

**To Practice or Not to Practice:
What Influences the Practice Habits of My Students?**

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INTRODUCTION

A common issue encountered by instrumental music teachers across the country is a lack of independent student practicing. In order for students to make progress on their instrument of choice, they need to review the concepts and musical selections that are taught in school or during private lessons. Since music is a physical activity, musicians need to build up the muscles required in order to succeed. For example, brass players need to build their lip strength to be able to play for longer periods of time and to be able to play notes across the whole range of their instruments. Woodwind players need to build muscle memory and dexterity so that they are able to switch quickly and accurately between all the possible notes on their instruments. Percussionists need to have good stick and mallet control and need to be able to perform complicated rhythms with ease. Without regular independent practice time, progress is slow or nonexistent.

Throughout my seven years of teaching in two different school districts, I have encountered many students who seem to truly enjoy playing their instruments and being part of band. However, many of those students do not demonstrate their dedication in their practicing. A large number of my students rarely practice or never practice at all. Some students, on the other hand, practice every day or almost every day. This makes planning for lessons and band rehearsals very difficult since some students are more prepared than others.

I am currently the fourth and fifth grade instrumental music teacher at Arthur Stanlick School and the first grade vocal music teacher at Ellen T. Briggs School in Jefferson Township, NJ. For the purposes of this research project, I concentrated on my instrumental music instruction at Stanlick. Stanlick is located in the Lake Hopatcong section of town and has a population of approximately 380 students in third through fifth grade. Each year, I instruct

roughly 150 students who have enrolled in the instrumental music program. Depending on the year, I typically have between 60 and 75% of the fourth and fifth graders involved in band.

Jefferson Township's population is comprised of middle to upper middle class families, but there are quite a few families that have financial difficulties especially in the Lake Hopatcong section of town. Although Jefferson is predominately Caucasian, there are subsets of Black, Hispanic, and Asian (predominantly Indian) students that provide diversity. Because my students vary in socioeconomic status and ethnic background, there are many different levels of parental support for their participation in band.

Students enrolled in the instrumental program attend one full ensemble rehearsal each week as well as one smaller group pullout lesson. Each lesson and rehearsal is 35 minutes in length. Ensemble rehearsals are held at the same time every week while the pullout lesson times rotate to ensure that students do not miss the same subject more than once a month. Lesson group assignments are based on the student's instrument and grade level. Most groups contain approximately six to eight students, however, due to schedule constraints, some groups have up to ten students. Ideally, each group would only have four to six students so that I could give each student the individual attention they need. Since I only have four days to schedule my instrumental instruction and have a large number of students involved in band, I am not able to keep my groups as small as I would like.

Band students are given a practicing assignment each week and asked to practice for at least 90 minutes throughout the week. Students are encouraged to practice at least three times during the week rather than trying to cram all 90 minutes into one session. I ask the students to log their practice times on a practice record that is collected each month and counted toward their

overall grade in band. Parents are asked to initial each week on the practice record to verify that their child practiced the amount of time that was logged.

I use several different strategies to motivate my students to practice. Each week in lessons, I encourage them to review their music and remind them of the importance of regular practicing. Since I know many of my students are not intrinsically motivated, I also use an incentive program to extrinsically motivate them. Every couple of weeks, I ask the students to play a song from their practicing assignment for me. I do not tell them ahead of time which song will be chosen and they often do not know which weeks they will be asked to play. If the students play the song correctly, they earn a sticker. Once they have earned ten stickers, they can choose a prize from my prize box.

Each year I have varied levels of response from the students on their practice records. Madison, a fifth grade flute student, practiced religiously for 90 minutes every week from when she began in fourth grade and throughout fifth grade. She always made sure to write down her practicing assignment and was always prepared to play those songs and examples at the next lesson. Richie, a fifth grade saxophonist, never practiced and never filled out a practice record. Any improvements made one week would be completely forgotten by the next lesson. Luke, a fifth grade trumpet player, practiced consistently throughout fourth and fifth grade and could play his music well but was not as consistent in completing and turning in his practice records.

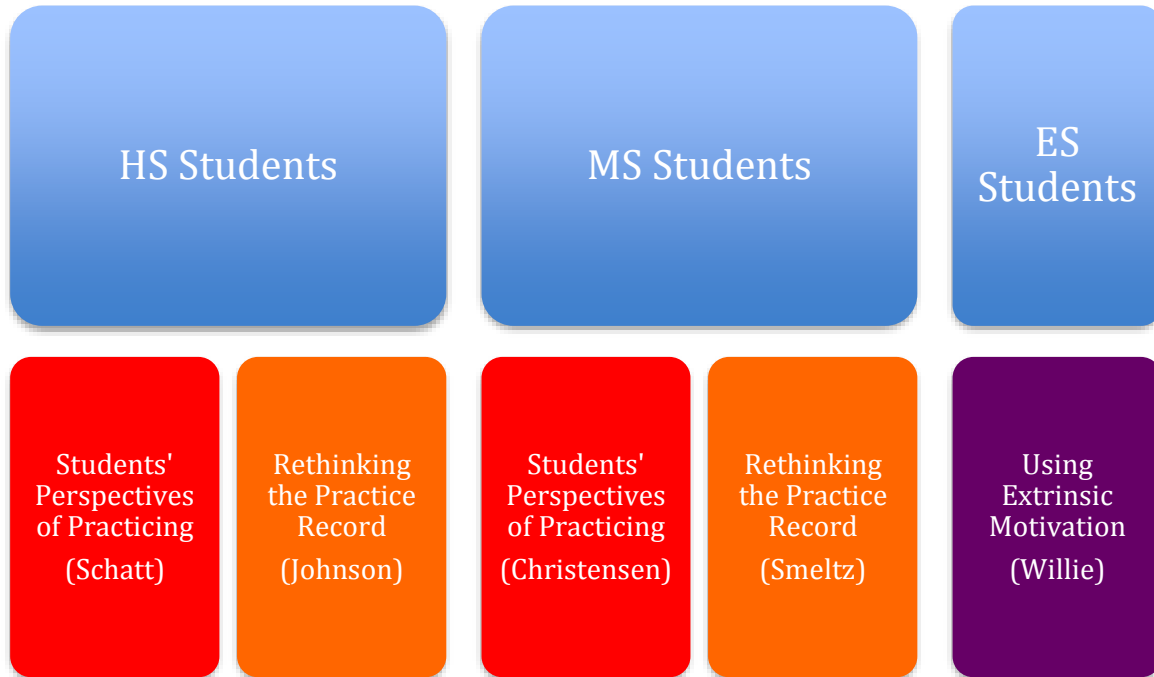
Because of the disparate practice habits of my students, each ensemble and lesson group's progress is often slowed to be sure that none of the students is left behind. Often, I spend weeks reviewing the same section of an ensemble piece or the same exercise in the lesson book because the majority of the students have not practiced at home. Constantly reviewing the same music becomes frustrating and tedious for me and for the students, whether they have

practiced their assignment or not. Lack of progress on the ensemble music also means that we may not be able to perform all of the music I have planned for a concert. This happened with my fifth grade band this past spring. I had chosen an ambitious program of five pieces but we were only able to perform three selections because the students as a whole were not practicing enough to make significant progress on the more difficult pieces.

The success of the instrumental program depends on my students' practice habits. With only one lesson and rehearsal each week, practice at home is crucial to help the students remember the concepts we have discussed and to build the muscle memory needed to develop their technical abilities. Because of the variation in practice times across my ensembles, I am not able to guide my students through as much repertoire and as many technique exercises as I would like. Since regular practicing is so important for my students' growth as instrumentalists, I wanted to gain a better understanding of the factors that influence their practice time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Age level of students studied and study focus for the articles used



Students’ Perspectives of Practicing

“The amount and quality of time spent improving musical skills through practice has a direct impact on instrumental music success” (Schatt, 2011, p. 29). Ask any music teacher and they will agree whole-heartedly with that statement. However, most music teachers have also experienced difficulties in getting students to spend the necessary amount of time practicing on their own at home. Since I too have found it difficult to motivate my students to practice regularly, I have always wondered about their perceptions of practicing. Do they enjoy it, hate it, or is it somewhere in-between? Do they recognize the value of practicing to help them improve on their instruments? Matthew D. Schatt had similar questions and conducted a study using students in grades nine through twelve.

Susan Hallam identifies three groupings of motivational factors present in human nature: those derived from the individual, those from environmental factors, and those from the

interactions between the individual and environmental factors “mediated by cognition” (as cited in Schatt, 2011, p. 30). Thus, we tend to spend more time on activities that we value and consider to be worth the effort needed to reach the target goal. In addition to considering these motivational factors, Schatt also used attribution theory to develop his study. His idea was as follows:

[T]he choice to practice (or not practice) a musical instrument could be because of a student’s perceptions of a lack of ability, his or her inability to expend sufficient effort on the task, an usually high perceived task difficulty, or his or her discernment of luck regarding a task. (Schatt, 2011, p. 31)

He adapted the Practice Attribution Survey, a 21-item survey using a Likert-type scale used by other researchers in their similar studies, for his own use. His study consisted of 218 high school students from three different high schools in the Midwest, representing a variety of grade levels and nearly evenly divided in terms of gender. Students’ responses were confidential and anonymous so that they would feel free to respond honestly.

After analyzing the data from the survey, Schatt found that students valued the attributes of effort and ability the highest, thus indicating that “students understand that if they would like to improve on their instruments, practicing is a necessity” (2011, p. 36). He also found that students seemed to gravitate toward the statements connected with achieving positive progress rather than avoiding failure. “It may be presumed that students do care about their musical development and desire to succeed more than they wish to be included in the class merely for social reasons” (Schatt, 2011, p. 37).

Overall, I found Schatt’s article to be helpful because his questions are very similar to my own. My greatest challenge in reading about his research was in understanding the results as

they are largely presented in statistical jargon. While I consider myself to be highly proficient in math, I have not taken any instruction in statistics so I do not have the background to fully comprehend Schatt's results. However, I do appreciate that he presented many of his data comparisons in table form in addition to the verbal explanations. The tables were helpful to me as a visual learner and also simplified some of the statistical analyses so that they were easier to understand.

Schatt's results are both comforting and exasperating at the same time. It is good to know that, at least among the participants in his survey, practicing is valued and seen as a necessity for achieving improvement on their instruments. However, if students do value practicing, why are there many that choose not to practice regularly? This contrast between value and action is precisely the reason for my interest in my own research topic.

Stephanie E. Christensen was also curious to learn about her students' perceptions of practicing after she discovered, through an anonymous end-of-the-year survey, that the large majority of her students were exaggerating their weekly practice times to receive a higher grade (2010, p. 1). She decided to focus on how her eighth grade students were practicing in addition to the amount of time spent and their level of enjoyment through a case study of two students and their parents.

Christensen conducted interviews with each of her study participants and had each student videotape a practice session so she could observe them. She found that neither student put much emphasis on the amount of time they practiced (Christensen, 2010, p. 7), and, while both mentioned several practicing strategies during the interview process, neither student fully applied these strategies during their recorded practice sessions. This seems to indicate that "the problem of student practicing may extend beyond simply teaching students how to practice. It

seems that for the participants, the greatest potential for improved practice seems not to be more knowledge but the application of preexisting knowledge” (Christensen, 2010, p. 8).

Both of the student participants in Christensen’s case study acknowledged a distinction between practicing and playing their instrument solely for enjoyment’s sake.

Both participants anticipate involvement in various musical activities throughout their lives, and it seems reasonable that their long-term expectations of continued involvement are indicative of a personal enjoyment that they derive from playing their instruments. However, ...playing is not necessarily synonymous with practicing, and by extension, practicing is not always fun. (Christensen, 2010, p. 7)

This raises the question of how we as educators can make practicing more enjoyable to students so that they are more likely to engage in practicing on a regular basis.

I enjoyed reading about Christensen’s case study and the narrative style of her writing. The format of the article was very similar to what I envisioned my final research paper would become, so it was helpful in that respect in addition to the similar topic she pursued. Because her study was conducted over a limited time frame, she was only able to study two of her students. It would be interesting to see how some of her other students’ practice habits and perspectives of practicing might change the overall results of her study. This will potentially be a challenge in my own research. Although I did survey a majority of my students, I focused much of my research on a focus group of four students.

This article inspired me to incorporate questions similar to those that Christensen used for my focus group interviews. While it was not the initial focus of my research questions, I decided to consider how my students are practicing in addition to the amount of time since, judging from

Christensen's results, that most likely affects their level of enjoyment and thus their motivation to practice.

Using Extrinsic Motivation

In this age of instant gratification, Jesse Willie advocates using extrinsic motivation to encourage students to build practice habits. In his school, he uses "band-bucks" as rewards for achieving a certain amount of practice time and for successfully playing the benchmark songs he has selected from the lesson book. Once Willie implemented this system with his beginning band, he saw a great improvement in his students' motivation to practice.

It didn't matter what form the extrinsic factors took, as long as they were present. The idea of learning a music instrument no longer seemed daunting to them. Instead, because success came so quickly in the form of band-bucks, their need for instant gratification was met. And, most interestingly, they seemed to begin to enjoy practicing and, every once in a while, even forgot about the band-bucks after passing off a page (Willie, 2014, p. 30).

Willie does mention that, at the beginning of implementing this reward system, students did not seem to fully understand the quality of performance that he desired from them. He found that "the most important thing we can do in teaching kids how to practice is to teach them what 'good' actually is. With that understanding, our students will be able to teach themselves how to practice" (Willie, 2014, p. 30).

Willie found that the use of extrinsic motivation with his students helped to develop their intrinsic motivation over time. He gives one example of a beginning saxophone student who wanted to pass off the last benchmark song of the year, a solo that was to be played with a

recorded accompaniment. The student played the song well and was rewarded with his promised band-bucks. However, the student was more interested in asking for a copy of the accompaniment so that he could perform the song again for his family members (Willie, 2014, p. 31). This student had developed his own intrinsic motivation through his love of and appreciation for the music he was learning.

While I agree with many of the views Willie expresses in his article, my main question is about the amount of instructional time such a reward program entails. I have used a similar incentive program with my students and have found that it is extremely time consuming. In order to hear each student in a lesson group individually perform the required song for the day, I spend the majority of the lesson on that one song and often do not get to go on to any new material. Willie mentions that he had to request an aide to help with passing students off (2014, p. 30). I wonder how he was able to get aide support and what exactly he had the aide do. Did the aide watch the other students while he listened to each play the benchmark song, or did the aide listen to the benchmarks while he led the rest of the students in the day's lesson? Was the aide a musician or someone who understood music? In my current situation, it is not practical to expect that I would be granted an aide for my lessons even if I requested one. Even if I were granted an aide, unless it was someone who had some knowledge of music, I do not feel that it would be especially helpful.

In using my own extrinsic motivation system with my students, I have experienced mixed results. Some students seem to be driven by the rewards for correctly playing the chosen songs while others could care less. For me, it has not had the overwhelmingly positive result that Willie seems to have experienced. Overall, Willie's article is a good reminder of some of the

common ideas regarding student practicing. I agree with most of the points he made, but there was not really any new information or anything particularly inspiring to me.

Rethinking the Practice Record

Many music teachers use practice records as part of their instrumental music programs. Students are required to practice a certain amount of time each week and are graded according to the number of minutes they record. While these records are a simple way to hold students accountable for practicing, students might be inclined to exaggerate their times to earn a higher grade or might not take the time to complete them at all. In recent years, several sources have advocated for a change to the practice record system to more successfully encourage students to practice.

Hannah Smeltz was interested in the enjoyment level her middle school students had in their practicing and in playing their instruments in general. Since most students do not pursue careers in music, Smeltz aimed to create lifelong musicians instead of future professional musicians. “If my students sustain a love of playing music into adulthood, then I will have done my job. If so, practice in some form will be an integral part of their musical lives” (Smeltz, 2012, p. 51).

First, Smeltz looked at the current methods that most teachers use to encourage student practice – practice records and performance tests – and tried to determine if they are the best ways to motivate students. While research has shown that students who practice longer will achieve a higher level of performance, studies have also identified “burn-out thresholds” for various age levels. In one study, music conservatory students who practiced more than four hours a day experienced “diminishing returns and a likelihood of physical injury, loss of

motivation, and burnout” (Smeltz, 2012, p. 52). For younger children, this threshold is likely as low as ten or twenty minutes but would vary child to child (Smeltz, 2012, p. 52). Instead, studies have shown that using a variety of practicing strategies (i.e. repetition, slowing difficult passages) in each practice session is more effective than requiring a certain amount of practice time each week.

Likewise, the use of performance tests to motivate student practice is not always effective. As Smeltz says,

Seemingly, this method rewards efficient practice, since more methodical, analytical students will reach the desired performance levels sooner. However, without modeling, support, and direct instruction in practice strategies, young students may not have the metacognitive skills...necessary for efficient practice. (2012, p. 53)

Students are also more likely to spend time practicing when the music is something they have chosen themselves. When they are forced to learn a specific, teacher-chosen song for a grade, some students may experience a decrease in their motivation to practice (Smeltz, 2012, p. 53).

In order to determine new ways to teach students to practice, Smeltz surveyed her musician friends who represented a variety of different musical backgrounds and current musical endeavors to understand their perceptions of practicing. Most respondents remarked about their love of playing music, but also agreed that “practice, by definition, is not intrinsically fun” (Smeltz, 2012, p. 53). Instead, the respondents overall seemed to suggest that practicing can become fun especially if you enjoy playing your instrument and the satisfaction of improving your playing abilities.

Smeltz then surveyed her students to determine their feelings toward practicing. Overall, her students generally viewed practicing as enjoyable “but lacked the structure, organization, and

self-awareness that...studies have shown to be most effective for acquiring technical skills in classical music” (Smeltz, 2012, p. 54). Since the issue was not the students’ enjoyment of their practice time but rather their productivity, Smeltz worked with her students to brainstorm different practice strategies that they could incorporate into their home practice time. She encouraged them to use at least five different strategies per practice session instead of requiring a certain amount of time. The students responded well and by the end of the year were incorporating more strategies into their independent practicing than they had at the beginning of the study.

While Smeltz did indicate the success students had in incorporating additional practicing strategies into their independent practice, she did not mention whether there was any improvement in their playing abilities as a result. I am curious to learn if she saw a noticeable difference in their abilities after implementing this new system of encouraging practicing. I do find the concept intriguing and would consider trying it with my own students although I am not sure if teaching about practice strategies would solve the issue of motivating my students to practice. Even after conducting my research, I am not sure if my students as a whole find practicing enjoyable and that seemed to be a key factor in the success of Smeltz’s students. Since her students were already practicing, her study focused on their enjoyment and effectiveness instead of their motivation.

Darren Johnson also decided to reframe the typical practice charts he had always used. After a colleague mentioned that he planned to do away with practice records since he felt it was not an effective tool to motivate all students, Johnson was initially taken aback. “Didn’t we have an obligation to require students to practice? If we stopped requiring practice charts, wouldn’t that be giving them permission to stop practicing? How would we hold them accountable?”

(Johnson, 2009, p. 63) As he thought more about his beloved practice charts, however, he realized that, even though he explained what quality practicing entailed during instructional time, the focus was placed on the amount of time spent because of the way the practice charts were completed and graded.

After this realization, Johnson decided to design a new practice chart that would guide his students in their independent practicing. His goal was to show students that “practicing can be a valuable, positive experience” (Johnson, 2009, p. 64). He considered what constitutes effective practice and determined that it is focused on specific goals rather than time and provides enough challenge to hold students’ interests without becoming overwhelming or frustrating (Johnson, 2009, p. 64). Successful practice also incorporates problem-solving strategies so that students can “work smart rather than work hard” (Johnson, 2009, p. 66).

Johnson then created a practice chart with three main areas of focus – fundamentals, etudes, and literature. Students are asked to record the number of minutes they practice each day throughout the week, but are also asked to complete a detailed practice session report indicating what specific things were practiced and how they were practiced on one day during the week. For example, students are asked to identify what etude they are working on and on which specific measures they focused as well as their goal for the section. Students are also asked to list the various strategies used for each piece that was practiced and are given questions to guide their reflection on their practicing for the day.

So far, Johnson has seen positive results from the new practice chart. As he describes (2009),

Students select measurable goals, experiment with different strategies for achieving those goals, and monitor their own progress. They use their experience to refine their goals and

to create a plan for each subsequent practice session. Students begin to value their practice time as they achieve small successes during each session. Practice becomes less about time and more about improving. Quality, not quantity, becomes the central issue. (Johnson, p. 67)

While he acknowledges that this new practice chart does take longer to grade, to Johnson the benefits outweigh the extra time needed.

I find the idea of a more detailed practice record interesting and I can see the potential benefits of using a similar version with my students. Since my band students are in their first or second year of playing an instrument, they are still learning how to practice, so having suggestions of how and what to practice during each session would most likely help them to practice efficiently. However, my concern is the amount of time that students would need to devote to completed the reflection questions and the detailed practice session summary. Since many of my students do not take the time to log their weekly practice times, would they devote the time to completing a more complex practice record? Perhaps instead of using a more detailed practice record, I could include a list of practicing suggestions each month to help guide my students' in their independent practice.

Research Questions

As the above articles suggest, many other music teachers have sought answers to the issue of motivating student practice. However, much of the published research seems to focus on secondary students rather than elementary age children. Musicians in middle school and high school have already demonstrated the dedication to commit to continue in their musical studies. Many of my elementary students continue in band for both fourth and fifth grade because of the

social aspects and do not necessarily have a high interest in music. While the strategies suggested by these other studies could certainly be adapted for beginning band students, I needed to understand my students' perspectives and motivational factors before implementing any new approaches.

Throughout my research project, I sought to answer the following questions: How often and for how long are my students practicing? How and what are my students actually practicing? What are my students' perceptions of practicing? What factors motivate my students to practice each week? What detracts from their practice time? What difference, if any, is there in motivation to practice between my fourth grade and fifth grade students? By gathering the answers to these questions, I endeavored to learn how to successfully influence my students' practice habits and thus improve the instrumental program at Stanlick School.

METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate my research questions, I collected data from all of my fourth and fifth grade students as well as their parents. I used several different types of data. Each type is explained in detail below.

Practice Records

As part of their overall grade for instrumental music, my students were already required to complete weekly practice records (Appendix A) to log the time that they practice at home. I used these records to determine how often and for how long my students are practicing. While all of my fourth and fifth grade students were asked to complete their practice records, not all followed through. Some were not turned in at all and others were not completely filled out. However, I did receive the records from the majority of my students in each grade level (75% from fifth, 93% from fourth) so I was able to collect enough data to use for my research.

I recorded the students' number of minutes and number of days of practice each week in a spreadsheet (Appendix B) as well as whether or not the students' parents or guardians had signed their records. I calculated the average amount of practice time among the students in each grade level for each week as well as the average number of days of practice per week. I included the median and mode for each week as well for comparison. I also tallied the number of students that had obtained their parents' signatures each week compared to the number that had not. I collected data on seven weeks of my fifth graders' practice habits throughout September and October. Because my fourth grade students began their instruction later, I was able to collect data from only five weeks of practicing. The spreadsheet and my calculations allowed me to

compare practice times among students in each grade level as well as between fourth and fifth grade.

Surveys

To get an idea of my students' perspectives of practicing, I administered a survey to all of my fourth and fifth grade band students (Appendix C). I also asked their parents to complete a survey (Appendix C) to determine their perspective of their children's practicing habits and motivation. The survey was primarily multiple-choice with one open-ended question. While I encouraged all students to participate, I could not make the surveys a mandatory assignment as per my district's policy. As was the case with the practice records, not all students and parents chose to respond. I received 44 responses from my fourth graders (61%) and 42 from their parents (58%). For fifth grade, I received 45 student responses (57%) and 44 parent responses (56%).

These surveys gave me some basic information of what motivates or detracts from the students' practice. I tallied the number and percentage of respondents who chose each multiple-choice answer. For the open-ended question, I had asked the students and parents to choose a word to describe their own or their child's practicing. In some cases, the students and parents submitted a phrase or sentence; when possible, I turned their longer response into a single word that fit their intended meaning. I recorded each answer and tallied the number of positive versus negative responses. I also created a word cluster for each group (fourth grade students, fourth grade parents, etc.) to illustrate which responses were more frequent. Using the data from my calculations and word clusters, I was able to compare the information the students and parents

provided with the practice record data as well as comparing answers among the survey respondents in homogenous and heterogeneous groupings.

Focus Group Interviews

After I had a basic idea of what influences my students' practice time from the survey data, I chose four students to participate in a series of focus group interviews (see Appendix D for questions). I chose two students, one male and one female, who practice regularly and two, one male and one female, who do not practice at all or only practice occasionally. I met with the students twice and recorded each session so that I could fully participate in the conversation and take notes afterward.

Before we began the first focus group session, I explained our procedure to the students – I would ask them questions about practicing, they would respond as honestly as possible and be sure to speak one at a time so that I could hear all of their answers. I requested that they raise their hand before responding to ensure that they would each get their turn to speak. I also informed the students that I would be recording the sessions. At the second session, I briefly reminded the students of the protocol since it occurred several weeks after the first.

Throughout each session, I asked the students questions related to my specific research questions and based on some of the ideas mentioned in the articles I read as part of this project. The students were eager to participate and each student responded to every question throughout the two sessions. After listening to each session twice and taking notes each time, I looked for common threads as well as contrasts in the students' responses. These group interviews helped to provide a more in-depth picture of these four students' perspectives of practicing.

FINDINGS

How often and for how long are my students practicing?

The first question I needed to answer was how much my students were already practicing. Since practice records were already one of my requirements for my students, I had a general idea of how often and how many minutes they were practicing on average but I had never collected the practice record data to analyze and compare before. The students’ practice minutes per week and days of practice per week are shown in the tables below.

| 4TH GRADE NUMBER OF PRACTICE MINUTES PER WEEK | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|
| | <i>9/22</i> | <i>9/29</i> | <i>SEPTEMBER OVERALL</i> | <i>10/6</i> | <i>10/13</i> | <i>10/20</i> | <i>OCTOBER OVERALL</i> | <i>OVERALL</i> |
| AVERAGE | 80.08 | 69.42 | 74.75 | 79.92 | 70.41 | 73.72 | 74.68 | 74.71 |
| MEDIAN | 90 | 65 | | 85 | 75 | 77.5 | | |
| MODE | 90 | 0 | | 90 | 90 | 90 | | |

| 4TH GRADE NUMBER OF PRACTICE DAYS PER WEEK | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|
| | <i>9/22</i> | <i>9/29</i> | <i>SEPTEMBER OVERALL</i> | <i>10/6</i> | <i>10/13</i> | <i>10/20</i> | <i>OCTOBER OVERALL</i> | <i>OVERALL</i> |
| AVERAGE | 4.81 | 4.26 | 4.54 | 4.80 | 4.31 | 4.58 | 4.56 | 4.55 |
| MEDIAN | 5 | 5 | | 5 | 5 | 5 | | |
| MODE | 7 | 7 | | 7 | 7 | 7 | | |

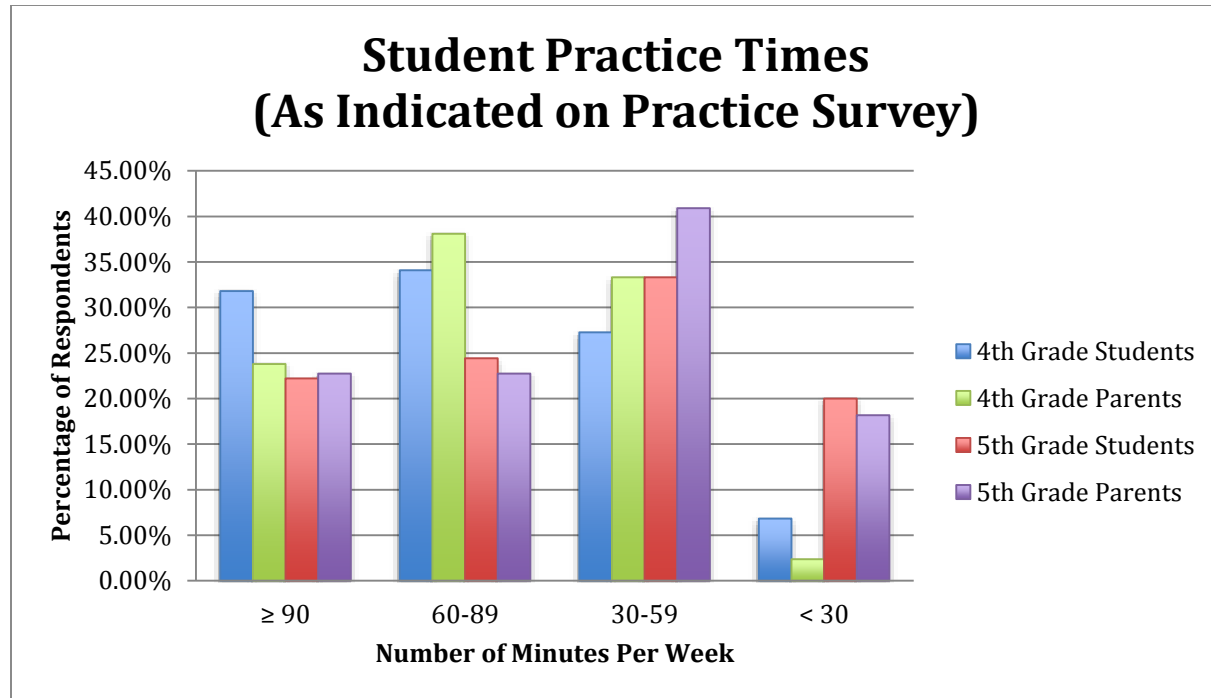
| 5TH GRADE NUMBER OF PRACTICE MINUTES PER WEEK | | | | | |
|---|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| | <i>9/8</i> | <i>9/15</i> | <i>9/22</i> | <i>9/29</i> | <i>SEPTEMBER OVERALL</i> |
| AVERAGE | 70.85 | 77.21 | 75.82 | 71.76 | 73.91 |
| MEDIAN | 80 | 90 | 80 | 72.5 | |
| MODE | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 | |
| | <i>10/6</i> | <i>10/13</i> | <i>10/20</i> | <i>OCTOBER OVERALL</i> | <i>OVERALL</i> |
| AVERAGE | 72.97 | 71.96 | 77.53 | 74.15 | 74.03 |
| MEDIAN | 80 | 80 | 90 | | |
| MODE | 90 | 90 | 90 | | |

| 5TH GRADE NUMBER OF PRACTICE DAYS PER WEEK | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| | <i>9/8</i> | <i>9/15</i> | <i>9/22</i> | <i>9/29</i> | <i>SEPTEMBER OVERALL</i> |
| AVERAGE | 4.06 | 4.30 | 4.23 | 4.17 | 4.19 |
| MEDIAN | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | |
| MODE | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | |
| | <i>10/6</i> | <i>10/13</i> | <i>10/20</i> | <i>OCTOBER OVERALL</i> | <i>OVERALL</i> |
| AVERAGE | 4.02 | 4.00 | 4.07 | 4.03 | 4.11 |
| MEDIAN | 4 | 4 | 4 | | |
| MODE | 7 | 7 | 7 | | |

According to the practice record data, on average my students in both fourth and fifth grade are practicing for 74 minutes per week and four days per week. While this is lower than the 90 minute goal I set for them, it is not too far off. In my own expectations, if the students are practicing at least an hour per week, they should be able to make adequate progress on their instrument. It is interesting to note that the mode for almost all of the weeks I recorded for each grade level was 90 minutes over 7 days. This indicates that many of the students are reaching the target amount of practice time even if the overall average of all the students is lower. The only week with a different result was the week of September 29th for the fourth graders where the mode was 0 minutes. It is interesting that the students’ practicing changed so drastically that week since it was only their second week of playing.

I was surprised that the overall average practice times were so similar in fourth and fifth grade. I expected that there would be more of a difference since fourth graders usually seem more excited about practicing because it is something new. I did, however, receive a higher percentage (93%) of practice records from my fourth graders than my fifth graders (75%). While I do not have the official data to prove it, this seems to be a consistent trend over the past few years of teaching.

I also used my practice surveys to collect data on student practice time. Both students and their parents were asked to identify how many weeks per month and how many minutes per week the students are practicing. Overall, the majority of respondents indicated that students are practicing every week or most weeks (3 per month). The results for the students' minutes per week are shown in the chart below.



As seen in the chart, the majority of fourth graders (34%) reported practicing between 60-89 minutes per week. 31.82% of the fourth graders reported practicing 90 or more minutes per week. Most of the fourth grade parents (38%) also chose the 60-89 minute range but the 30-59 minute range was the next highest (33.33%) according to their survey results and the 90 or more range had only 23.81% of responses. For fifth graders, the majority (33.33%) reported practicing between 30-59 minutes per week. The other time ranges were relatively close – 24.44% selected 60-89, 22.22% 90 or more, and 20% less than 30 minutes. The majority of fifth grade parents (40.91%) agreed that their children practice in the 30-59 minute range and were also fairly close

with the other ranges – 22.73% selected either 60-89 or 90 or above and 18.18% chose less than 30 minutes.

In comparing the practice record data and the survey data, I discovered some interesting discrepancies. While the average practice time (74.71 minutes) for fourth grade does match with the 60-89 minute range indicated on the surveys, the fifth grade average (74.03) is higher than the 30-59 minute range chosen in the surveys. There also were discrepancies between students' responses and their parents' responses. I compared these to the practice record data to determine whether the student, parent, or neither was more accurate. In fourth grade, there were 18 differences. For ten of the student/parent pairings, the practice records indicated more practice minutes than the student or parent had selected on the survey. In three cases, the practice records indicated less practice time than the survey data. In four pairings, the students' survey responses matched the practice record. The final discrepancy could not be analyzed due to incomplete practice record data.

In fifth grade, 21 differences were discovered among student and parent responses. Nine indicated more practice time on their practice records than in the survey responses. Two reported less practice time than their survey answers. One case matched the student's survey response, two cases matched the parents' surveys, and seven could not be analyzed due to incomplete practice records. Because of these discrepancies, I am curious whether the practice record or survey data is more accurate in representing the students' true practice habits.

How and what are my students practicing?

To answer this question, I used my focus group sessions. I asked the four students a series of questions relating to their practicing routines and habits. All of the students indicated

that they have a fairly routine time to practice whether it is before or after dinner, after completing their homework for the night, or on weekends. Most of them time their practice or continue until they are told to stop by a parent for dinner or some sort of after school activity. When asked about the ideal amount of time to practice per session, the students' responses ranged from 20 minutes to 45 minutes. Male student B, who does not practice often himself, suggested practicing "until you get it right". The students also differed in their responses to the ideal amount of practice time per week. Most were close to my stated practice goal of 90 minutes, but Male B suggested two to three hours or as much as possible. The students did not bring up fatigue themselves, but when asked about it, all four agreed that they do feel tired when they have played for a while. The students did agree that the more you practice, the better you get, and that it is ideal to try to practice every day but without over practicing and becoming fatigued.

When asked what music they practice, the students named their practicing assignments given by me as well as playing songs from the lesson book and reviewing music from last year. Male A, a student who practices regularly, also indicated that he reviews some of the rhythms that we focus on in lessons or band rehearsals. Male B discussed his focus on certain techniques or skills such as not playing too loudly or using correct articulation. I was glad to see that the students seem to have a basic understanding of what they should be practicing on a regular basis and are reviewing the assignments I give them.

In our second group session, we discussed practice tips that had been posted on a bulletin board in the hallway throughout the past month. I asked the students to identify which tips they currently used in their practicing as well as the tips they felt were most important. All of the students indicated that they have fun practicing and like to repeat difficult sections until they can

play them correctly. The majority of students also chose the strategies of breaking songs into smaller sections and using a timer. Only one student selected “Practice daily” as something they do and only one indicated that she sets goals for her practicing.

The students selected having fun as one of the most important tips. Other tips that they chose as important were: repeat difficult sections, review a little at each session, break songs into smaller sections, practice daily, name the notes and practice switching fingers, not practicing mistakes, preparing their space for practicing (music stand, lighting, sturdy chair), and setting goals. I found it interesting that the students who chose practicing daily and reviewing a little at each session as some of the most important tips do not currently use these tips themselves. This seems to coincide with Christensen’s findings that, even if students are aware of practice strategies, they do not always use them.

What are my students’ perceptions of practicing?

Before I could look at what motivates or detracts from my students’ practicing, I needed to know how they felt about practicing in general. On my surveys for the students and their parents, I asked for a one-word description of practicing. I collected the responses and turned them into word clusters organized by groupings (fourth grade students, fourth grade parents, etc.). I was expecting that the students would have a negative perception of practicing since many professional musicians (myself included!) do not always enjoy practicing in itself. I was shocked to discover that most of my students had a very different view.

4th Grade Students:

5th Grade Students:



The overwhelming majority of students who responded to the surveys chose “fun” to describe their practicing. When looking at the other responses, the students in both grades were surprisingly positive about practicing with very few (three in fourth grade, nine in fifth) negative responses given. Some of the other responses that were given frequently were “awesome”, “amazing”, “interesting”, and “learning”.

The parents were also mostly positive, although the fifth grade parents submitted more negative responses (13 compared to six from fourth grade parents). The parents also had more variation in their responses, most likely due to their advanced vocabularies. However, both parent groups selected “good” most frequently. For fifth grade parents, the most popular negative response was “sporadic”. I find it interesting that, for fourth grade parents, the second most chosen responses were “excited” and “enthusiastic” while for fifth grade parents, “sporadic” and “fun” were next. This is most likely due to the newness of the instrument to the fourth graders. Since practicing is “old hat” to the fifth graders, it is most likely not as exciting.

4th Grade Parents:



5th Grade Parents:

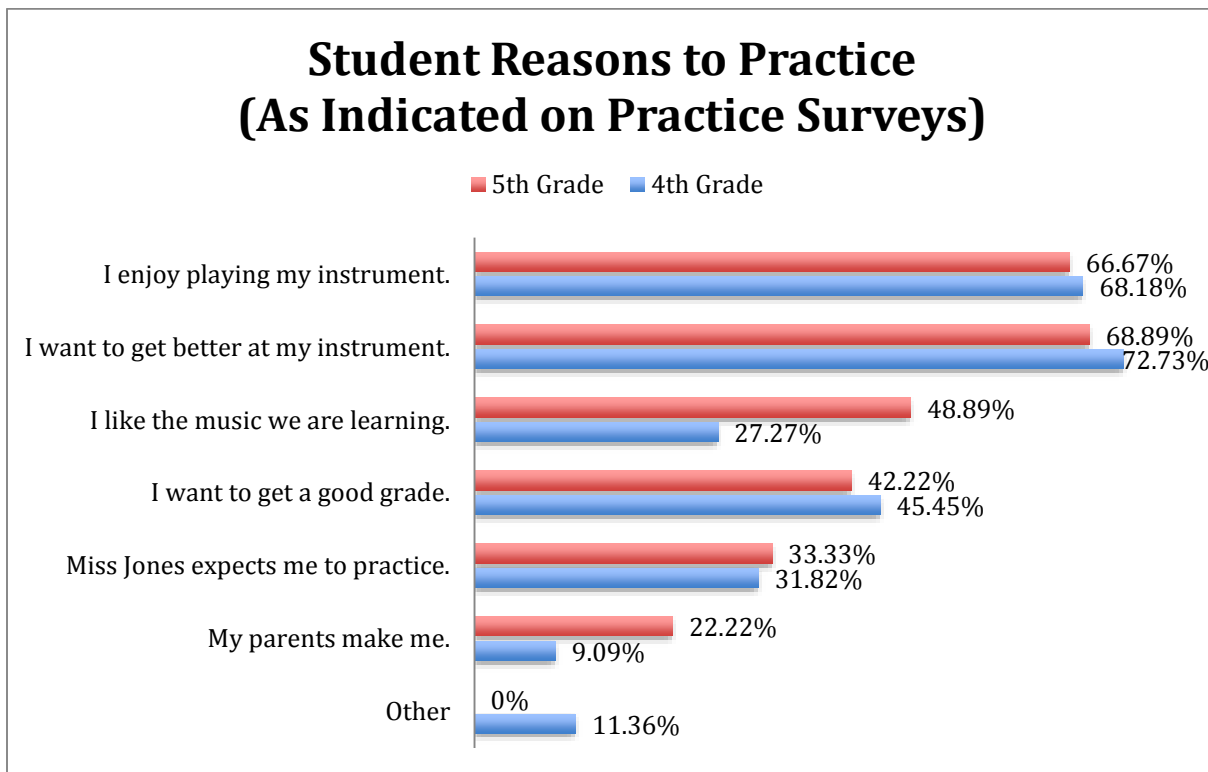


I also discussed perceptions of practicing with my focus group. All four students indicated that they enjoy playing their instrument, but that they do not always enjoy practicing. They all agreed that practicing is important and like the improvement they achieve through practice. Male A mentioned that when he hasn't practiced for a while, his cats are scared by the sounds he makes! I asked the students to think about what advice they would give to the fourth graders or the fifth graders who are just beginning an instrument this year. All four mentioned practicing regularly to get better. Female B, who does not practice much at all herself, would advise them to practice regularly so that they could be chosen for special group performances. When asked to compare last year to this year, some of the students indicated that practicing is more enjoyable this year since they know more and are capable of more. They also agreed that the more difficult repertoire we are working on this year requires more practicing.

In general, my students do understand the importance of practicing in order to improve and they have a largely positive perception of it as well. It is a relief to know that I don't have to completely change their perception of practicing in order to motivate them to practice regularly.

What motivates my students to practice?

To get an idea of how all of my students are motivated, in the survey I asked parents to identify whether their children were self-motivated or needed their encouragement to practice. I was surprised that a majority of the survey respondents (25/42 of the fourth grade parents and 22/42 of the fifth grade parents) indicated that their children were self-motivated. Students were also asked to indicate their reasons to practice by selecting from several multiple-choice responses. Students were allowed to select as many as applied to them. Their responses are shown in the chart below.



Overall, students selected getting better at their instruments and enjoyment of playing their instruments as the top motivators. I was glad to see that the students enjoy playing and recognize that practicing will help them to improve. Grades were also one of the top reasons students gave for practicing, although it seems to be a slightly higher priority with the fourth

graders than with the fifth graders. Fifth graders indicated that the music we are learning is a strong motivator while relatively few fourth graders chose that in their surveys. I believe this might be due to the fact that the fourth grade was only a month into playing when I gave the survey. Since the fifth grade has more experience and is able to perform more complex and interesting repertoire, that could explain the higher percentage that chose music as a motivator. I also found it interesting that more of the fifth graders chose their parents as a motivator than the fourth graders. This could be due to the fact that playing an instrument is new and exciting to the fourth graders so their parents do not need to encourage them to practice as much.

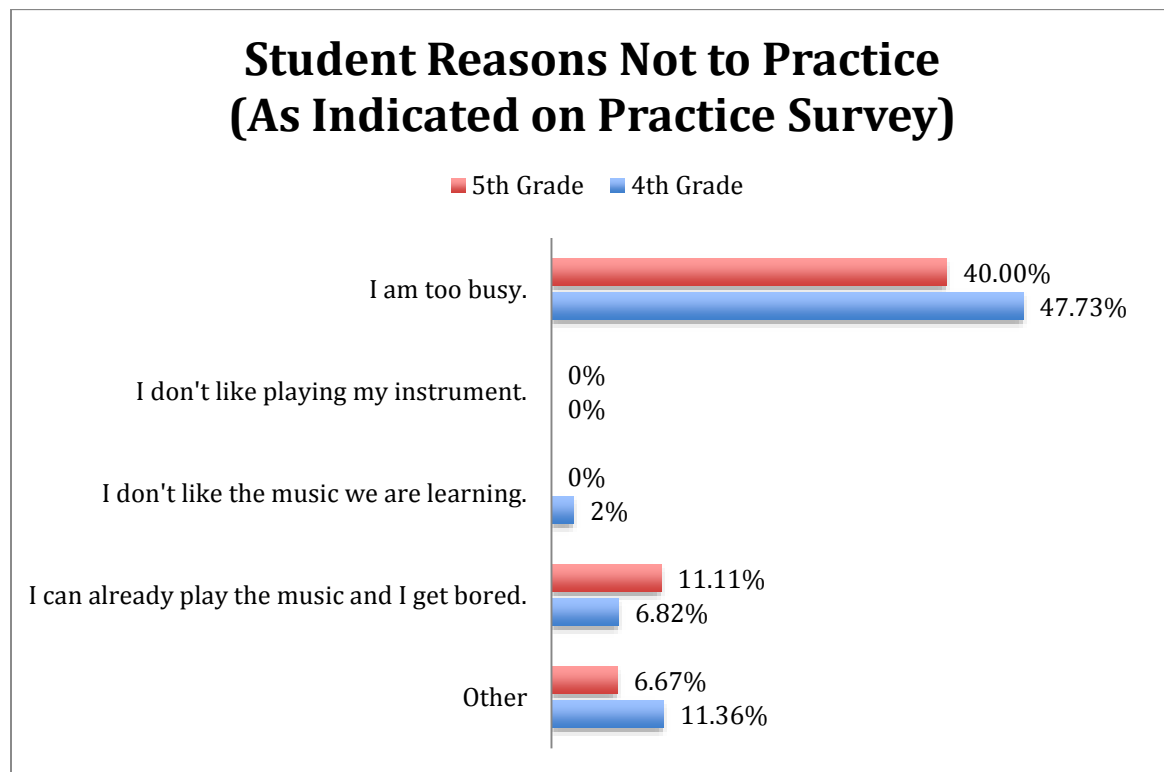
To understand more about my students' motivation to practice, I discussed it my focus group sessions as well. My four focus group students all enjoy playing their instruments for slightly different reasons. One enjoys hearing how good he is, two expressed their enjoyment of their improvement and progress, and one mentioned liking the sound of her instrument. All four students indicated that they plan to continue playing at least through next year if not through high school and beyond. Since they are all invested in progressing on their instruments, that leads to motivation.

When asked what or who encourages them to practice, all four students mentioned their parents, as I had anticipated. Male A also included his grandparents since they ask him to perform at their holiday get-togethers. Two students named me as someone who motivates them to practice. One student mentioned the desire to improve. Surprisingly, only one student listed getting a good grade. However, when asked specifically whether they would practice as much if practice records were not required, all four agreed that they would not practice as often or for as long. This seems to indicate that grades are indeed a motivational tool for practicing, even if

students are unaware that they are influenced by them. The students also expressed a desire to have fun. As Male B stated, “If you’re not having fun, why are you doing it?”

What detracts from my students’ practicing?

Now that I knew more about what encourages my students to practice, I wanted to know what keeps them from practicing. In the past when I have asked my students why they haven’t practiced, the most common reason given is busy schedules but I was curious whether they really were too busy to practice or if that was just a convenient excuse. On my practice surveys, I asked students to indicate why they didn’t practice. Some of the students did not answer this question either because they do already practice and did not feel the need to respond or because they did not realize the survey went onto the back of the page. 30 fourth graders and 26 fifth graders did choose to answer, however, and their responses are shown in the chart below.



In their survey responses, students indicated that busy schedules are the most common reasons they do not practice. In addition to selecting the “I am too busy” option, I also asked the students and parents to indicate with what they were too busy. The most common schedule conflicts were homework (especially for the special education students who take longer to complete assignments); after school activities such as sports, dance, acting lessons, or gymnastics; and chores. Some students indicated their social calendars interfered due to play dates, parties, or family obligations. Some students with younger siblings are not allowed to practice their instrument while their brothers or sisters are napping and therefore have a difficult time. Some students have to balance practicing another instrument as well. I thought it was interesting that only one student mentioned the temptation to play as a reason not to practice.

I was very glad that students did not choose the response about not liking their instrument and only one student indicated that he does not like the music we are learning. Several students did respond that they get bored with the music since they are already able to play it. Most of the fifth graders who selected this response take lessons on another instrument outside of school and do typically progress more quickly than some of the other students. I need to be sure I am giving them some extension activities to try to prevent their boredom and get them excited about practicing again.

My focus group also agreed that being busy is what keeps them from practicing most often. Male A, who does practice regularly, mentioned that he does find it difficult to fit into his busy schedule. He is typically at school early and stays after for the daycare program until his mom gets out of work. He also plays football, so it is especially difficult to find time in the fall. Male B also mentioned his sports schedule as a conflict. He plays sports throughout the year and indicated that this year, he seems to have more practices and games than last year. Only one of

my focus group students indicated that she does not enjoy practicing. She also feels that she has more important things to do and finds it hard to make time to practice. It does seem as if the students have busy schedules, but hopefully, as I have been encouraging them to do all along, they will be able to carve out some time here and there to spend practicing.

IMPLICATIONS

Throughout my research project, I was pleasantly surprised by my students' responses to the questions I asked through the surveys and in the focus group sessions. I was not expecting them to have an overall positive perception of practicing and thus I thought I might have to completely change their views in order to motivate them. While some students still do not enjoy practicing, most students do seem to appreciate it and recognize its importance in helping them to improve on their instruments. My students seem to consider playing their instrument and practicing to be somewhat synonymous, judging from their survey responses and the conversations with my focus group. If I can continue to make playing an instrument enjoyable for them, then hopefully they will continue to have fun practicing and want to continue participating in instrumental music beyond elementary school.

I was also happy to learn that, on average, my students are practicing for what I would consider an adequate amount of time. I would love it if all of my students practiced 90 minutes a week, but I realize that their schedules may not all allow for that. Because my focus group admitted that they would not practice as much or as often without a practicing requirement, I do plan to continue to provide students with a goal practice time for each week. Since my students are only in the beginning stages of their instrumental music instruction, I need to teach them how

to practice, including what an appropriate amount of practicing might look like. I do think that 90 minutes per week is an achievable goal and should help the students to maintain and improve their skills on their instruments. However, due to the feedback from some of my fourth grade parents, I will be revising my requirements for the fourth graders in their first few months of learning their instruments. The parents expressed a concern that 90 minutes is too long when the students do not know as much. I am not sure yet to what amount I will set their requirement, but I will continue to think about it and ask for more student and parent feedback to help in my decision.

LIMITATIONS AND SUBJECTIVITY

I was very fortunate to have very few logistical issues in conducting my research. My principal and superintendent were both very supportive of my project and approved it with no issue. When I mentioned the project to my students, most were excited to help by completing the surveys. I did have one fourth grader, however, who asked why I was having them do my work for me! Even though the students expressed an interest in my research when I first explained the surveys and their purpose, I did not receive responses from all of my students. For some of them, I believe the “out of sight, out of mind” phenomena occurred. Since I only see the students once or twice a week, they forgot about the surveys. I did not remind them as often as I probably should have, partially because I didn’t want to pester them and also because I sometimes forgot when we got caught up in the day’s lesson or band rehearsal. Even though I did not get to hear from all of my students, I did get responses from the majority of each grade level that gave me enough data to formulate my findings.

In terms of subjectivity, I do have several concerns. Throughout my research, I attempted to keep an open mind and not let my preconceived notions of my students' perspectives affect my analysis. However, as much as I encouraged my students to give honest responses, I worry that some of the students may have answered some of the survey or focus group questions to please me rather than with their truthful answers. I am fairly certain that one of my focus group participants was not entirely truthful since he claimed to practice regularly even though he has never completed a practice record and often his instrument is left in school over the weekend or during a school vacation. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly which students might have altered their responses and in attempting to do so, I feel that I would be acting subjectively myself. Perhaps some of my students' perceptions of practicing might not match their actions. Since I am unsure of how truthful the data gathered from my students is, I must take my findings with a grain of salt and continue to do further investigations, perhaps in the form of anonymous surveys, to fully understand my students' perceptions of practicing.

EMERGING QUESTIONS

My research project has given me ideas of some things I would like to investigate further. Since I am not entirely certain of my students' honesty in their responses, I would like to give some anonymous surveys or exit tickets to try to find out more about their perceptions of practicing. If the majority of my students do really find practicing fun, I would like to find out more about why they enjoy it so much compared to many professional musicians. Is it because playing an instrument is still new and exciting since they are only in their first or second year of band? Are my students really practicing in a thorough and methodical way or do they consider

playing their instrument to be synonymous with practicing? What causes practicing to become less fun for them and how can this shift in perspective be averted?

Since I only discussed it with my focus group of four students, I would also like to get a better idea of what my students are practicing and how they go about it. I think this is an especially important topic to investigate since it will help me determine if I am explaining the process of practicing adequately. Have I made it clear to students that the processes that we use during lessons are the same things they should do in their individual practice? Do I need to spend more time instructing the students on how they should structure their practice? After a conversation I had this year with one of my fourth graders, I have a suspicion that I do need to increase my instruction on practicing. Another student had forgotten his folder for lessons that day so this student mentioned that he always left his folder at school. He had told me a few minutes earlier that he had practiced for at least an hour over the previous week, so I asked him how he practiced without his music. “Oh, I just practiced the notes,” he replied. This led to a conversation about the importance of practicing the specific songs we were working on for our concert and not just reviewing the notes. Previously, I would have considered something like this to be common sense – how can you practice the concert songs without having your music at home? However, I believe there may be more students that are “just practicing the notes” and not really practicing the way they should.

I also plan to consider implementing a new version of my practice record form. I am curious whether a format like the one mentioned in Johnson’s article would work for my students. Would they take the time to fill in a more complex practice record including goal setting and self-assessment in addition to logging their practice time? Would the inclusion of a suggested practice session itinerary be helpful or confusing to them? Since many of my students

don't fill out their simple practice logs as it is, would they buy into a new format or would I receive even fewer responses?

In connection with the new practice record format, I would also like to investigate my current practice requirements to determine whether they are truly realistic, attainable, and sufficient. I realize some of my students will always be able to learn the necessary skills and repertoire faster than others, so how much time is enough time to require on a weekly basis for the majority of students? Should the practicing requirements differ for fourth and fifth grade due to the difference in rigor of their repertoire? What is the best way to grade the practice records fairly?

Through my continuing research, I hope to gain an even better understanding of my students' perceptions of practicing as well as of their practice habits. While I don't think that I will ever find a magical solution to get all students to practice and have fun while doing it, I look forward to delving further into the process of classroom research to find out as much as I possibly can.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This study was primarily for my own edification and to help me understand how I might be able to improve my students' practice habits. While I certainly have gained insight into my students' perceptions of practicing and the frequency with which they practice, I will need to do further research to determine whether I need to adjust my requirements. One thing I do plan to change for next year is to lower the time requirement for my fourth grade students in their first few months of instrumental instruction. Many of the students and parents commented that it is

difficult to fill 90 minutes of practice time per week when only a few notes are known. I have not yet determined how I will adjust my requirements but I will most likely use a focus group or an overall grade-level survey to help in my decision.

I do not have any plans to share my research with the music education community at large, but I will certainly share my findings with my colleagues. I think practicing is a topic that is at the forefront for all music teachers, so it is important to continue to discuss it and the tips and tools we have each discovered to make it as successful as possible for our students. Although there are relatively few resources regarding practicing at the elementary level, I do not feel that my study yielded significant results to merit publication. If, through my continuing research, I do find something significant that could positively impact practicing for students, I will certainly consider sharing those results on a broader scale.

CONCLUSION

This research study was very valuable for me. It gave me a better picture of my students' perceptions of practicing and allowed me the chance to better understand my students' practice habits. It is always nice to feel that you are making a difference to your students, so I was glad to learn that most of my students do enjoy playing their instruments and the repertoire I select. However, I do need to be more aware of students who learn their music quickly and might therefore be susceptible to boredom and loss of motivation to practice. These students should be given additional songs or technique exercises to challenge them and extend their abilities. If I can continue to keep all of my students engaged and excited to play their instruments, hopefully it will encourage them to practice regularly as well.

While my study did not reveal any cure-all to motivate all students to practice consistently, I believe my colleagues would still be interested to hear my results. I know this study has encouraged me to incorporate discussions about practicing into my instruction more frequently. I think that I often assume that students will magically know how to practice simply from my modeling of various strategies and I often do not take the time to instruct students in practice techniques. However, if I took the time to discuss practicing with my students, I believe it would help the students to practice more effectively and efficiently and perhaps help students who do not value it as much to appreciate its worth.

At first, the idea of conducting a research study was a bit daunting. After going through the process, I realize that classroom research is not only attainable but also necessary to improve my program for my students. My research has encouraged me to continue investigating topics that peak my curiosity. By continuing to question and discover new ideas and techniques, I will continue to improve my teaching and thus my students will continue to progress and grow. As my one focus group participant said, "If you're not having fun, then why are you doing it?" I did enjoy conducting this study and the opportunity it gave me to understand my students better. I look forward to continuing research in my classroom throughout my career so that I can continue to learn and grow as a teacher.

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Appendix C

Surveys

STUDENT PRACTICE SURVEY

Name: _____

1. How often do you practice?
 - a. Every week
 - b. Most weeks (3 weeks per month)
 - c. Occasionally (1-2 weeks per month)
 - d. I don't practice at all.

2. How many minutes do you practice each week?
 - a. 90 minutes or more
 - b. 60-89 minutes
 - c. 30-59 minutes
 - d. Less than 30 minutes

3. Why do you practice? (Circle all that apply)
 - a. I enjoy playing my instrument.
 - b. I want to get better at playing my instrument.
 - c. I like the music we are learning.
 - d. I want to get a good grade on my practice records.
 - e. Miss Jones expects me to practice.
 - f. My parents make me.
 - g. Other: _____

4. Why don't you practice? (Circle all that apply)

a. I have no time to practice because I am too busy with:

b. I don't really like playing my instrument.

c. I don't like the music we are learning.

d. I can already play the music we are working on and I get bored playing it over and over.

e. Other: _____

5. If you could choose one word to describe practicing your instrument, what would it be?

6. If you would like to say anything else about practicing, please write it below.

PARENT/GUARDIAN PRACTICE SURVEY

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

1. How often does your child practice his or her instrument?
 - a. Every week
 - b. Most weeks (3 weeks per month)
 - c. Occasionally (1-2 weeks per month)
 - d. He or she doesn't practice at all.

2. On average, how many minutes does your child practice each week?
 - a. 90 minutes or more
 - b. 60-89 minutes
 - c. 30-59 minutes
 - d. Less than 30 minutes

3. How often do you encourage your child to practice?
 - a. Every day
 - b. A few times a week
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never

4. If you could choose one word to describe your child's practicing, what would it be?

5. Please choose the statement below that best applies to your child:

- a. My child practices without needing my encouragement.
- b. My child practices, but only when I encourage him or her.
- c. My child refuses to practice even with constant encouragement.
- d. My child is too busy to practice because of _____

6. If you would like to say anything else about your child's practicing, please write it below.

Appendix D*Focus Group Interview Questions***FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - #1***

1. Do you enjoy playing your instrument? Why or why not?
2. How long do you plan to continue playing your instrument?
3. What do you do when you practice at home?
4. Do you have a particular time that you set aside as practice time?
If so, what time is it and why?
5. Are there differences in your playing between when you practice and when you don't?
What are they?
6. When you practice at home, what music do you practice?
7. How do you know it is time to stop practicing?
8. Do you enjoy practicing? Why or why not?
9. Do you think it is important to practice? Why or why not?
10. What or who encourages you to practice?
11. Tell me anything else you would like to share about practicing.

*Adapted from:

Christensen, S. E. (2010). Practicing strategically: The difference between knowledge and action in two eighth-grade students' independent instrumental practice. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 20 (10), 1-11. DOI: 10.1177/8755123310377924

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - #2

1. Think back to when you first started on your instrument last year.
Were your practicing habits any different? If so, explain.
2. What advice would you give to the 4th graders/5th grade beginners about practicing?
3. Take a look at these practice tips. Which one(s) do you already do yourself?
Which one(s) do you think is/are most important?
4. What do you think is a good amount of practice time for each practice session?
For each week? Explain.
5. If you didn't have to fill out practice records and practicing wasn't a part of your grade for band, would you still practice? Why or why not?