addition, the group communication skills that were introduced during the course outline discussion are directly reinforced.

Very rarely do the small groups fail to rise to this challenge. The students and I evaluate their performance and they are given a group mark. This helps to motivate the group as a unit, and gives the stronger players impetus to help the less experienced or weaker members.

Term 2

In the first term of the program, the demands on public performance are not large. During the first term time is spent preparing one small-group piece and one large-group piece for performance. Most of term one is spent establishing the group processes that will later become the backbone of the more task-focused second term. During term two the large group will prepare for two performances: the Winter Concerts, and a music festival performance. We also continue with the small group sectionals through this period, although during term two the small group sectionals are almost exclusively geared toward the large group tasks. This differs from term one, where the small group sectionals were focused on a small-group specific task.

The Winter Concerts

Each of the ensembles will play three selections at the Winter Concerts, with the repertoire choices geared around seasonal music. By the time term one is finished, there is usually a window of about three weeks to prepare for this event. This not a great deal of time to prepare, and the group is mobilized by this deadline. The heightened sense of urgency puts pressure on the large group, and
simultaneously there is less goal setting structure provided in the small group. This allows the small groups to tailor their own small-group tasks to whatever they deem important in relation to meeting the large group's needs. This pattern will be repeated for just about every large group performance or event throughout the program.

After the Winter concerts, there is usually a week before the winter break and this provides an opportunity in two or three classes to debrief about the concert experience and discuss the students perceptions of their performance. Included in this discussion will be some talk about how the small group work can further the large group goals. In addition, large and small group processes will be revisited. After discussion has ended, the remaining classes will be spent previewing music for the festival performances that occur soon after classes resume in January.

The Festival Performance

The first few weeks back after the winter holiday are spent on selecting repertoire for the music festivals and on delineating the technique requirements for the remainder of the term. The students are asked to submit goals each week for their individual practice. These goals can be submitted by email or in writing and will form the basis for their term two evaluation.

The selection of the large group repertoire for the festival is a more rigourous affair than selecting for the Winter Concerts. The festivals require that each ensemble play three selections: one to be chosen from a list which the festival organizers provide, one selection in a march style, and one to be chosen
by the group that should contrast in style from the piece chosen from the provided list. The music is more technically challenging and difficult to play than most of the Winter Concert selections. At this point the large group becomes very task-oriented. If the group skills taught and used in term one have not been well understood, it will be obvious in the presentation of the pieces at the festival.

While the pieces are musically and technically challenging, the time line for preparation is longer and therefore there is time to revisit group process as it is required. Time is taken at each rehearsal to reinforce the process and talk directly about it in some way as needs emerge.

Once the festival has been completed and the group receives adjudication by a panel of two or three judges, the group will spend time on debriefing the experience, usually spread over one or two rehearsal periods. The focus of these sessions is on the achievement of the large ensemble and the efficacy of the group processes. If the ensemble is not achieving well, we spend time revisiting process and trying to assess how best to improve. Group processes are taught as needed and the small groups become more structured around these points of process as required. Some class time is given over to working in small groups, with me being able to directly observe the processes in action. The remaining two weeks of term two are spent on individual evaluations in the same manner as term one, except that the students will be asked to demonstrate their improvement based on the goals for individual practice that they have been submitting each week. In this way, the students are responsible for their own development as players and are accountable for their weekly practicing. It is
repeatedly reinforced that their individual improvement helps the group improve.

**Term 3**

In term three there are two events for each ensemble: a tour or retreat of some kind and a final performance at the end of May. While the retreats have been worthwhile experiences for the younger groups, they have not been possible in the last few years due to financial and time constraints.

**Tour**

The larger tours are for students in the senior ensembles, typically Grade 10, 11 and 12. Each year there is a trip and they alternate between a large-scale tour and a smaller one. Scotland, England, and Cuba have been the destinations for the large-scale tours in the past 10 years, and Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver Island have been the destinations for the smaller tours. The preparation for these tours follows two patterns: the large-scale tours involve music festivals, so the repertoire and musical preparation tends to be similar to the preparation for music festivals locally. Repertoire selection follows the same pattern, with usually one to three pieces being set by the festival committee, and any other pieces left up to the group. For the smaller tours, we usually play for audiences ranging from elementary schools to secondary schools, so the repertoire is chosen to try and appeal to those age groups.

Whether large or small, the tours are important for a number of reasons. The students are away from home for an extended period, some for the first time. They must learn to live together, usually in groups of four. This includes
everything from sleeping arrangements, groceries, cooking, and cleaning, to setting up and striking each concert, playing together, etc. So much occurs during the five to ten days of the tour that it defies description; however, the important points seem to be the sense of shared purpose, the social ties that are formed and/or strengthened, and the feeling of accomplishment, both interpersonally and with regard to the musical and extra-musical achievements of the large group.

The tours, whether large or small, are defining points in the development of the group. When there hasn’t been a solid grounding in group processes, the tour tends to be less successful musically as well as socially. When the tour goes well, the students are drawn together. Their sense of ‘groupness’ is increased and they gain a sense of accomplishment. Even if audiences are not appreciative of their playing, there is enough intrinsic reward for playing well that the students feel good about their efforts. This is an important point for the group to understand – that the rewards are intrinsic. Indeed, sometimes after doing a good concert for an unpleasant crowd, the group is drawn closer together as a result of their shared misfortune and shared musical understanding.

Final Concerts

The final concerts of the year take place at the end of May and follow the same format as the Winter Concerts, except that the repertoire chosen are usually pieces that the students have selected as their favourites for that year.

Following the final concerts, some rehearsal time is given over to debriefing, followed by three or four periods of individual evaluations. Identical
to term two, the students are evaluated on the goals that they have set for themselves. In addition, some time is given over to discussing their experience over the year, and if they are not continuing in the program, what their reasons are for terminating their involvement. If the same reasons come up repeatedly, it allows identification of problem areas that need fine-tuning for the next year.

**Summary**

If the program is successful, at the end students should feel they have progressed musically as individuals, as well as improved the playing of the group. They gain a sense of confidence in their abilities to solve problems and work in a group setting, gain some understanding of how the group process works, and, if desired, an opportunity to assume a number of roles within the many subgroups that exist within the context of the program. A brief description of some of these subgroups follows:

**Jazz Band**

The jazz band program has four levels, from beginner to advanced. While students are placed in their large group by age so they remain with their peer cohort, the jazz bands are seated by ability. Students must be enrolled in a large group in order to be considered for placement in a jazz band. The focus of the large group program is balanced between ability and effort, but the jazz band program is geared more heavily to ability. The jazz band program is enrichment of the main program and is for students who want to play more challenging music in a different musical style. The assignment of musical roles in the jazz band is also different from the large group. In the large group, students may find
themselves sharing a part with two to ten other people; if an individual can’t play all of their part, it is likely that someone else in their section can play it. In jazz band, students are assigned one per part. If an individual can’t play all of their part, it is obvious to the rest of the group. Because of the seating of students by ability, the assignment of one person per part, and the more difficult nature of the music, students who elect to join jazz band tend to be the better players from the large group who are looking for a musical challenge.

**Music Students’ Executive**

There are many things in the program that can provide an opportunity for students to contribute in ways that do not involve their musical instruments. There is a stage crew to look after stage and equipment management, there is a sound crew that looks after recording the concerts for later distribution through CD’s and on the internet, as well as looking after the public address system. There is a student group to look after front of house requirements such as ticket sales and ushers, and there is a decorating crew that looks after preparing the concert hall with decorations for each concert. All these teams are coordinated through the Music Students’ Executive – a kind of music student council. The teams are made up of student volunteers and in each crew there emerges a leader or two who reports to the larger Music Students’ Executive and coordinates the activities of their group through them. This structure is parallel to the structure of the large and small musical ensembles, and the skills taught in the music classes are transferable to this setting. Because the instruments are
removed, it allows students the opportunity to occupy other roles in the group independent of their role as a musician.

**Yalom's Therapeutic Factors in the Program**

A number of the therapeutic factors that Yalom describes are at play in the program.

**Imparting Information.** Yalom draws a distinction between didactic instruction and direct advice. The program uses a lot of didactic instruction. As it is a high school course, obviously there is direct teaching of subject specific content. In addition there is some direct instruction about social interaction, and an attempt is made to keep these concepts as generalizable as possible.

What direct advice occurs happens between members of the group and occurs informally. There are not many occasions during group meetings when the group feels comfortable singling out one member for direct advice.

**Development of Socializing Techniques.** What social learning occurs in the group is largely indirect. Students receive musical and extra-musical feedback in the context of rehearsals and other group activities on a largely informal basis. On rare occasions I have taken on the role of mediator in helping small groups work out problems in social interaction. These instances usually revolve around the unwillingness of specific individuals to cooperate with the group. In the main, the socializing techniques that are learned are picked up indirectly. As the group leader, I try to provide as many opportunities as possible for this type of development to occur.
**Interpersonal Learning.** Of the three components of interpersonal learning that Yalom describes, the idea that the group is a social microcosm has the most relevance. Students don’t join or continue to remain in the program because they are interested in personal development, or that they consider their experiences in music as some kind of interpersonal therapy. Many students do refer to music class as therapeutic, but only in the sense that it provides a change from the bulk of their high school course work and allows them an opportunity to be personally creative. They have never commented informally to me that they come to band for interpersonal therapy; however, there is an aspect to the small group rehearsals that mirrors their social experiences and there is some attempt to help students change patterns of maladaptive behaviour so that the group can progress musically. Because the group is primarily task-focused, there is little time or willingness on the part of students to discuss the importance of interpersonal learning, or to providing a cognitive map for corrective emotional experiences.

**Altruism.** There are many opportunities for students to give to one another. Whether through help in small group sessions, or by volunteering on any of the committees such as the Music Executive, the students benefit from helping one another.

**The Corrective Recapitulation of the Primary Family Group.** I mention this factor only in passing and because of the oddity of the remarks that students have made. These comments and incidents seemed strange until I had reread Yalom.
As the only instrumental music teacher in the school, I teach the same students for five years. Some of these students I see three hours each week, and for students who are involved in other activities, such as jazz band or music executive, I may see them up to ten hours a week. If they remain in the program, this continues for five years. In many cases, I am the only constant adult in their lives, other than family members. There are no other teachers in the school that have this kind of continuous relationship with their students, except for the members of the special needs class. The number of students that have called me ‘Dad’ in informal conversation, and then quickly corrected themselves happens too often to be ignored. In one case, I had a student describe their music experience at Point Grey like being a member of a family, with my colleague who taught choir at the time being like the ‘Mum’ and me being like the ‘Dad’ looking after everyone. As stated, it all seemed a bit odd until viewed through Yalom. I do not feel that this is an important factor that participants would cite, but it is a curiosity, and Yalom’s perspective does seem to explain this behaviour.

**Group Cohesiveness.** Of all the factors identified by Yalom, this one seems the most important to the program. The indescribable nature of group cohesiveness makes it difficult to discuss. Everyone in the group is aware of it, and yet no two people describe it the same way; however, The success of the program from year to year has been the degree to which there is a feeling of ‘groupness’ present.

**Imitative Behaviour.** As the group leader, I am acutely aware that he is a model for his students. For example, I have observed some of the students
occasionally copying his style of speech. In addition, the students copy one another to some degree. The quirks of some of the more charismatic members of the group turn up in the behaviour of others, even if just for a short time. As a consequence, I am aware of my interpersonal style when rehearsing a group and try to model the kind of behaviour that I would like to see.

The Participants

The nine participants in the study left or graduated from the program between June 1994 and June 2000. The participants' current post secondary situation is shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Employment/Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Mechanical engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>Professional musician. Does some private teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>1st year Sciences at university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>4th year in natural resources conservation (B.Sc. Forestry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>Working for a management consultant and runs a web hosting company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>3rd year Engineering at university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>3rd year Music at university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
<td>1st year Sciences at university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>1st year university transfer program for Arts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants were asked to reflect on their high school experience. From these reflections the interview data was gathered.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The interviews were wide-ranging and covered many topics, but through the process of the interviews, and upon reflection of their content, some categories began to emerge:

1. The Value of Group Work
2. Self-Confidence
3. Mentoring
4. The Role of Teachers
5. Subject Specific Observations
6. General Impressions of High School

The Value of Group Work

Most of the participant's responses fell into this category. All of the participants talked about how the group experience was beneficial. These responses fell into two general categories, although there were many responses that could be construed as supporting either category.

Many responses talked about the interpersonal interactions involved in group work:

Everybody is friends with everybody else and working with those people throughout ...high school was so amazing. (P.3)
In order to work in a group, the participants repeatedly mentioned the value of learning to accommodate many different types of people in order to accomplish the group goals:

You learn a lot about personal skills, like jockeying for position for a certain part, like you don’t want to be a dick and say, “you are playing this wrong, I want to play it right”. That is not nice and it isn’t cool. You learn how to get along and play nice. There was a lot of times when (another musician) and I had big clashes, and it was about learning how to get past that for the good of the band. (P.6)

Meeting new people, learning to get along, finding new friends, and strengthening old ones all came up in this category. Many of the friends made during their time in music continue to this day. The varied opportunities and shared experiences seem to strengthen these interpersonal bonds:

I think of all the people that I hang out with now from high school, pretty much all of them were band people. (P.7)

The shared misery of 7:30 a.m. rehearsals, waiting backstage for performance calls, small group rehearsals, hanging out in the band room and on trips – there are many different examples of the participants identifying the importance of the day to day experience in the music program:

(Music) was also about the people and the music, you know, hanging out with my friends doing this activity. And you also happened to be learning, which is very convenient. (P.6)
The social hierarchy in high school can seem quite rigid and restrictive to many students and one participant commented on the lack of hierarchy and acceptance that he felt in the social milieu of the music department:

Yeah, I would say participating in Band was the most positive social experience I had in high school... I don't know, you wrestle with things in your regular classes, ... you have your geeks and all these social levels. You know the hierarchy of who is cool; all this crap is going on. In Band... you sort of attract the kind of people who like to do things together... But the same thing doesn't seem to be there; the (social) hierarchy was kind of flat. (P.7)

Another aspect of the group experience that was commented on frequently was the setting of goals and working toward a common purpose. This involves interpersonal skills, but it seems that the main value of the experience lies in contributing to something larger than themselves:

You could see progress over time and not just individual progress but progress as a whole. Which is really cool, and super important. You see how you fit into something that is greater than yourself, but you are necessary. (P.4)

Whether working toward a group project through the Music Students' Executive, or working toward a musical presentation, the sense of contributing to the larger collective and achieving something through that process is important. In one case, a working partnership that began with a project through the Music Executive led to a continuing business partnership:
(Our web hosting business) just kind of took off, but it was all because of the Night of Jazz (an event organized by the Music Students' Executive) that we became friends and linked up, so it was a high school experience (that got us started). (P. 5)

Learning how to unite and work with people that have different agendas or different levels of commitment to the task at hand was cited frequently. Being able to manage a small group within the larger group to achieve an end was a significant part of one participant's experience.

...there were a lot of slackers so I had to deal with that problem, because it made things not as much fun for me and so when you come to Symphonic Band and only a few people want to play, it kind of makes your part useless. Like if there is just this one part not supporting all the other parts, its not fun...So you've got to learn how to deal with that, try somehow to get them to play without being an enemy. Cause they are friends. That took me about a year to figure out. (P. 9)

In his current job while attending college, Participant 9 has hired many of the members of his small group. He laughed about it, and during his time in high school he frequently talked to me about strategies for managing his "problem group", but he has deliberately chosen to continue to work with these individuals as their manager in his current employment situation.

Participants frequently stated that learning to resolve conflict to achieve a collective goal was a skill they learned in the program that they frequently use now. Two participants felt that they had been given an advantage in their current
situations because they had learned how to manage conflict so well in their high school years:

(I had) all the experience playing in the jazz band and the combo, and so when I went to ... university, I had all this experience under my belt already, so it was just night and day. I assume that working with other people teaches you how to work with other people. I do that pretty well; I don’t go into rehearsal and get mad or start arguing with people, and I think that applies to most aspects of my life. Just going in with the idea of accomplishing something, whatever situation it is, whether it is discussing something or rehearsing something ... I think it all helps. Just getting along with people. (P.2)

Or this from Participant 5:

Yeah, I felt there was a lot of people looking at me and saying, “Shut up, you don’t know anything, let us do it.” Which was a negative experience, but at the same time, having (found) myself in the conflict situation, (I had to) figure out how to get out of that situation. In the end it was successful, because I used these skills at work or in social situations. ... If I hadn’t been involved though, I wouldn’t have had the experience. (P. 5)

One participant has actively sought experiences at the university she attends that mimic the positive experiences she had leading a team toward achieving a group goal:

...dealing with the Music Executive was so different; different people at each other’s throats all the time. So that was hard to deal with, especially
with individual members too, because everyone seemed to have problems with one person, and then you had to deal with that. ... So I kind of took that on to university because I want to help with intramurals next year, and I love organizing and I love organizing things. I think that came from music, too. Even though it was the same kind of stress all the time, it was really fun.

**Self-Confidence**

Seven of the participants made statements that demonstrated that they gained a sense of self-confidence through participating in the music program. That sense of confidence seemed to come from two areas, and again these areas are intertwined.

One was the sense of confidence gained through conceived proficiency on their chosen instrument, or in the conceived proficiency of the group. The term 'conceived' is used because in each grade cohort there is a fairly wide range of ability levels on each instrument, as well as a smaller but nonetheless real difference in the achievement levels of the various groups from year to year. The **actual** achievement seems to be of little importance, however; it is the participant's conception of their perception of their achievement that is the key to building confidence.

If I wasn't ... good at music, I don't know if I would feel this complete. If I'm going to school, its always sort of there that I'm good at something. When your good at stuff, it just gives you more confidence everywhere else. (P. 9)
A lot of those (other high school) classes I didn’t do really well in them and it decreased my confidence... Whereas music was there to increase it, to push it back up and I think that is one of the biggest things I got from music (at Point Grey): A good feeling about myself and the belief that I could do something, and I was interested in something. (P.2)

Many participants commented on acquiring the skills and the discipline to be good at their instrument.

Yeah, its given me something to define who I am... its something I’m proud of because being in this music program gave me the skills. I’ve got a really good (rock) band (now) and I think just the discipline of ... (the large group) has made us a lot better at playing... (P. 9)

The sense of individual accomplishment and pride in doing a good job, of contributing something that was valued by the larger group all were cited as confidence building experiences.

Giving someone a chance to shine on the their own terms does a lot for their confidence level. (P. 6)

The other source of confidence is related to the group social experience. Some of the participants cited being successful at interpersonal interaction as being a very important confidence builder. Many also commented on the transferability of their sense of confidence. Being confident in the music program carried into other classes and on into their post high school endeavours.

It gave me a lot of confidence that I was able to (play my instrument) well and I think that gave me confidence in other classes as well. (P. 9)
Mentoring

To some participants, being mentored by older students and then having the opportunity to mentor younger students held great importance. As a young student, they appreciated that they had an opportunity to interact with a student who was older who usually played the same instrument:

I looked up to Participant 4 when she was here. I never ever could be that good. Ever. But with practice, it worked. (P. 9)

Especially at the Grade 8 and Grade 9 levels, the stigma of being a “band geek” is very difficult. To interact with someone who is older, who is proficient on their instrument, and who (hopefully) is seen as “cool” goes a long way to lessening this stigma and shows the young students what is possible for them to achieve, both socially and musically.

More often than being mentored though, participants wanted the opportunity to be a mentor. Participant 9 felt strongly about this:

I wish people ... could have shown me some stuff... Like (the older students) coming in to show me rock beats, like I did for the younger ones. You know, be a leader that way, help them with their music so they come up to me in the hall and ask me questions. (P. 9)

Participant 3 echoed these points.

Yeah, like somebody taught me how to get up there, and so I wanted to teach (the younger students). (P. 3)

The opportunity to give something back, to be looked up to or recognized for contributing something to another person was very positive. Whether working
with peers their own age or with younger students, participants gained a sense of altruism and pride in their own abilities by being able to share with others.

The Role of the Teacher

One of the great parts of teaching music in a school that has students from Grade 8 to 12 is the opportunity to teach the same students year after year. I have previously commented on the unique position I occupy as a constant adult figure through my students' years at high school, while all their other teachers change from year to year. This special relationship comes with a sense of great responsibility. Five of the participants cited the role of teachers in general, and me specifically, as being an important part of their high school experiences:

...the thing about teachers that got me is their energy and their personal interest in what they were doing. I could really feel that, their personal interest in what they were teaching but also their ability to be interested in the kids. You could sense that, when they were interested they had a sort of energy about them, an enthusiasm, which you know, transmits from one to the other. (P. 2)

One participant commented on my role as a model in his learning:

...You taught us through your actions and the way you spoke ... we treated you like a friend, so I think that informal or more relaxed style made things more comfortable and it taught us... Its really tough trying to put all the lessons together in summing them up 'cause it was really just an attitude... Respectful and mature responsible attitude. I don't know how to put it better than that. (P. 6)
The atmosphere that a teacher sets and the manner in which expectations are laid out has a great bearing on student experience. The impact of the modeling done by the teacher should not be underestimated.

**Subject Specific Observations**

Of particular interest to me at the outset was whether individuals who had decided to make music their vocation learned or valued different things than the other participants. While more of the interview was taken discussing aspects specific to music with the two participants who have continued with formal music study, it is interesting that many of the students who have continued to play avocationally at different levels also spent more time talking about subject specific outcomes. Many of these individuals were playing or singing in groups outside the school during their high school years, or taking private lessons, so the musical knowledge they gained from the program they were also getting in other places. While six participants made subject specific references in their interviews and valued the musical knowledge and skills they had learned, they also stated or implied that they would have learned this material elsewhere if they hadn't been in the program. The frequency of subject specific comments appears to depend not only on whether the participants continued with the formal study of music, but also whether they continued to play at any level after high school.

**General Impressions of High School**

Many of the participants cited the music program as being one of the highlights of their time in high school. While students remarked generally about their high school experiences, it is difficult to generalize about their responses
beyond saying that all of the participants had very different overall impressions. Whether the participants had a positive or negative view of high school, all commented on the positive impact of the music program.

**Observations Of The Researcher**

The following section is based on my observations and did not come directly from the interview participants. During the course of the interviews, my unique position as the participants' former teacher meant that the participants were self-conscious about disclosing some information. Gentle probes into these sensitive areas usually met with resistance. Nonetheless, there were areas that both the participants and I were aware of but unable to discuss. These areas varied from participant to participant, but usually involved talking directly about their impressions of me.

Participant 7 was of particular interest. During his high school career, he was a top performing academic student; with very little effort, he managed to obtain high marks. Many of his teachers commented on how creative and advanced his ideas were for a young person, especially in English class. At the beginning of his grade 8 year, it was apparent that he was going to have a difficult time socially. He made a conscious decision to wear all black clothing, and he stopped cutting his hair. He vowed to wear all black and not cut his hair until he had finished high school, a vow he kept. The black clothing and long hair became his trademark through his high school years. Socially, he found an accepting group of people in the music department, and I suspect other peer groups elsewhere in the school largely rejected him. While his initial forays as a
player were not promising, through hard work and effort he became one of the better players that I have had the pleasure to teach. The peer group that he was accepted into were all music students and mostly male. I suspect that this group of music students was the only social group where Participant 7 felt comfortable. His frequent negative comments about the social hierarchy of high school dominated much of his interview, which is why, along with observation, that I suspect his social experiences outside of the circle of music students was largely negative. When asked about his decision to study music, Participant 7 said that his positive social experiences had influenced his decision. His other teachers led me to believe that because of his academic prowess, he could choose virtually any field and expect to excel, while at the outset of his music studies, music was not a subject for which he appeared to have an overwhelming aptitude. I suspect that Participant 7's decision to continue with music study - initially an area of relative weakness - was an attempt to perpetuate the accepting community of peers that he had built up around himself during high school.

His interview was also characterized by an unwillingness to talk about himself in negative high school social situations. He frequently talked in the third person, or spoke about what the experience might be like for others, or for groups of people that may have included him. Also absent was any comment about my role in his high school life, but it was definitely 'in the room'; neither Participant 7 nor myself were comfortable bringing it up. Participant 7 is someone whom I hold in high regard and therefore found it difficult to approach this topic.
While Participant 1’s interview was the longest (approximately 1 hour), it revealed very little useful data. Most of Participant 1’s observations were extremely specific and situational; attempts to force generalizations were met with resistance. Frequently, the interview degenerated into reminiscing about specific incidents or listing off events. It did not appear that the participant was uncomfortable talking about his past experiences; he had good memories of his high school career. He was very enthusiastic about participating in the study and was keen to contribute useful material. Almost all general questions were answered with lengthy descriptions of specific instances and lists of the people involved. He seemed unable to generalize from his experience. My reflections on the interview have not led to any other insight about this.

Participant 8 would characterize incidents as good or bad, but seemed unable or unwilling to connect his emotional responses to anything concrete. When asked at one point why something was good, he was at a loss to explain why – he just knew it was good. Connecting his emotions to his experiences was a slow process for him, and fits with my experience of him during his high school years. He participated heavily in the program, and became very musically proficient, yet it always seemed that he was having a negative or neutral experience. In light of his attitude and general day to day demeanour, I often wondered why he chose to stay in the program at all, yet he appeared year after year. His volunteering to take part in the study was another surprise. It seems that he cannot characterize his experiences as good or bad until well after they
have happened. He seems to push himself to do things that he is not sure he wants to do in order to realize an emotional response later.

Participant 9’s strong sense of self-confidence seems to stem from his ability as a musician. He chose not to study music after high school, but still plays and seems to derive a strong sense of self from his skills as a player. He frequently cited the confidence that comes with proficiency as one of the important aspects of his high school musical career.

All of the study participants played in the concert bands made up of students in their age cohort, but in addition they were all involved in at least one other aspect of the program. The involvement in extra activities is important. The nine participants where all very involved in different aspects of the program and as such seemed to gain more from their experience. For example, here is a brief excerpt of Participant 3’s interview:

... I think you have to get into the whole thing, or it doesn’t work.
I: What do you mean “the whole thing”? 
P: The whole band experience...
I: Like Music Exec?
P: Yeah, all the different things. ... we did stage crew and that helped too, you know, organizing the concerts and decorating. I did the whole thing. I think that if your heart is not in it, and you are not going to try those things, then you can’t really enjoy band. So we all really loved being there, and so that is why we did everything... (P. 3)

On the following page is a summary of all the participants’ involvement:
Table 2: Study participants' involvement in the music program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Concert Band</th>
<th>Jazz Band</th>
<th>Music Executive</th>
<th>Pit Orchestra</th>
<th>Other Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Stage Crew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Stage Crew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Stage Crew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Stage Crew</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One other aspect that came up in every interview was the importance of the large trips. Participation in the large trips was a defining moment for many of the participant’s high school memories. Why they were important seemed to be related to how the group ‘bonded’. This relates to Yalom’s group cohesiveness therapeutic factor, and the previous quote bears repeating:

Group cohesiveness “is like dignity; everyone can recognize it, but apparently no one can describe it, let alone measure it.” (p. 48)

The trips seemed to be the opportunity to put all the aspects of the program to the test; all the direct and indirect instruction and experiences come together and are applied during the trip. The strong sense of group cohesiveness achieved during the trips made those memories very potent.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with an overall summary of this study's problem and findings. Following the summary, conclusions will be made according to insights gained from the study.

Summary

Chapter One began with an introduction to the study. As a music educator, I suspected that much of what was being learned by students in the music program at Point Grey Secondary included extra-musical outcomes. Specifically:

1. What do past students identify as the extra-musical outcomes of the music program at Point Grey?

2. Why do past graduates of the program feel these outcomes are important?

In order to orient the reader to my approach to the problem, an overview of selected readings in cooperative learning, self-esteem, and group therapy was offered.

Chapter Two presented a review of the literature. In psychology there has been much written about the group process, and in music there are volumes of research on musical outcomes from music programs. Very little has been researched on group processes in music education from a student's perspective. The lone study discovered presented findings that pointed to the importance of extra-musical factors in the rehearsal setting, but did not discuss them in great detail.
Chapter Three provided a description of the music program at Point Grey and some background on the study's participants. The aim of the program, in addition to teaching basic musicianship, is to give students opportunities to encourage their personal development by contributing in a group setting. The contributions can be musical (through one of the music ensembles) or non-musical (through the Music Students' Executive, for example). The hope is that students will be able to find an area where they can "step up and shine." (P. 2)

The overview of participants is meant to show that graduates of the program over the past 6 years have found themselves in varied fields of study and employment.

Chapter Four presented the research findings. The participants' responses fell into 6 categories: (1) The Value of Group Work, (2) Self-Confidence, (3) Mentoring, (4) The Role of Teachers, (5) Subject Specific Observations, and (6) General Impressions of High School.

Conclusions and Implications for Practice

I have attempted to explore an area of psychology and music education that has not been directly studied very often, if at all. Participants in the study valued their time in the program highly, and the reasons for the high valuation suggest questions for further study, and ways in which the program can be altered to enhance the delivery of extra-musical outcomes.

Participants cited the value of group work most often. The benefits of group work centred around achieving goals and on successful interpersonal relationships. Any attempts that can be made to maximize these effects in the
day-to-day experience in the classroom would be beneficial. For example, in September I will be spending more time on goal setting exercises and working explicitly with students to help set personal goals in music, as well modeling goal setting strategies in the small and large groups. The individual goal setting described in term two of the program (see page 37) will get an earlier start. In addition, more time will be spent on small group interaction, with a stronger focus at the beginning of the year on interpersonal processes, rather than music instruction.

Self-confidence and self-esteem were also important outcomes for participants. It seems that self-confidence is derived from proficiency in music and from proficiency in interpersonal skills. This confidence seems to transfer out of the musical arena for many students and allows them a personal foundation from which to experiment and take risks in other areas of their lives. There are many ways that this can be addressed in the regular day to day of the classroom. Through written activities, students could be asked to expound on past positive musical experiences, or within their small groups, discussion could be directed toward early positive musical experiences and how those experiences have influenced their current development. I will be implementing discussion within the small groups of the program at Point Grey this year along these lines.

Mentoring and being mentored was cited frequently. From the feeling of being welcomed by older students, to the responsibilities of being a mentor to younger students, participants felt that this was an important aspect of the program. This result surprised me a little because it seemed that this part of the
program was not particularly popular with the students. As a result, I had removed many of the opportunities for mentoring and being mentored. I will be restarting a mentoring component in the program to allow senior students opportunities to help younger students. This will involve seniors leading masterclasses on their instruments for the beginner and intermediate players.

The teacher has a role to play in the process. Participants commented on the difference in their relationship to me compared to other teachers in the school. The atmosphere that the teacher nurtures in the rehearsal room and the behaviour modeled in and out of the classroom appear to be the most important parts of this aspect. The power of modeling was driven home to me during the course of this study. More than what is taught or said, students remember acutely how the teacher interacts with others. I will be a little self-conscious trying to model the behaviour I wish to see in my students come September.

Students who continue to play and study music vocationally and avocationally commented on the value of the music specific outcomes of the program more than those who no longer play.

The participant’s range of responses about their general high school experience was large. Some students cited the music program as the only thing positive about their high school career, while others found many positive things about high school, of which the music program was only one part.

Many participants saw the trips that the music program undertakes each year as very important. The responses indicate that the trips provided a concentrated opportunity to apply their musical and extra-musical skills. The
sense of accomplishment and pride that resulted was highly valued. All of the components of the program seem to come together for the participants during the trips.

Thoughts For Future Research

There is a dearth of research from the student’s perspective on the outcomes of music programs. This study has presented some basic ideas that lead to other questions:

Further exploration of the role of the teacher needs to be conducted. The perspective gained by me provides one perspective, but there is awareness that by asking his ex-students, I would be privy to some information not accessible to other researchers, and I would also not have access to some information. While teacher modeling and classroom atmosphere were cited as important, there is more that can be discovered about how this pertains to music programs, both in musical and extra-musical achievement.

Because so many of the participant’s responses were about group work, a stronger focus on this aspect might reveal more subtle variations in responses than the two general categories revealed here.

The importance of the trips as a crystallizing event needs to be looked at in more detail with a focus on group cohesiveness.
REFERENCES


MUSIC COURSE EVALUATION

Several components make up a music course. To achieve a particular letter grade you must complete all the assignments required and make sure your work meets the described standard. The following is a list of course requirements:

1. **MUSIC AND TECHNIQUE IN CLASS: 15%**

You will be marked several times in each term during class time on excerpts from the pieces we are working on, and on a checklist of exercises and studies assigned to each grade level. These tests will be worth 10 or 20 marks each.

2. **INDIVIDUAL TESTING: 20%**

At least once per term you will be required to make an appointment for testing. The material will be assigned in advance and will generally be on exercises and pieces worked on in class. These tests will occur primarily outside of class time. **It is your responsibility to sign up for a test.**

3. **THEORY: 15%**

There will be one theory test each term that will cover any material we have discussed in class.

4. **PRACTICE: 20%**

In order to develop skills as an individual musician and to improve the quality of the group, practice is necessary. Private home practice is required and 1/2 hour per day is recommended. Grade 8 band students will receive a practice record to
be taken home and filled out each week for the first term. In addition to home practice, all students will be evaluated using sectional rehearsals. A 'sectional' is defined as any group of two or more people working together on the same music. A sectional rehearsal must be twenty minutes or longer and should be used to work on parts, and on blend and balance.

5. **ATTENDANCE: 20%**

Attendance at rehearsals and performances will make up a significant portion of your mark. Each student will receive 20 marks at the beginning of each term.

**PERFORMANCE:** Performances are like term projects in a music program; therefore, attendance is mandatory. There will be several performances that you will be required to attend as a member of a Point Grey performing group. These performances are listed on the attached calendar and will not be altered without group consensus. An unexcused absence from a performance will cost you all 20 marks and your future participation in the music department will be in question.

**REHEARSALS:** An unexcused absence from a rehearsal will result in a loss of 4 marks. If you are 5 minutes late, you will lose 1 mark. More than 5 minutes late will cost you 2 marks. If your total for term approaches zero, your parents, Mr. Taylor and you will have to discuss your future participation in the music program.

7. **CLASS PARTICIPATION: 10%**

Easy marks to gain and just as easy to lose. Bring your music, a pencil, an instrument, and a good attitude to class and you will get full marks. Talking out
of turn, low effort, and a negative attitude in class will be considered in this area. An easy 10% if you watch yourself.

**MUSIC STUDENTS CAN EXPECT:**

1. To participate in at least three performances, one of which will be located outside the school.
2. To learn a large number of musical selections in a variety of styles.
3. To be tested on your knowledge of the parts you play and on other general musical information that is presented in class.
4. To perform at a high standard.
5. To have available all the details of each method of evaluation in each course.
6. To be taught the correct method of playing your instrument.
7. To be given teaching and encouragement regardless of natural ability.
8. To be encouraged to participate in school activities both inside and outside the Music Department and to be supported in making compromises where there are conflicts.

**THE TEACHER WILL EXPECT:**

1. **Participation** to the full extent of your ability with energy and enthusiasm.
2. **Attendance** at all performances and rehearsals already scheduled and those agreed upon by your group.
3. **Punctuality** - be on time for class and be sitting down warming up your instrument when attendance is being taken.
4. **Open-mindedness** regarding musical styles.
5. **Willingness to try something new.**
DAILY SURVIVAL GUIDE - WHAT YOU NEED FOR CLASS EACH DAY

a) A pencil and an eraser.

b) Your instrument.

c) Your music.

** Brass Players **
- Valve and/or slide cream.
- Tuning slide grease.

** Percussion Players **
- One pair of drumsticks
- A room temperature I.Q.

** Reed Players **
- Three good reeds. THREE!
- Cork grease

** String Players **
- Rosin.
- A rag.

GENERAL INFORMATION

REHEARSAL SCHEDULES
The music program at Point Grey runs mostly off the timetable to allow students who are taking a full academic load to participate. PLEASE ARRIVE AT LEAST TEN MINUTES PRIOR TO THE START OF YOUR REHEARSAL. This is to allow time for set up of instruments and chairs. The rehearsal times for the various groups are as follows:

Symphonic Band:  Monday: 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. (everyone)

Wednesday: 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. (Band uno)

Friday: 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. (Band primo)
Please note that Symph Band members will only attend one morning rehearsal per week.

**Jazz Band D:**
- Monday: 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Auditorium
- Tuesday: 3:20 - 4:30 p.m. Band Room

**Jazz Band C:**
- Monday: 3:20 - 4:30 p.m. Band Room
- Thursday: 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Band Room

**Jazz Band B:**
- Monday: 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Band Room
- Wednesday: 3:20 - 4:30 p.m. Band Room

**Jazz Band A:**
- Tuesday: 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Band Room
- Thursday: 3:20 - 4:30 p.m. Band Room

**Pit Orchestra:**
- Monday: Lunch Auditorium
- Wednesday: 3:20 - 5:30 p.m. Auditorium

**QUALIFICATION FOR MUSIC TRIPS**

Belonging to a particular group does not automatically entitle you to participate in a Music Department trip. You must earn this privilege. Attendance, achievement, behaviour, and attitude will be monitored throughout the year and it will be on that basis that a student will be invited to participate.

Your attendance record will also effect whether or not you will be invited on a Music Department trip. If you demonstrate an inability to be on time or skip classes you will not be invited to participate.

**MUSIC STUDENTS’ EXECUTIVE**

This year the music students’ executive will be organizing fundraising events for students, planning and implementing the Jazz Night, helping out with
preparation and backstage management at concerts, and working on other projects. The music executive is a great way to get involved with other music students, learn to work in teams, and get some experience in a leadership capacity. Involvement is voluntary and we welcome all interested students. The first meeting of the year will be on Monday, September 11th at lunch. We encourage all interested students to come out and see what we’re about.
COMMITMENT FORM

To all Music Parents:

Please note the rehearsal times and concert dates on the previous two pages. Attendance is expected at all rehearsals and at the events listed on the year's calendar. Please read this with your student, discuss the commitment involved and return this form to the school by FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8th.

If you have questions or problems with any of the policies, procedures, or with making a commitment to the events listed, please feel free to phone me at school, or leave your phone number and a few times that you are available and I will phone you.

Your signature along with your student's signature indicates that you have read the above and your student will be present at the listed rehearsals and events, barring unforeseen circumstances.

_________________________________________  ___________________________________________
Name of parent   Name of student

_________________________________________
Signature of parent  ___________________________________________
Signature of student
If you have any questions and would like to discuss them with Mr. Taylor, please leave your phone number and some suggestions for good times to call.

Phone number:____________

Times available________________________

________________________

________________________

The school phone number is ***.****

Thank You,

Brent Taylor
SAMPLE MUSIC DEPARTMENT CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

Saturday, Sept. 22: Music Department Car Wash (Rain date: Sat. Oct. 7)
• All groups

OCTOBER

Wednesday, Oct 22-23 Jazz Retreat
• All jazz groups

NOVEMBER

Thursday, Nov. 15: Vancouver District Jazz Festival
• Jazz Bands A & B
Monday, Nov. 19: Symphonic Band Small Ensemble Concert
• Symphonic Band

DECEMBER

Wednesday, Dec. 12: Afternoon winter matinee concert for elementary students.
• Symphonic Band
• Jazz A
• Vocal Jazz
• Senior Chamber Choir

Wednesday, Dec. 13 and
Thursday, Dec. 14: Winter Concerts
• All groups

JANUARY

Wednesday, Jan. 30: Grade 7 Parents' Night
• Jazz Band A

FEBRUARY

Wednesday, Feb. 24: Annual “Tour of the Neighbourhood” elementary school concerts
• Jazz Band A
• 37th Ave.

MARCH

Monday, March 25 Senior Music Tour to the U.K.

Friday, April 5
• Symphonic Band
• Senior Chamber Choir
• Jazz Band A
• Vocal Jazz

APRIL
MAY

Friday, May 10: Point Grey's Jazz Night

- All Jazz Bands
- Vocal Jazz

Wednesday, May 22 and

Thursday, May 23: Spring Concerts

- All groups

JUNE

Friday, June 7: Graduation Ceremony

- Concert Band 9
- Symphonic Band (Grade 10 and 11 students only)