

CREATION AND VALIDATION OF A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT CONDUCTOR  
CURRICULUM

By

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To my wife

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS/TERMS

Band Director	an individual currently teaching high school band in the Florida public schools
Expert	an individual who has had a distinguished career as a music educator as well as conductor educator
FBA	Florida Bandmasters Association
FMEA	Florida Music Educators Association
MPA	Music Performance Assessment sponsored by the Florida Bandmasters Association
NASM	National Association of Schools of Music
RDSCC	Researcher Developed Student Conductor Curriculum
Student Conductor	A high school student selected by his/her band director to participate in the FBA student conductor activity

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May 2014

Chair: Russell L. Robinson  
Cochair: David A. Waybright  
Major: Music Education

For almost 75 years, the Florida Bandmasters Association (FBA) has included a student conductor assessment as part of the Music Performance Assessment (Florida's statewide adjudication process for music ensembles). The student conductor assessment occurs at the annual district-level Music Performance Assessment (MPA), during which the student conducts his/her school band in a performance of a predetermined work. While this activity has been truly innovative and has likely encouraged many future music educators, some challenges still exist.

The purpose of this study was to develop and determine the validity of a high school student conductor curriculum that clearly articulates and addresses specific educational outcomes. The researcher designed an eight-week web-based curriculum for high school student conductors. Seven experts in wind band conducting and five high school band directors were surveyed regarding the curricular content validity of the Researcher Designed Student Conductor Curriculum (RDSCC). Additionally, five high school band directors and their student conductors participated in a pilot-test of the

curriculum. Teachers' and students' perceptions of the curriculum were documented through three time-lapse interviews.

The wind band conducting experts, as well as the participating high school band directors, found the RDSCC to be valid. Additionally, the participating band directors and student conductors exhibited several changes in perception regarding the student conducting activity over the course of the eight-week curriculum.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

For almost 75 years, the Florida Bandmasters Association (FBA) has included a student conductor assessment as part of the Music Performance Assessment (Florida's statewide adjudication process for music ensembles). The student conductor assessment occurs at the annual district-level Music Performance Assessment (MPA) during which the student conducts his/her school band in a performance of a predetermined work. While this activity has been truly innovative and has likely encouraged many future music educators, some challenges still exist. To move the student conductor activity forward, consideration needs to be given to the design and implementation of a curriculum that clearly articulates and addresses specific educational outcomes.

Education philosophers have long stressed the importance of curricular design grounded in learning theory and educational psychology (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Ralph Tyler identified four fundamental questions to address in the development of any curriculum. These were:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained? (Tyler, 1949, p. 1)

Application of the Tylerian rationale to the FBA Student Conductor Activity, as it exists today, highlights significant shortcomings. The FBA, through its website or printed publications, does not identify specific purposes for the student conductor



activity. The FBA also does not clearly specify desired learning outcomes for the student conductor, nor does it suggest educational experiences for student conductor training. In fact, the sole document providing information regarding the FBA student conductor activity is the assessment sheet used by adjudicators at the MPA. Therefore, curricular scope and sequence are relegated to the discretion of the student's band director. In the interest of time, most directors focus their instruction on the basic conducting gestures necessary to conduct the selected piece. While gestural training is a fundamental aspect of conductor development, a more holistic student conductor training should include several additional concepts.

The current assessment tool provided to FBA student conductor judges is a form wherein students are assigned a grade A-E for each of three sub-topics (Figure 1-1). Column sub-topics are: (1) conducting fundamentals, (2) gestural vocabulary, and (3) musical effect. Columns 1 and 2 contain basic proficiencies in physical conducting. Column 3, however, contains content areas that are unrelated to the generally accepted role of the student conductor. For example: "rhythmic accuracy," "note accuracy," and "balance and blend" are included as assessable categories. Inclusion of these topics in the assessment form presupposes that the student conductor is in some way responsible for the ensemble's musical preparation – a concept that creates numerous confounding variables. Rehearsal technique and error detection are certainly valuable content areas for conductors-in-training, but to include them in a high school student conductor activity would require far more instructional time than is typically available. Also, if the assessment included these content areas in a statewide and standardized format, a much more complex assessment tool would be necessary.

# *Florida Bandmasters Association*

## Adjudicator's Comment Sheet

# STUDENT CONDUCTOR

Name \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Selection Conducted: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>CONDUCTING FUNDAMENALS</b>	<b>GESTURAL VOCABULARY</b>	<b>MUSICAL EFFECT</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Baton held between thumb and index finger <input type="checkbox"/> Fingers curved naturally <input type="checkbox"/> Baton extends almost straight from arm <input type="checkbox"/> Posture erect, poised, relaxed, confident, commanding <input type="checkbox"/> Visual check made to ensure readiness of group <input type="checkbox"/> Correct patterns utilized	<input type="checkbox"/> Preparatory beat executed without Hesitation <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate and effective cues given <input type="checkbox"/> Hands demonstrate independence <input type="checkbox"/> Phrasing indicated through nuance and variability of beat size <input type="checkbox"/> Size and energy of beat appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Dynamic markings indicated and observed <input type="checkbox"/> General freedom from conducting errors <input type="checkbox"/> Visual contact with ensemble (not score bound)	<input type="checkbox"/> Tempo appropriate for expressive character <input type="checkbox"/> Rhythmic accuracy <input type="checkbox"/> Precision <input type="checkbox"/> Articulation (style) <input type="checkbox"/> Note accuracy <input type="checkbox"/> Phrasing <input type="checkbox"/> Balance and blend <input type="checkbox"/> Dynamic Contrasts
(Circle One) <b>A B C D E</b>	(Circle One) <b>A B C D E</b>	(Circle One) <b>A B C D E</b>

Officials will include a + or - by the subdivisions, which mean they are noticeably good or noticeably needing improvement as related to the letter grade assigned. The absence of any marks indicates a performance consistent with the letter assigned. After completing the previous, circle an A, B, C, D or E to indicate the level of performance in each category.

## COMMENTS

**Recommended for:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Superior, Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor)  
**Write out Final Rating**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Adjudicator's Signature**

Rev 8/02

Figure 1-1. Current FBA Student Conductor Adjudicator's Sheet

To address the many aforementioned concerns, the present study sought to develop an online student conductor curriculum specifically for the FBA Student Conductor Activity.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to develop a curriculum for the high school student conductor activity and to investigate its validity and relevance based on the perceptions of experts, high school band directors, and high school student conductors.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent does the Researcher Developed Student Conductor Curriculum (RDSCC) align with experts' opinions of appropriate high school student conductor preparation?
2. To what extent does the RDSCC align with high school band directors' opinions of appropriate high school student conductor preparation?
3. What are the students' perceptions regarding the learning activities and outcomes in the RDSCC?
4. What are the high school band directors' perceptions regarding the learning activities and outcomes in the RDSCC?

### **Significance of the Study**

The student conductor activity can provide a valuable opportunity for high school students to develop rudimentary conducting skills and score study/reading techniques. This format of authentic context learning could potentially strengthen the participants' interest in the music education profession (Paul, Teachout, Sullivan, Kelly, Bauer, & Raiber, 2001). Band directors should actively encourage such activities and seek to refine their implementation.

It is widely understood that the school band director's time is at a premium. It would be difficult to ask a band director to add several hours of instructional time to

his/her schedule for implementation of an enhanced FBA student conductor curriculum. However, as Florida band directors have been engaging in this act of mentorship since 1939, a level of commitment has been exhibited such that a formulated curriculum is warranted.

Participation in the FBA student conductor activity is completely voluntary. Band directors choose whether or not to participate based on their perceived benefits of the overall activity. Likewise, potential student conductors can accept their band director's invitation to be mentored based on their perceptions of the activity. Therefore, the band directors' and students' perceptions of the activity and curriculum are of the utmost importance.

The findings from this study will help determine the validity and relevance of the RDSCC. Additionally, the findings from this study will determine the teachers' and students' perceptions of the RDSCC.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

This study took place during the Fall semester. As the FBA Student Conductor Activity takes place each Spring semester, generalizing the findings from this study must take into account the participants' maturation. Essentially, each participant in the actual FBA Student Conductor Activity will be approximately 4-5 months older than he/she would have been as participants in this study.

As previously stated, participation in the FBA student conductor activity is completely voluntary. Therefore, this study was designed to determine the relevance of the RDSCC based on the participants' perceptions. Specific learning gains from the RDSCC were not measured.

In addition to the high school student conductor activity, the FBA sponsors a student conductor activity for middle-school students. Also, the Florida Orchestra Association sponsors a similar activity. However, the scope of this study focuses specifically on high school band students.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to investigate the validity and relevance of the RDSCC, based on the perceptions of experts, high school band directors, and high school student conductors. This chapter consists of a review of literature pertinent to this study. The researcher developed a curriculum for high school student conductors. Therefore, this chapter includes a review of literature regarding philosophies and theories of curricular development as well as literature on conductor training. The RDSCC was designed as a web-based platform. Therefore, a review of literature regarding web-based learning is included. The FBA student conductor activity is completely voluntary. As such, its existence is wholly dependent on directors and students choosing to participate, making the teachers' and students' opinions/perceptions of the curriculum vitally important. Therefore, a review of literature regarding teachers' and students' perceptions of curriculum is included. The chapter concludes with a summary statement on how the literature relates to the study.

### **Philosophical Rationales**

David Elliott, in his theory of “praxial” learning stated “that music ought to be understood in relation to the meanings and values evidenced in actual music making and music listening in specific cultural contexts” (1995, p. 14). A fundamental aspect of the RDSCC is the student’s active participation in music conducting. Students engage in frequent music listening and self-evaluation sessions, musical movement instruction, and several sessions of conducting practica. Elliot’s praxial theory contends that such activities will benefit the students toward better synthesis of content addressed in this training.

Furthermore, Elliot states that assessment scenarios should involve “(1) the opportunity to make music in the context of (2) an authentic musical situation that, by definition, surrounds the student with (3) musical peers, goals, and standards that serve to guide and support the student’s thinking” (1995, p. 264). The RDSCC culminates with an assessment designed to provide an authentic experience in which to demonstrate the student’s learning.

Beginning in the 1960’s, the progressive educational philosophy of humanism involved a change of thinking with regard to curricular development. As a reaction to the perceived overemphasis on subject matter and cognitive learning, educators sought to develop curricula that would “increase students’ self-understanding, personalize and individualize learning, and provide academic experiences that take students’ personal needs and interests into account” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009, p. 49). Humanism highlighted the position and perceptions of the learners. “Inasmuch as the intentions, goals, and beliefs of students drive and sustain their thinking, then the enacted curriculum would encourage student expression and examination of their beliefs along with other perspectives” (McNeil, 2006, p. 21). A major focus of this study is the evaluation of the RDSCC from the student perspective.

### **Theoretical Rationales**

Curricular development should involve purposeful decision-making, informed by recognized and valid theories on both curricular development as well as learning (Taba, 1962). Tyler’s *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* outlined his curricular development theory in four steps:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?

2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained? (1949, p. 1)

Tyler's theory served as a foundation for the development of the RDSCC. Content and activities were included based on specific information and skills necessary for a successful introduction to instrumental music conducting. The sequence of lessons, quizzes, and evaluations were organized such that each week progresses in difficulty. Furthermore, the sequencing of course content accounts for curricular continuity through repetition of important content and activities. The learning assessments, summative and formative, were designed to provide opportunities to evaluate whether or not the learning objectives have been attained.

Jerome Bruner, in his learning theory described the cognitive process as consisting of three steps: acquisition, transformation, and evaluation (Olson, 2007). Information is acquired and assimilated into the learner's existing knowledge. Information is then reworked to form new schema. The evaluation phase occurs at the point in which students make decisions on how and when to employ new knowledge to a particular set of tasks. Bruner's learning theory applies directly to the way in which the content of the RDSCC has been sequenced. Successful participation in the training necessitates a level of prior musical knowledge and experience. Therefore, acquired information is automatically assimilated with prior learning. This is taken into account in the sequencing of content and activities. Instructional content progresses in a manner similar to the student's training on his/her primary instrument. For example, conducting



lessons progress from basic music concepts, such as time signatures, to more complex concepts, such as phrasing.

The RDSCC is based on a subject-matter design. Lessons include content relevant to Fine Arts and artistic expression in a more general sense; however, this course was designed by an instrumental music education professional and consists of the specific fundamental knowledge needed to function as a conductor of instrumental music. For example, the scope of instructional content consists of concepts toward improving musicianship and musical expression, but these topics are addressed in a manner in which the student is placed in the role of conductor – acquiring and developing skills such as conducting technique and score-study concepts unique to instrumental conducting. Larry J. Bailey described this as “curriculum for career development education. . . . CCDP seeks to provide an educational setting wherein individuals may develop broad arrays of basic skills that would endow them with a great deal of conviviality and potential for career self-actualization” (Schaffarzick & Hampson, 1975, p. 189). The successful student in this curriculum will develop specific fundamental skills necessary of an instrumental music educator.

Many aspects of the curriculum can be categorized as experience-centered design. Students will engage in live conducting practice with fellow students. On experience-centered designs, Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) stated: “[students] construct and revise their knowledge through direct participation and active observation” (p. 199). This is most evident in the relationship between conductor and musician(s). The musicians will either respond appropriately or inappropriately to gestural information delivered by the conductor – thereby providing direct feedback.

The conducting sessions within this course place the students in an environment of cooperative learning and application of concepts. This type of learning was described by Lev Vygotsky as “social constructivism. . . . By participating in a broad range of activities and using tools with others . . . learners *appropriate* the outcomes produced by working together” (Hoy & Hoy, 2009, p. 126). Students participating in the RDSCC will experience cooperative learning situations that are authentic to the work setting of an instrumental music educator.

Formative assessments are utilized to “gather and utilize data in order to make those instructional adjustments necessary for optimal student learning” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2012, p. 252). Additionally, formative assessments can promote the students’ independent learning. “As students gain more expertise in learning and greater knowledge, they can assume more management and refining of their learning adjustments” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2012, p. 253). Summative evaluations are utilized to assess the curriculum’s overall effectiveness in student learning. “If formative evaluation has been implemented carefully, summative evaluation should indicate that the program has enabled students to attain the curriculum goals” (p. 253). The RDSCC culminates in a summative assessment modeled after a lecture-recital. The lecture-recital is a widely used summative assessment for musician-scholars. The Eastman School of Music describes the lecture-recital format as one that “requires the candidate to bring to bear his or her accumulated skills and knowledge on a presentation demonstrating an ideal synthesis of performance and scholarship” (Eastman School of Music).

Once a curriculum is established, the process of curricular evaluation must take place. Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) stated: Does the program have worth and merit? Throughout the process, educators must evaluate the worth and merit of the curriculum's content and experiences" (p. 275). Stated another way, Abeles, Hoffer, and Klotman (1995) offered seven guidelines for determining the quality of a curriculum. The authors stated that a curriculum should be "educational, valid, fundamental, representative, contemporary, relevant, and learnable" (pp. 278-280).

### **Conductor Training**

In order to investigate the validity and relevance of student conductor curriculum designed for high school students, it is important to understand conducting pedagogy in a larger sense. Furthermore, there is a void in research regarding high school student conductor training. Therefore, research on introductory conducting courses at colleges and universities presents the closest link. What is the current situation for the training of conductors? What, if any, are the problems associated with traditional conductor training? What are the emerging trends in conductor training?

The development of conductor training began with individuals aspiring to develop their skills in positions as assistant conductors with symphony orchestras or coach/pianists at opera houses (Keene, 1982). Alan Lee Baker (1992) described current conductor training methods to be a "recent phenomenon. . . . Since the end of World War II, the responsibility for training conductors has shifted to academic degree programs" (1992, p. iv). According to Hanna-Weir (2013), the growth of university-based conductor education "may be due to widespread adoption of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) accreditation requirements that encourage the study of conducting for music majors and require it for those in some particular degree

pathways” (p. 6). While university-based conductor training has dramatically increased the volume of conducting students, the scope and sequence of introductory courses varies widely. As Hanna-Weir (2013) described:

the art of conducting is complicated, variable, often improvisatory, and highly personal. How does one communicate this in its most basic elements to a novice in ways that they can digest and then use as the building blocks to create their own personal conducting style? (p. 7)

As with all artistic endeavors, conducting includes a large element of subjectivity. However, there are generally agreed-upon traits of a successful conductor with regard to musicianship and gestural technique. As the empirical philosopher might suggest, there is a “consensus of the learned” among conductors regarding the skill-set evident in successful conductors – and therefore necessary of the conducting student (Ables, Hoffer, & Klotman, 1995). The university professors are considered experts in the field, and groom their students according to their own expertise. Furthermore, university-based conductor training typically focuses on the “acquisition of specific information and skills” – another tenet of empirical philosophy (Ables, Hoffer, & Klotman, 1995, p. 54).

While a general consensus exists with regard to expected skills and techniques of a conductor, similar consistency is not evident in the practical training of the conductors. One possible explanation, according to Farberman (2003), was:

At the same time that conservatories were starting to teach conducting, a new impediment to conductor training formed. The most brilliant of the day’s conductors – Bulow, Nikisch, and soon Toscanini and Stokowski – were morphed into *Urbemensen* or supermen. With this celebrity came the notion that conducting was a magical gift; a mind-set that is damaging to all conductors and has severely hampered conductor training. (p. 252)

Put more succinctly, Stokowski said: “Conductors are born, not made” (1943, p. 217).

Perhaps the perception, held by many professional conductors, that a structured

conductor training would not adequately produce a successful conductor, propagated a level of ambiguity in academically centered conductor training.

Baker (1992) identified another concern with development of conductor training. According to him, the “objectivist movement” created a situation in which conductor training and subsequent young conductor’s interpretive skills were, until recently, restricted to the point of being “cautiously correct” (p. 6). He asserted that communicative faculties such as facial expression, eye contact, and body movement were not stressed due to the objectivist’s inability to “depersonalize such things” (p. 40). According to Baker, this type of training resulted in young conductors whose performances were purposefully devoid of self-involvement. Conducting pedagogy of this nature resulted in a deficiency in decision-making abilities with regard to performance (Baker, 1992).

### **Conducting Textbooks**

College and university training of conductors typically consists of one class of basic conducting technique with one or more subsequent classes that delve further into a specific medium – band, orchestra, or choir. A study conducted by Romines (2000) included a survey sent to National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) accredited schools with 200 or more music majors. The responses indicated that the three most widely used texts for undergraduate conducting courses were Joseph A. Labuta’s *Basic Conducting Techniques*, Donald Hunsberger and Roy E. Ernst’s *The Art of Conducting*, and Elizabeth Green’s *Modern Conductor*. An examination of these commonly used texts present an overview of topics addressed in a typical undergraduate introductory conducting course.

Labuta (2000) covers baton technique in-depth. There are numerous musical examples with very brief descriptions on how to navigate specific baton techniques. The score analysis section reduces the process to three steps: 1) acquiring a conception – development of an aural concept of the score through a structural and expressive analysis of the music; 2) anticipating problems of conducting – location of specific trouble spots for the conductor’s technique; 3) anticipating problems of ensemble and rehearsal – have a plan to address anticipated trouble spots for the ensemble. The book concludes with several appendices covering topics such as student evaluations, transpositions, and counting drills for uneven meters.

Hunsberger and Ernst (1992) divide their text into four sections: basic principles and techniques, special topics and techniques, an anthology of musical excerpts for class performance, and appendices of additional information. The first section covers basic conducting competencies. However, unique to this text, is the inclusion of an “aural analysis” at the end of each chapter to encourage student conductors to make musical evaluations during and after class sessions. The score study portion of this text divides the process into three phases: 1) title page and overview; 2) structural features – formal design, melodic development, harmonic organization, rhythmic development, texture, text, conducting problems; 3) interpretation. The second section of *The Art of Conducting* includes topics such as conducting the band as accompaniment to a soloist, contemporary music (notation, conducting techniques, logistics, etc.), music theatre, and jazz ensemble conducting. Section three is an anthology of musical excerpts used as exercises for the conducting student. Interestingly, a large portion of excerpts in this textbook is taken from the band literature. The fourth and final section of this text is a

collection of appendices meant to serve as resources to the young conductor and conducting teacher. Topics include: the typical undergraduate conducting course (with example syllabus), daily exercises/warm-ups, seating charts, program checklist, conductor evaluation forms, and recommended readings.

Elizabeth Green's *The Modern Conductor* (1997) features two sections. Part one is comprised of conducting technique (patterns, style, expression, left hand, etc.). Part II is entitled score study and includes topics such as transpositions, conducting different ensembles (orchestra, band, choir), musicianship, and score memorization. The appendices include information on seating arrangements, instrumentation, bowing techniques, etc.

### **Research on Conducting Pedagogy**

Hanna-Weir (2013) compiled and analyzed conducting course syllabi and materials from twenty-two "leading teachers of conducting at colleges and universities throughout North America" (p. 70). His findings revealed current trends in university-based conductor education highlighting areas of convergence as well as variance in course scope and sequence. According to Hanna-Weir, the two essential elements universally found in all texts on conducting and introductory level conducting syllabi was manual technique and score study. Beyond these topics, Hanna-Weir found large variation in the scope of the courses. Areas of variation included: rehearsal techniques, score preparation, error detection, critical listening, open score reading at the keyboard, and internal hearing of the score (2013). Structurally, conducting courses showed considerable alignment with regard to number of meeting times, number of conducting sessions per student, and use of a laboratory ensemble for conducting sessions. Significant variations were evident in the use of various textbooks and repertoire.

Hanna-Weir offered: “the particular topics selected for inclusion in the books serves to elucidate the individual pedagogical approaches and values of each of the authors” (2013, pp. 7-8). A conducting pedagogue’s selection of particular texts or repertoire would then speak directly to his/her approaches and values.

Stalter (1996) developed a conducting course process model for use as a curricular organizing factor for undergraduate conducting courses. This model consists of five major stages: 1) score study, 2) preparation, 3) rehearsal, 4) performance, and 5) evaluation. His research included interviews of twelve teacher/conductors as well as critiques of ten conducting texts. According to Stalter, “certain differences and similarities emerged” (1996, p. 161). With regard to conducting texts, Stalter found the process model was not articulated in a clear, logical manner even though components of the model were present throughout the text. He noted the texts placed greater emphasis on physical technique than on score study as evidenced by the sequencing of sections as well as time spent on each topic. Stalter said:

It is possible that students could perceive score study as secondary in importance and physical technique as primary, when, in reality, teacher/conductors felt that the physical technique is a natural response to an internal aural image stemming from a conductor’s careful study of the score and high level of personal musicianship skills. (1996, p. 164)

Stalter asked his twelve teacher/conductors how a conductor should evaluate his/her own conducting in rehearsals and performance. The teachers identified the following methods:

1. Videotape – gesture (9 of 12 teacher/conductors)
2. Audio Tape – sound (5 of 12)
3. Colleague (5 of 12)
4. Self-evaluation without the aid of someone or something else (4 of 12)
5. Feedback from ensemble members (1 of 12) (1996, p. 169)



Finally, Stalter asked his teacher/conductors to evaluate conducting textbooks. Several teacher/conductors agreed that the texts should be supplemented with on the CD ROM video materials for gestural instruction so students “could see conducting in motion rather than two-dimensional diagrams” (Stalter, 1996, p. 170).

Manfredo (2008) studied the current practices of introductory and advanced conducting classes. A survey was sent to individuals identified as instructors of introductory conducting courses, advanced conducting courses, or both. Participants were selected from 26 schools in the Midwest United States. Prior to completing the survey, respondents were asked to self-identify as a conductor/performer, music educator, or a combination of both. Results indicated that the introductory conducting courses “highly emphasized” the basic conducting patterns of 2, 3, 4, and one-to-the-bar, while little to no emphasis was placed on more advanced conducting patterns. Advanced conducting courses placed equal emphasis on advanced conducting patterns as basic conducting patterns. Additionally, both introductory and advanced courses “highly emphasized” fundamental baton techniques such as posture, baton grip, releases, ictus, and rebound. Participants were also asked to rate the importance of several sub-topics categorized as “score study.” Sub-topics included 1) types of scores, 2) transpositions, 3) clefs, 4) score marking, 5) arranging/orchestration, 6) historical background of composition, 7) analysis (phrasal, formal, harmonic). Results indicated that within the introductory course, there was significant variance on the importance of the score study sub-topics. For example, within the introductory courses “arranging/orchestration” was rated as “no or little emphasis” while “transposition” was rated as “highly emphasized.” The advanced conducting courses rated most of the

score-study sub-topics as “emphasized” or “highly emphasized.” Interestingly, instructors that self-identified as “music educators” generally agreed on the importance of meters and conducting patterns, while those self-identified as “conductors” exhibited larger variation. In the area of score study, there was no agreement across any group of instructors. Manfredo’s (2008) study implied that there still does not exist an “appropriate and unified focus” for the introductory conducting course (p. 56).

### **Video-Enhanced Conducting Instruction**

Yarbrough (1979) stated: “The development of the videotape recorder as a practical educational tool has made the systematic observation and analysis of all aspects of conducting possible” (p. 104). Given that the RDSCC exists as an online platform, a review of literature regarding video-enhance conducting instruction is warranted. Additionally, previous research indicates success in the use of video recordings for self-evaluation and assessment of learning (Keller, 1979). Each participant in the RDSCC is expected to video record his/her conducting sessions for self-assessment and reflection. The following studies represent research regarding use of video in content delivery as well as assessment/self-reflection.

Jordan (1980) researched the effectiveness of videotape instruction as a supplement to instruction in introductory conducting. Sixty subjects, from two major universities in Illinois, were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Both groups received identical in-class instruction and printed materials to guide the students’ conducting practice, but the experimental group received supplementary videotapes for reference in conducting practice. Both groups were post-tested using an expert-validated conducting assessment. Results indicated that the videotape supplements had a statistically significant positive effect on the students’ conducting

gesture. Additionally, all subjects (control and experimental) completed questionnaires on their opinions of videotape supplements for conducting instruction. Subjects in the experimental group indicated: "videotape materials stimulated interest in the conducting class" (p. 79). Also, roughly 50% of experimental subjects suggested an expanded use of videotapes in instruction (Jordan, 1980).

Fleming (1977) evaluated the effect of guided practice materials used with videotape recordings on the development of conducting skills. Twenty-two students, enrolled in an introductory conducting course at a major university, were used in the experiment. A control/experimental group pretest/posttest design was used. The experimental group was treated with practice materials for use in preparation for in-class conducting sessions. Among these materials were: score study assistance and a self-evaluation guide for use in analyzing videotaped individual practice. The control group also participated in the in-class conducting sessions, but did so without the score study assistance and self-evaluation guide/videotaped practice. Results of the study indicated that guided practice materials and use of a videotape recorder had beneficial effects on the development of students' conducting skill. However, this study did not disaggregate the effects of each aspect of the treatment on the dependent variable (conducting skill). Subsequent research has delved more deeply into the specific effects of video recording and guided practice materials (Yarborough, Wapnick, & Kelly, 1979; Yarbrough, 1987).

In a similar study, Scott (1996) investigated the effect of conducting skills diagnostic instruction on the acquisition of basic conducting skills. The subject pool, comprised of 36 students enrolled in an introductory conducting course a major Midwest

university, were randomly assigned to either a control group or experimental group. Both groups were pretested for conducting skill as well as diagnostic skills with regard to conducting techniques. The pretest included a written test as well as a conducting test. Over the course of 5 weeks, the control group watched videotapes containing lectures/demonstrations of specific conducting techniques. The experimental group watched videotapes containing the same lectures/demonstrations but with added content on diagnostic skills. Diagnostic content included video examples of improper conducting techniques followed by prompts for the student to diagnose errors through multiple-choice questions. Posttest results indicated a significant improvement in written test scores for both groups. Results further indicated that diagnostic skills instruction did not have a statistically significant effect on conducting ability. However, Scott found a notable increase in conducting scores in the group scoring lowest in the pretest – and argued this represented evidence of merit in this teaching method.

Modeling has been identified as a “fundamental means by which new modes of behavior are acquired and existing patterns modified” (Bandura, 1969, p. 118). Leppla (1989) researched the effects of guided vs. unguided modeling on the acquisition of basic conducting skills. Thirty-one Ohio State undergraduate students enrolled in the introductory courses were divided into two experimental groups. Students in Group A viewed videotapes containing basic conducting skills demonstrated by modeling only (no verbal guidance). Group B viewed the same videotapes – but with added verbal guidance. Students were exposed to their treatments for six weeks. At the conclusion, both student groups were post-tested for conducting effectiveness using a panel of experts. Results indicated no significant difference between modeling with verbal

guidance and modeling without verbal guidance. The researcher hypothesized the low significance might have been due to the experts inability to ascertain success in the subjects' isolated conducting skills from one conducting performance that includes multiple skills simultaneously. Also, Leppla argued the possibility of confusion with regard to desired conducting execution due to lack of consistency between modeling videotapes and in-class instruction. A final concern found by the researcher was the perceived difficulty in motivating students to view the videotapes. Leppla argued that the students were denied "positive incentives in influencing behavior" resulting in lower participation in videotape viewing (p. 63).

Tjornehoj (2001) investigated the effectiveness of video modeling and self-evaluation as pedagogical tools in the learning process of conducting techniques. Twelve pre-service music teachers were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups. Both groups were pretested and post-tested for conducting expressiveness, as determined by a panel of three experts. Additionally, all subjects were asked to self-evaluate their conducting performances of the pretest and posttest using a provided conducting skills "checklist." The control group received conducting instruction through printed materials while the experimental group received additional material in the form of video-modeling examples. Results indicated that the use of video modeling resulted in significant improvement in expressive conducting. The control and experimental groups agreed on the high value of self-evaluation of the conducting videos while using a "checklist." Interestingly, posttest results indicated a statistically significant difference between the pre-service teachers self-evaluation and that of the experts, with self-evaluations being notably higher.

As illustrated in the aforementioned studies, research supports the notion that basic conducting competencies can be learned through video. However, Yarborough, Wapnick, & Kelly (1979) noted that current conductor training “relies on the combination of feedback from an experienced conductor-teacher, a variety of conducting textbooks, and repeated viewing with instructor feedback of videotaped conducting examples for modeling and remedial purposes” (p. 105). Yarborough et al. compared the effects of traditional instructor feedback versus self-observation form feedback of videotaped conducting sessions. Subjects ( $N=34$ ) were students enrolled in an introductory conducting course at Syracuse University. Students were randomly assigned to two experimental groups. Additionally, two control groups were assigned to control for testing effects and maturation. Over the course of one semester, each subject video recorded two conducting practicums, after which they were asked to review their videotapes for 30 minutes. During the videotape reviews, subjects in the first experimental received feedback from a conductor-teacher who identified conducting problems, modeled appropriate techniques, and made suggestions for improvement. Subjects from the second experimental group reviewed their videotapes while using a supplied “Music Conductor Observation Form,” a self-guided critique form (Yarborough et al., 1979, pp. 105-106). Following the feedback sessions, all subjects completed a critique of their experiences. Results indicated there was no statistically significant difference between the two feedback techniques, suggesting there is evidence to support systematic self-observation as an alternative to traditional teacher feedback. Price (1985) replicated this study and found similar results.

Yarbrough (1987) further studied the use of video in self-assessment. Eighty-five students in introductory conducting course at Syracuse University participated in the study. Students each conducted and videotaped six conducting practicums. Following each conducting session, participants reviewed and critiqued their conducting using an observation form developed for the class. A fellow student “reliability observer” as well as the instructor also critiqued the student’s video using the observation form. The researcher compiled data from the observation forms and computed the reliability for the groups revealing coefficients of .82 and .84, respectively. Additionally, following two of the conducting sessions, the students were asked to complete a self-critique using data from the previous videotaped observations. Yarbrough compared the students’ self-critiques with a posttest of his/her conducting skill. Results indicated that students’ self-critiques were accurate 80% of the time. Implications of this study support previous research regarding potential for behavioral assessment through self-observation.

### **Teachers’ Perspectives**

Curriculum development is strengthened when teachers have a “voice” in the process. Unfortunately, in many curriculum projects, teachers are seen merely as the mode of delivery for a professional “developer’s” creation (Ben-Peretz, 1980). Ben-Peretz (1980) conducted a study in which six teachers from socioeconomically diverse schools were involved in a curriculum development project that placed the teachers in the role of curriculum writers. Following the curriculum development, the researcher conducted exit interviews of each participant. The participants indicated that the subsequent curriculum, in addition to being pedagogically sound, was more flexible in terms of teachers’ practical situations. Additionally, the teachers expressed that their

curriculum functioned more appropriately in terms of teaching materials needed. The researcher offered: "The perception of teachers as sensitive to and knowledgeable about practical problem situations demands their being assigned a primary role in the curriculum process that starts with the locating of curricular problems" (Ben-Peretz, 1980, p. 54).

Ben-Peretz research indicates that curriculum developed by teachers is more satisfactory to teachers. What, then, would increase the number of teachers requesting to be involved in the curriculum writing process? Young (1985) researched 15 randomly selected teachers' motivations in curriculum development participation. The primary reason indicated by the study subjects was the desire to be involved in decision-making. Young summarized this point saying: "This change of role may be attractive to those classroom teachers who find their hierarchical subordination conflicts with their perception of themselves as professionals" (p. 407). This reaffirmation of the teachers' role as a professional educator fosters an increase in self-efficacy (Young, 1985).

Another important area of research in teacher perception is teacher stress and potential burnout. Kokkinos (2007) described burnout as a syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion and chronic stress. Research has shown that some of the most frequently reported sources of teacher stress and burnout are workload, time pressure, and the lack of support/resources provided (Hawkes & Dedrick, 1983). High school band directors can be particularly prone to burnout due to their multitude of responsibilities and demanding schedules. Heston, Dedrick, Raschke, & Whitehead (1996) surveyed 120 high school band directors addressing their job satisfaction and levels of stress associated with their job. Results indicated that the most frequently



reported causes of stress were: “1) lack of support from parents, administration, and community, 2) workload, 3) lack of student commitment, and 4) busywork or non-teaching duties” (p. 323). Interestingly, teachers indicated that adding the responsibility of teaching individual lessons provided a unique source of job satisfaction, not increased stress. Teachers expressed that this medium provided an opportunity to develop closer relationships with their students and influence positive behaviors (Heston et al.).

A similar study conducted by Scheib (2003) focused on music teachers’ stress resulting from their perceived role(s). The researcher conducted case studies of four music educators in one midwestern high school. Each teacher was observed and interviewed over the course of the fall semester. The participants expressed that the most common contributors to role-related stress were role conflict and role overload. The researcher believed that these two categories were closely linked. Scheib (2003) stated:

Meeting the demands of teaching, directing performing ensembles, and maintaining a personal life apart from the responsibilities of work proves quite challenging for these teachers. Sometimes this tension does not come necessarily from a conflict of roles, but a sense that no role can be fulfilled satisfactorily due to being ‘spread too thin.’ This is called role overload. (p. 132)

Job related stress and burnout contributes significantly to teacher attrition. As Heston et al. (1996) stated: “Any excesses in terms of student load and extensions beyond the original job description would undoubtedly overload an already hectic work schedule” (p. 325). Therefore, successful implementation of a student conductor curriculum necessitates a thoroughly planned-out integration into the existing curriculum with minimal impact on the participating band director’s schedule.

## Students' Perceptions

Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) stated: "Students should have a voice in curriculum development. Their input is important in its own right, but allowing them to participate in curriculum development also empowers them and encourages them to take responsibility for matters that concern them" (p. 241). Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman (2010) expressed a similar opinion: "Learning is not something done *to* students, but rather something students themselves do. It is the direct result of how students interpret and respond to their experiences – conscious and unconscious, past and present" (p. 3). Ambrose's statement is supported by recent research indicating an increased emphasis on student perception in curricular planning (Brooker & Macdonald, 2010). As Levin (2000) expressed: "educational reform cannot succeed and should not proceed without much more direct involvement of students in all its aspects" (p. 156). A fundamental aspect of interpreting one's own experiences is self-perception. Beane and Lipka (1986) identified several learning constructs with regard to self-perception.

Among them are:

- The way in which individuals perceive themselves affects the perception of what is worth learning. The most desirable learning is that which grows out of the salient dimensions of self.
- Self-perceptions of ability account for some degree of variance in learning. The degree to which individuals have confidence in their ability to learn may influence the degree to which learning actually takes place.
- Self-perceptions are most likely enhanced when individuals knowingly assume responsibility for their own learning. Activities in which learners assume greater responsibility and in which they are aware of personal efforts in this regard add to personal meaning and satisfaction.
- Self-perceptions are most likely to be enhanced when high priority is placed on interaction. Those learning situations in which individuals have opportunities to try out new roles, test ideas, and get feedback from others are most congruent with the interactive nature of self-perception development. (pp. 92-93)

Research regarding the “student voice” in curriculum continues to grow (Moehle, 2005; Cook-Sather, 2006; Yonezawa & Jones, 2009). Kohn (1993) offered that the student voice was a fundamental factor in motivation, and that depriving students of self-determination effectively deprives them of motivation. Kohn stated:

Students ought to help determine the criteria by which their work will be judged and then play a role in weighing their work against those criteria. This achieves several things at once: it gives students control over their education, it makes evaluation feel less punitive, and it provides an important learning experience in itself. (p. 6)

This level of student involvement in the learning process has its roots in constructivist learning theory (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). According to the tenets of constructivism, the learner should be actively engaged in the process of thinking and learning.

In order to include the “student voice” in the curriculum, developers must first acquire and interpret the students’ perceptions. Brooker and Macdonald (2010) conducted research outlining several difficulties in capturing the authentic student-perspective with regard to curriculum. Teachers and students at eleven different Australian high schools were interviewed regarding their perceptions of the school’s physical education curriculum. The researchers identified various problems with the “positioning” of the student voice. Time, frequency, and location of the interviews was determined by the researchers – creating potentially confounding variables considering the students’ opinions might vary if they were given the opportunity to offer opinions at a time of their choosing. Also, interviews were conducted in-group settings, effectively homogenizing the student “voice” (p. 94). The researchers urged “a commitment on the part of curriculum-making authorities both to challenge the dualistic acceptance of ‘educator’ and ‘student’ and also to reorganize power relations to ensure that student voice informs curriculum making” (p. 96).

Richards (2006) explored various teacher-student relationships and their effects on the students' perspectives of their learning. Twenty-seven high school students enrolled at six different schools were used as subjects. Each subject participated in one-on-one interviews consisting of questions regarding the relationship between teachers and students and the subsequent impacts on student learning. Results indicated that students overwhelmingly felt that the teacher-student relationship was the single most important factor in their learning (Richards, 2006). Also, interview results indicated that students who perceive their relationship with their teacher as "positive and caring" will complete more assignments and exert more effort than those with negative views of the teacher-student relationship (p. 170).

### **Perceptions of Web-Based Learning**

The internet has increasingly gained acceptance as a curricular supplement, and in many cases, as the singular mode of instruction (Pfundstein, 2003; Richardson & Swan, 2003). Research has also shown that, in some cases, students prefer web-based learning to traditional in-class learning due to increased flexibility with their schedule, and a perceived increase in control of their own learning (Pfundstein, 2003).

Marin-Marquez (2003) compared the academic achievement and learning style preferences of students receiving on-campus instruction ( $N = 27$ ) to those receiving online instruction ( $N = 7$ ). All students were registered in the Graduate Business School at the Universidad del Turabo, Puerto Rico. Dependent measures for the study were a posttest for the course, final grades, an instrument designed to measure student perception of learning gains, and Kolb's Learning Styles Inventory (p. iv). Results indicated no statistically significant difference in learning achievements as measured by posttest results and final grades. However, the researcher noted that a number of

students in the on-campus section received grades of “C” whereas no students in the online section received a grade of “C.” Marin-Marquez suggested this might have been a result of a lack of individualized attention, as the on-campus course had many more students than the online course. Also, results indicated no statistically significant difference in students’ perception of their learning achievements. With regard to time-commitment, students in the on-campus course registered complaints such as “The time frame was not enough to discuss some concepts” (2003, p. 148). The online students registered no such complaints. The researcher suggested this might be due to the online students’ stronger ability to work well independently. These findings have implications regarding what type of students would likely function best in an online classroom environment.

As Kohn’s (1993) indicated, success of a curriculum is largely dependent on the level at which the students feel connected to the course. This factor is potentially magnified in non-traditional classroom situations (Luciano & Testa, 2011). Richardson and Swan (2003) studied the relationship between students’ expressed level of “social presence” and their perceived learning gains. Additionally, this study compared the students’ expressed satisfaction with the course instructor to perceived learning gains. Participants for the study were 369 students enrolled in an online course offered at Empire State College, New York. The researcher chose Empire State College as the source for the study based on the high quality of the institution’s online education program, attempting to limit the complications that typically affect studies of this type (Richardson & Swan, 2003). Results indicated that students who perceived their social presence within the course as being high also perceived their learning gains to be

greater. Also, students who expressed high satisfaction with their instructor believed they learned more than those with low instructor satisfaction. A portion of the study involved interviews of the students regarding activities they perceived as being most beneficial to their learning. Students expressed the importance of teacher involvement in projects/assignments prior to the due date (p. 80). The findings from this study indicate the importance of a strong connection from the student to the online platform. Findings also indicate that students perceive their learning outcomes to be greater when the course instructor maintains an active presence over the duration of the course.

Pfundstein (2003) studied the effects of web-based versus web-enhanced learning on high school students' learning outcomes and self-regulatory skills. The subject pool was comprised of thirty-eight students enrolled in a United States Government course at a Midwest suburban high school. Students were divided into web-based instruction ( $N = 21$ ) and web-enhanced instruction ( $N = 17$ ). The reported findings indicated that mode of instruction (web-based or web-enhanced) did not account for significant variance among students' learning outcomes. The researcher commented that this might be due to the nature of the subject pool. This study took place in an affluent suburb, where students are typically considered high achievers based on state scores. However, all students, whether identified as low performing or high performing (based on pretest), showed similar gains in learning outcomes. Results did indicate a significant amount of variance in learning outcomes with regard to self-regulatory skills and resource management. The researcher suggested "motivation, cognition, metacognition, [and] resource management skills could be indicators for students to consider prior to taking an e-learning course" (p. 129).

## Summary

The Florida Bandmasters Association's Student Conductor Activity affords high school students a unique experience in gaining insight into the practices of a wind band conductor. The literature reviewed in this chapter highlights some important concepts and themes in the development of a web-based curriculum for high school student conductors.

Systematic training of the instrumental conductor is a relatively new development (Baker, 1992). However, with the adoption of university-based instruction, conductor pedagogy has developed rapidly. Several research studies have added to the literature regarding acquisition of fundamental conducting skills as well as innovative uses of technology. Specifically, video modeling and self-evaluation using video recordings have shown particular effectiveness.

Research regarding web-based courses indicates large successes when students feel empowered in their learning process and connected to the course. A well-designed web-based course can provide educational opportunities equal to, and in some cases, greater than those available through traditional means (Pfundstein, 2003). The RDSCC exists as a web-based curriculum, providing students and teachers with increased flexibility in scheduling through 24-hour access to instruction.

Curriculum researchers have stressed the importance of including students' and teachers' perspectives in curriculum writing (Ben-Peretz, 1980; Kohn, 1993). The successful implementation of any curriculum, particularly one in which participation is voluntary, is highly dependent on the experiential perceptions of the students and teachers.

This examination of literature highlighted important historical and pedagogical concepts in conductor education, key concepts in curricular development and implementation, and several uses of educational technology – all pertinent topics to the creation and validation of a Researcher Designed Student Conductor Curriculum.



## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the validity and participants' perceptions of a Researcher Developed Student Conductor Curriculum. First, the researcher developed a web-based curriculum for high school conductors. Second, the researcher sought validation of the curriculum from expert conductor-educators as well as professional music educators in the secondary schools. Third, the researcher sought perceptions of the curriculum from the participating band directors and their student conductors. The following chapter describes the methodology used in this study.

### **Development of the RDSCC**

The development of the RDSCC was guided by Tyler's curricular philosophies identified in his *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (1949). The researcher: 1) identified specific educational purposes, 2) identified educational experiences toward attainment of those purposes, 3) organized the experiences, and 4) developed a method to determine whether the purposes had been met. Once a curricular philosophy was established, the RDSCC was created using a popular blog creation platform, allowing for easy upload and modification of text and videos. The RDSCC is comprised of nine webpages on one website and can be found at <http://www.fbastudentconductor.blogspot.com>.

### **Home Page**

The home page functions as an introduction page that begins with the following stated purpose of the curriculum:

The purpose of this website is to provide instruction and educational opportunities for students interested in the basic fundamentals of band conducting. Additionally, this curriculum is

designed to prepare students for the student conductor assessment administered by the Florida Bandmasters Association. (Birkner, 2012)

Additionally, the introduction page includes: a welcome/introductory video by the researcher, a list of materials needed for the successful participation in the curriculum, and the researcher's contact information. At the top of the introduction page, the researcher placed a toolbar with links to eight "WEEK" pages (WEEK 1, WEEK 2, etc.). Each of the eight pages represents one full week of instruction. The RDSCC was designed as an 8-week curriculum, as most Florida Public Schools resume classes (after the holiday break) in the first week of January, leaving an average of eight to nine weeks before the FBA MPA's. Therefore, a student who begins the RDSCC in the first week of the spring semester will theoretically complete the curriculum just prior to the FBA MPA's.

### **Instructional Content Pages**

The RDSCC is comprised of specific content and educational experiences relevant to a beginning band conductor. This includes: gestural training, score reading, transpositions, and score study. While there are several other skills necessary for success as a band director, the researcher chose to focus the scope of this curriculum specifically on that which is fundamentally necessary as a band conductor, taking into account that which is realistically attainable for a high school student. "The job analysis and a knowledge of the characteristics of the intended learners are all that is necessary for the blueprint of expected student performance" (McNeil, 2006, p. 106). In addition to gestural training, the RDSCC was designed to include concepts of score study through training in

music theory and music history. As Wayne Bailey (2009) stated: “The conductor must provide an informed interpretation of the music through his own knowledge of musical style and performance practice, compositional style of the composer, and historical aspects of the work and composer” (p. 3). Many of the conducting gesture concepts were adapted from David A. Waybright’s (2006) textbook, *Basic Conducting*.

### **Organization of Educational Experiences**

The educational experiences presented in the RDSCC were organized for maximum “continuity, sequence, and integration” (Tyler, 1949, p. 84). Activities are presented in a gradual progression from basic physical conducting gestures (i.e. posture, arm positions) to more complex physical conducting gestures (i.e. cueing, fermatas, style). Additionally, the curricular content related to score study/score-reading progresses from basic identification of components of a musical score (i.e. key signatures, instrument list) to more complex aspects (i.e. instrument transpositions). The concept of “integration” refers to the purposeful organization of experiences to help the student “get a unified view and to unify his behavior in relation to the elements dealt with” (1949, p. 85). As such, each progressive level of content is related directly to the student’s overall experience as a student conductor. For example, following instruction on basic identification of components in a musical score, the student is instructed to apply this information directly to the study of his/her selected student conductor piece.

### **Score Study**

In WEEK 1, students are instructed to obtain the score they’ll be using for the curriculum. The student is instructed to identify basic components of the

score: composer, title, instrument list, location of instruments within the score, key signature(s), time signature(s), tempo(s), and repeats. In WEEK 2, students are instructed to research the composer of their selected piece. Students are asked to write a 250-word biographical sketch including birthplace/date, musical training, influences, additional works, etc. In WEEK 3, students are introduced to concepts regarding treble clef and bass clef as well as transposing instruments commonly found in a band score. Students are instructed to identify major style-characteristics of the piece, as well as to identify and define musical terms/markings found in their score. Additionally, students are instructed on basic fundamentals of marking the musical score. WEEKs 4-7 include instruction on transposition for instruments pitched in keys of Bb, Eb, and F. Content includes a list of instruments typically pitched in each key, a detailed explanation of each transposition, and transposition etudes for practice. Each subsequent week contains answers to the previous week's transposition etude. Also, during WEEK 4-7, students are instructed to compose a 250-300 word essay on the student conductor piece including information on the composer as well as information on the specific piece.

### **Gestural Training**

In WEEK 1-3, students are introduced to basic conducting fundamentals through instructional videos, brief conducting etudes, as well as formative evaluations – termed “conducting checkpoints” (Birkner, 2012). The instructional videos feature the researcher, as well as Graduate Students in the instrumental conducting program at the University of Florida, modeling and explaining basic conducting techniques. In several videos, the researcher chose to provide

several camera angles from various viewpoints, including from the viewpoint of the conductor, to clearly illustrate the appropriate execution of each gesture. Additionally, where applicable, the instructional video(s) include(s) the conducting etude(s) introduced during that week's instruction. Each week concludes with a "conducting checkpoint" comprised of several etudes designed to check for mastery of that week's gestural content.

### **Conducting Practica**

During WEEK 4-7 students are instructed to, in consultation with their band director, schedule 2-3 times he/she will conduct the band on the student conductor piece. Students are instructed to set up a video recorder in the back of the band room, focused on the conducting podium, to video record each conducting session for self-evaluation.

### **Journal Reflection**

Students are instructed to keep a journal through the entirety of the RDSCC. The researcher included this aspect of the curriculum as it provides an important resource for self-expression, critical thinking on the learners' experiences, and as a guidepost for the learners' development.

### **Assessment of Objectives**

Throughout the RDSCC, students are expected to complete formative assessments called "conducting checkpoints." Additionally, the students are advised to utilize his/her band director to check homework and assignments. The RDSCC culminates with a summative evaluation using the lecture-recital format. The student conductor is instructed to, using his/her prepared written score summary, prepare a brief two to three minute oral narrative on the

historical and theoretical analysis of the composition. In preparation for this activity, the student conductor is instructed to:

1. Look over your 250-300 word summary once again. Make any final adjustments necessary.
2. Read your summary aloud. Use a strong speaking voice.
3. Be sure to practice making eye-contact with the imaginary audience. Don't have your head aimed at your essay.
4. If you choose to memorize the summary - great. If not, consider making notecards to keep you on track and the presentation moving. It's not necessary that you recite your essay word-for-word. The objective is to present your material in an organized and fluid manner.
5. Practice your presentation for friends and family. (Birkner, 2012)

Students are given the latitude to incorporate brief performance excerpts (from his/her ensemble) for examples. Following the narrative, student conductors are required to conduct his/her ensemble through a full performance of the composition. The narrative and conducting performance represents the culminating event of the RDSCC.

For the purposes of this study, the narrative and performance is delivered to a concert audience. If the RDSCC were to be adopted by the FBA as the formal assessment for the student conductor activity, the oral presentation would be delivered to the assigned FBA adjudicator. Additionally, given the various differences between the RDSCC and the current FBA student conductor activity, a revised assessment sheet would be necessary. A curriculum map is provided as Appendix A.

### **Validation and Participants' Perceptions of the Curriculum**

The implementation of a curriculum should include a careful evaluation of perceived strengths and weaknesses (Bebell, 1974). Thorough curriculum

evaluation includes multiple facets ranging from instructional content to mode of instruction (Lewy, 1977). Also, a more holistic curriculum evaluation is comprised of input from multiple stakeholders (e.g. experts, teachers, students) (Brooker & Macdonald, 2010). Hence, the evaluation portion of this study was divided into two phases: 1) validation, and 2) participants' perceptions. Phase one (validation) consisted of a curriculum evaluation of the RDSCC by selected experts in the field of wind band conducting as well as current high school band directors. Phase two (participants' perceptions) consisted of a collection and comparison of students' and band directors' perceptions of the curriculum at three different stages of instruction. A qualitative research design was chosen for this study in order to provide for open-ended questioning and to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and perceptions (Creswell, 2002).

Four research questions were addressed:

1. To what extent does the RDSCC align with experts' opinions of appropriate high school student conductor preparation?
2. To what extent does the RDSCC align with high school band directors' opinions of appropriate high school student conductor preparation?
3. What are the students' perceptions regarding the learning activities and outcomes in the RDSCC?
4. What are the high school band directors' perceptions regarding the learning activities and outcomes in the RDSCC?

## **Participants**

In both phases of the evaluation portion of this study, participants were purposefully sampled. The researcher consulted with a leading conductor/music education expert to identify 10 leading experts in the field of wind band conducting to act as curriculum evaluators. Also for Phase One, five high school

band directors were selected as additional curriculum evaluators. The high school band directors were sampled for “maximal variation” based on geographic location, FBA classification, and director experience (Creswell, 2002, p. 194). High school band directors selected as participants for Phase One of the study were retained for Phase Two.

### **Procedures (Phase One)**

Following the development of the RDSCC, the researcher developed two surveys. One survey was designed specifically for wind band conducting experts (Appendix E). The second survey was designed specifically for high school band directors (Appendix F). Both surveys were comprised of Likert scale items. Each item included a statement followed by a five point rating system, requiring participants to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the provided statement (e.g. strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree). Following each survey item, participants were given the opportunity to include additional comments.

The survey designed specifically for wind band conducting experts included three categories: instructional content, assessment, and additional questions. The survey designed specifically for high school band directors was identical to that of the experts, with two exceptions in the “additional questions” section. The high school band directors’ “additional questions” did not include an item regarding the student conductor activity being “productive and worthwhile,” as that topic was covered in greater depth in Phase 2. Also, as it is known that each of the high school band directors surveyed are employed in Florida, the



item regarding in which state they reside was replaced by the dichotomous (true/false) item:

- I have previously mentored a high school student in the Florida Bandmasters Association Student Conductor Activity.

### **Data Collection (Phase One)**

The researcher emailed an introduction letter and explanation of the study to the ten selected wind band conducting experts and the five selected high school band directors. Included in this letter were website links to both the online curriculum and the survey with which to evaluate the curriculum. Seven experts responded affirmatively as did five high school band directors. Subsequently, each respondent was mailed a letter of consent (Appendix G and Appendix H) via email.

### **Procedures (Phase Two)**

The high school band directors selected for Phase One of the study were retained for Phase Two. In addition to completing the curriculum evaluation survey, each of the five band directors volunteered to participate as a mentor to a high school student conductor in their band program using the RDSCC. Band directors were asked to select a student for participation in the RDSCC using the same selection criteria they would normally use for participation in the FBA Student Conductor Activity. Consent forms were mailed to the band directors for distribution to the students' parent/guardians (Appendix I).

As participants in Phase Two, the band directors, with their student's assent, agreed to: 1) select a piece for their student conductor to study. (The researcher requested that the piece be of similar style(s)/difficulty as the pieces

listed in the FBA Student Conductor repertoire list (i.e. Grade 4)); 2) commit to an 8-week time period in the Fall semester of 2013 in which to participate in the RDSCC; 3) provide the student conductor a performance opportunity at the conclusion of the 8-weeks – as outlined in the RDSCC; and 4) participate, and facilitate their student conductor's participation in, three audio recorded interviews conducted by the researcher.

### **Data Collection (Phase Two)**

An interview format of data collection was chosen for Phase Two of the study. The interview format can be used to obtain a deeper understanding of the subjects' perspective. "... through the careful motivation of the subject and maintenance of rapport, [the interviewer] can obtain information that the subject would probably not reveal under any other circumstances" (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 436). Each participating band director and his/her student conductor were contacted on three occasions: prior to beginning the RDSCC, approximately halfway through the RDSCC, and at the conclusion of the RDSCC. This method of time-series data collection was used to periodically measure individuals' potential changes in perception over the course of the 8-week curriculum (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). On each occasion, the interviewee was informed that the interview was being recorded, but that names would not be used in any presentation of data. Interview questions were designed to glean band directors' and student conductors' perceptions of the student conductor activity in general, as well as their perceptions regarding the RDSCC (Appendix J).

## **Reliability Procedures**

Two members of the conducting faculty at the University of Florida conducted a pretest of the survey instruments. Additionally, interview questions were previewed by a conducting faculty member at the University of Florida as well as an outside reviewer holding a PhD in Music Education with an emphasis in Instrumental Conducting. Based on these reliability procedures, changes were made to both the survey instruments and interview questions to improve the capability of collecting pertinent information on the validity and participants' perceptions of the RDSCC.

## **Data Analysis (Phase One)**

Following the collection of survey responses, the researcher computed descriptive statistics for each survey question, including mean and standard deviation. The experts' responses were treated as one data set, and the band directors' responses were treated as a second data set. Then, the researcher conducted independent *t*-tests to determine if there were significant differences between the means of responses between the experts and the band directors. Additionally, open-ended comments were analyzed for more detailed opinions from the curriculum validators.

## **Data Analysis (Phase Two)**

Each interview was transcribed and analyzed for emerging themes. The researcher documented themes related to 1) overall perceptions of the student conductor activity; 2) changes in perceptions over the course of the RDSCC; and 3) differences in perception between groups (i.e. students, band directors). Additionally, participants provided opinions (via rating scale questions) regarding

the “helpfulness” of specific aspects of the RDSCC. The researcher computed and analyzed this data for further description of the participants’ perceptions.

## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine the validity and participants' perceptions of a high school student conductor curriculum. The study was divided into two phases: 1) validation, and 2) participants' perceptions. Phase one (validation) consisted of a curriculum evaluation of the RDSCC by selected experts in the field of wind band conducting as well as current high school band directors. The researcher contacted ten wind band conducting experts and five high school band directors to evaluate and validate the curriculum using a researcher-designed survey. Phase two (participants' perceptions) consisted of a collection and comparison of students' and band directors' perceptions of the curriculum at three different stages of instruction. The high school band directors selected for Phase One of the study were retained for Phase Two. After completing the curriculum evaluation survey, each of the five band directors volunteered to participate as a mentor to a high school student conductor in their band program using the RDSCC. Band directors were asked to select a student for participation in the RDSCC using the same selection criteria they would normally use for participation in the FBA Student Conductor Activity.

### **Data Collection (Phase One)**

The researcher contacted ten wind band conducting experts. Seven completed the survey. Five high school band directors completed the survey.

### **Data Collection (Phase Two)**

The researcher conducted three phone interviews with each band director as well as their student conductor. Each of the five band programs started the eight-week curriculum on a different date. However, the researcher was able to

interview each band director/student combination at the appropriate time relative to their specific start date (i.e. prior to the start of the curriculum, halfway through the curriculum, at the conclusion of the curriculum). Generally, interviews were conducted during the school day. On two occasions, band directors asked to be interviewed outside of school hours due to scheduling conflicts. Most band director/student combinations chose to conduct their interviews separately from one another. The researcher did not stipulate privacy for the interviews. Instead, the researcher suggested the student and teacher create an interview environment in which they felt most comfortable. The researcher transcribed all interviews.

### **Presentation of Results (Phase One)**

The following presentation of results consists of each statement from the validation survey followed by brief statistical representation of results. The survey was divided into three categories: 1) instructional content, 2) assessment, 3a) additional comments about the student conductor activity, 3b) additional comments about the curriculum. Each survey statement provided the participant with an opportunity to add additional comments regarding that specific topic. When provided, the additional comments are included. To preserve anonymity, each participant was assigned a generic title (e.g. Expert 1, Expert 2, Band Director 1, Band Director 2, Student 1, Student 2, etc.). Each band director number corresponded to a student number (i.e. Band Director 1 was Student 1's band director).

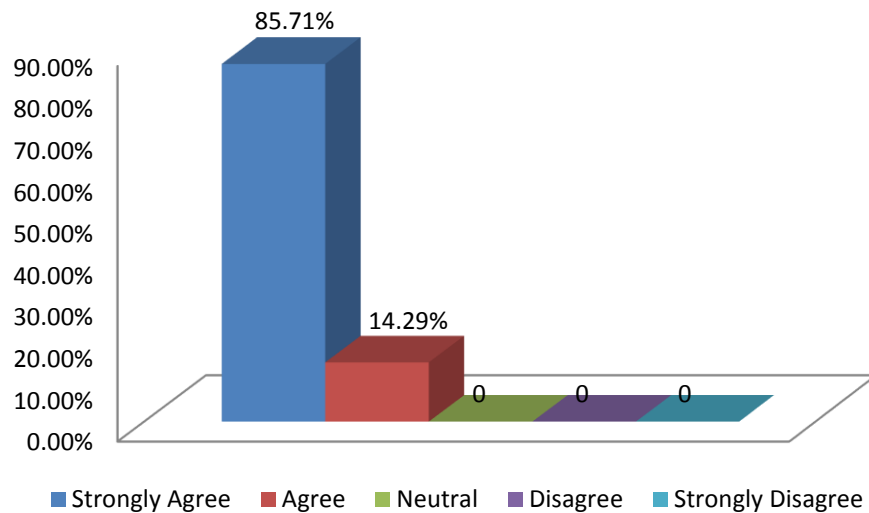
## Results (Phase One)

### Content Area 1: Instructional content

The first section of the survey was designed to have the survey participants indicate the strength to which they agree or disagree with statements regarding the instructional content of the RDSCC. The first section contained eight statements.

#### **Statement 1: The purposes and goals of this curriculum are clear and easily understood.**

**Experts:** One expert (14.29%) agreed with this statement while six experts (85.71%) strongly agreed (Figure 4-1). Expert 3 added: “Excellent introduction...Suggest adding your email below your name at the bottom of the



first page.”

Figure 4-1. Percentages of experts’ opinions on whether the purposes and goals of the curriculum are clear and easily understood.

**Band Directors:** All five of the band directors (100%) strongly agreed with this statement (Figure 4-2). Band Director 1 added: “Information was clear, concise and informative. Band Director 2 added: “The curriculum is clearly designed with a logical progression of skills and necessary musical development

to accomplish [the] task. Band Director 5 added: “Very clear, sequential videos and information so students can follow easily.”

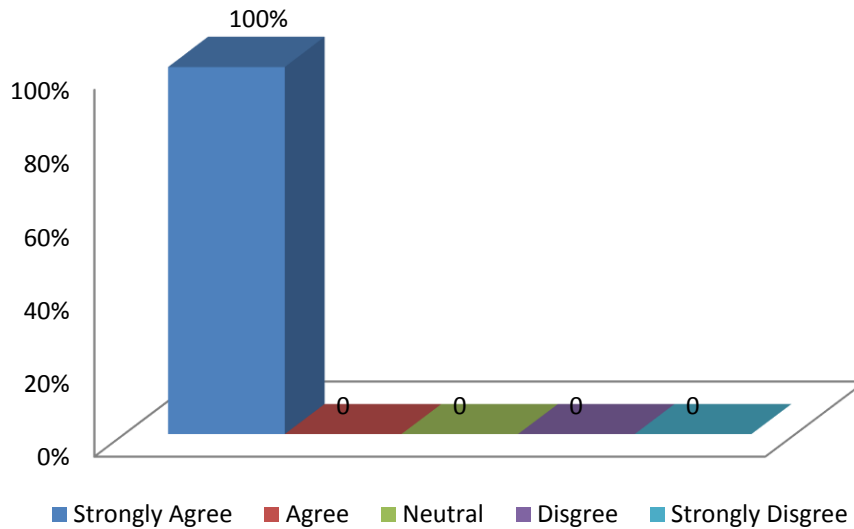


Figure 4-2. Percentages of high school band directors’ opinions on whether the purposes and goals of the curriculum are clear and easily understood.

**Statement 2: The instructional content related to conducting gesture is accurate.**

**Experts:** Five experts (71.43%) strongly agreed with this statement while two experts (28.57%) agreed (Figure 4-3). Expert 2 added: “The aural descriptions, as well as videos, are easy to understand. The videos allow students to practice as often as needed.” Expert 4 added: “I was impressed with the videos, especially the angles from which you film the gestures.” Expert 5 added:

Some minor concerns: - Volume is inconsistent from one video to the next. I really like the demos. Well done. However, I would make sure all men are professionally dressed. Being an old guy I like the shirt and tie! I would add a video re: conducting area and conducting plane. That is always an area that creates problems (i.e. gestures that are too high or too low, gestures that extend the horizontal plane outward too far). Have you ever tried using a table or other flat surface to demonstrate the ictus rebound? I studied conducting with Donald Mattran at Hartt School of Music and he used a table to get me to strike the same level for the ictus.



It also encourages a slight flick of the wrist at the ictus. I think a darker background behind the conductor might make the video easier to read.

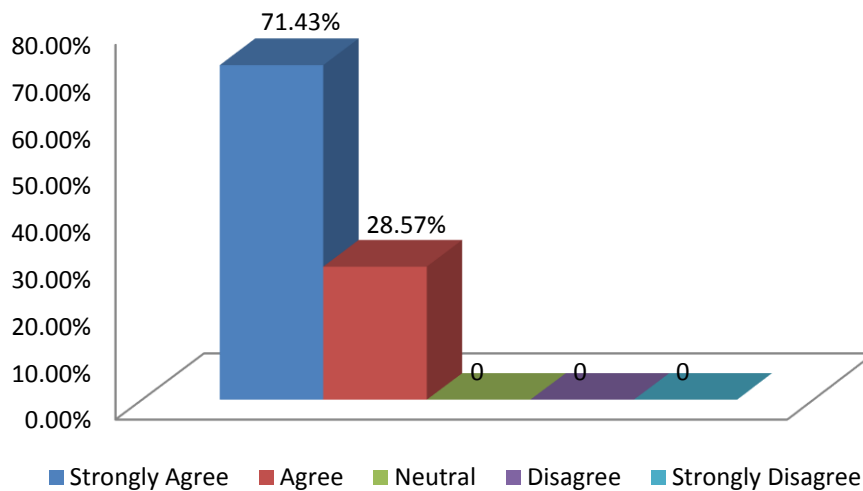


Figure 4-3. Percentages of experts' opinions on whether the instructional content related to conducting gesture is accurate.

**Band Directors:** Four band directors (80%) strongly agreed with this statement while one band director (20%) agreed (Figure 4-4). Band Director 1 added: "Accurate and well-presented." Band Director 3 added:

Great video presentation of conductors at all levels. I would recommend spreading out the videos throughout the lectures. Besides ensuring that they're continually practicing, it'll also increase chances of students actually finishing the course since the videos will draw them in.

Band Director 5 added: “This program gives a great platform from which to start young conductors.”

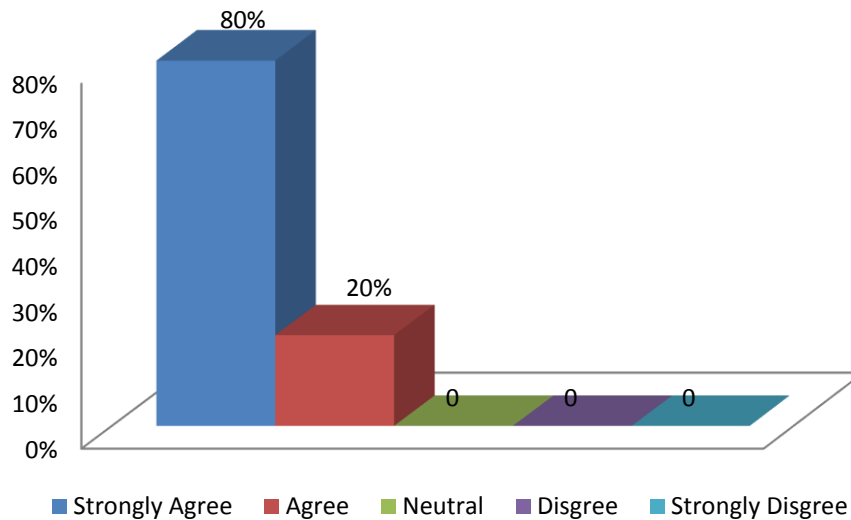


Figure 4-4. Percentages of high school band directors' opinions on whether the instructional content related to conducting gesture is accurate.

**Statement 3: The instructional content related to score study/preparation is accurate.**

**Experts:** Six of the experts (85.71%) strongly agreed with this statement while one expert (14.29%) agreed (Figure 4-5). Expert 5 stated:

I'm thinking this whole thing needs to be longer than eight weeks. Also, somewhere it needs to be stated that all of the beat patterns need to be practiced until they become automatic. It might be a good idea to focus on one beat pattern after having introduced 2, 3 and 4-beat patterns. Have the student focus on only one that they will use in the performance with their high school band. I would think that somewhere around the third week the student should choose a piece that they will conduct and then focus their work on one of the beat patterns and the transpositions.

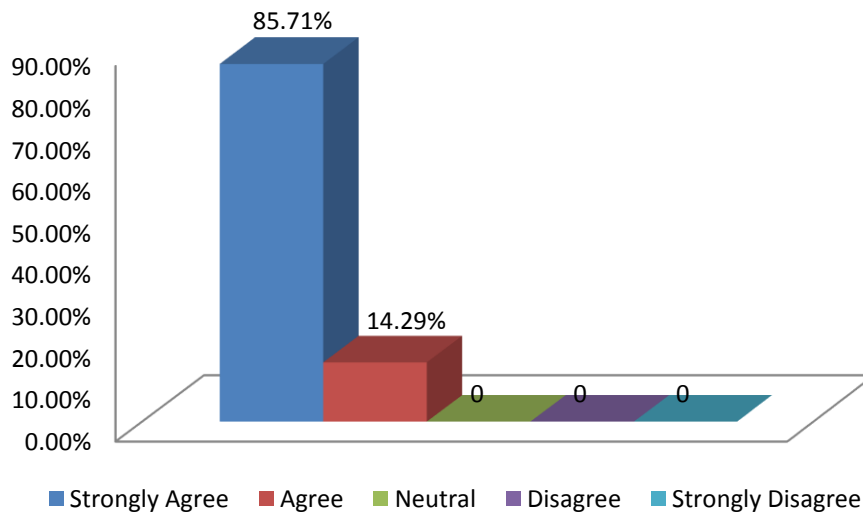


Figure 4-5. Percentages of experts' opinions on whether the instructional content related to score study/preparation is accurate.

**Band Directors:** Four band directors (80%) strongly agreed with this statement while one band director (20%) agreed (Figure 4-6). Band Director 5 added: “[The researcher] has given the students a good balance of information and practice that allows the participant to be successful. A spiral curriculum technique is necessary for this study and the program seems to fit it well.”

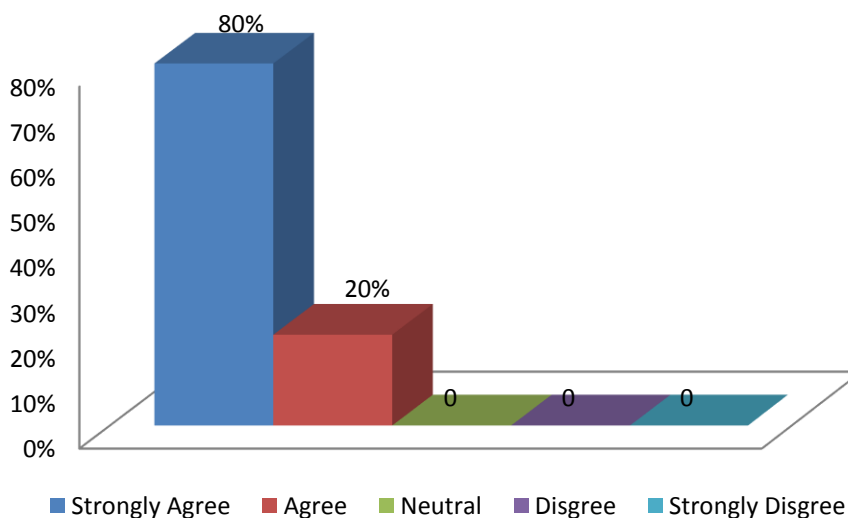


Figure 4-6. Percentages of high school band directors' opinions on whether the instructional content related to score study/preparation is accurate.

**Statement 4: The content is clearly presented and easily understandable.**

**Experts:** Six of the experts (85.71%) strongly agreed with this statement while one expert (14.29%) agreed (Figure 4-7). Expert 5 stated:

Stress in example one that the up and down speeds are the same. This would also apply to conducting a 3/4 tune in one beat per measure. I also liked the fact that you used the up and down movement (similar to conducting in one beat per measure) to introduce the movement of the arm, hands, and baton.

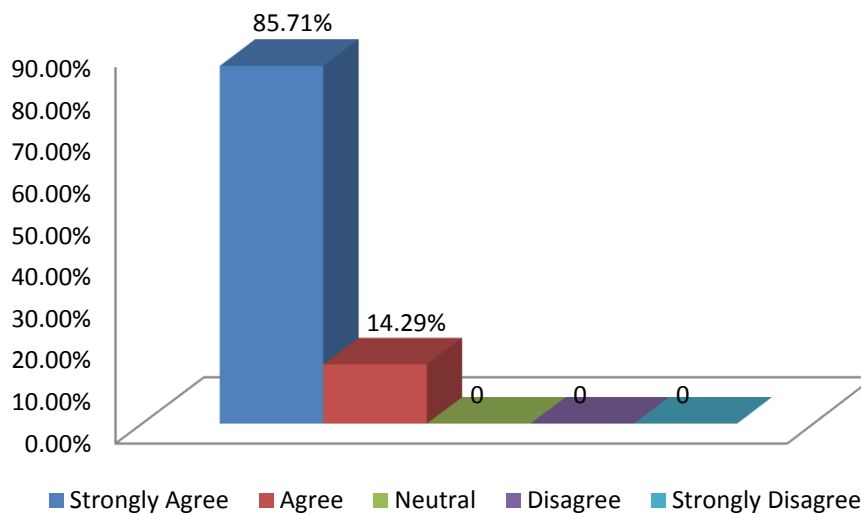


Figure 4-7. Percentages of experts' opinions on whether the instructional content is clearly presented and easily understandable.

**Band Directors:** All five band directors (100%) strongly agreed with this statement (Figure 4-8). Band Director 5 added: "By simply scrolling from one video to the next, the participant/student can easily see the next portion of the curriculum."

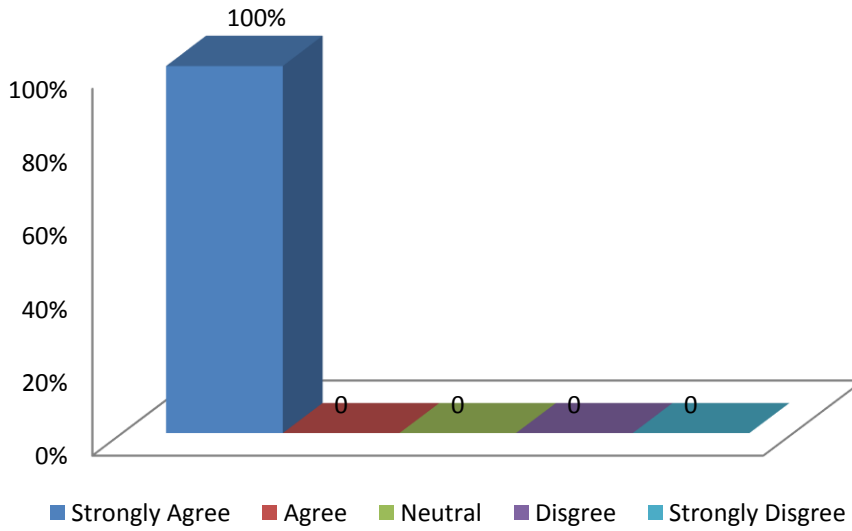


Figure 4-8. Percentages of high school band directors' opinions on whether the instructional content is clearly presented and easily understandable.

**Statement 5: The content of this curriculum adequately covers the necessary content areas for high school students' introduction to band conducting.**

**Experts:** Six of the experts (85.71%) strongly agreed with this statement while one expert (14.29%) agreed (Figure 4-9). Expert 4 stated: "I strongly agree and would hope that the student's band director follows the curriculum. Who knows what he or she might learn!"

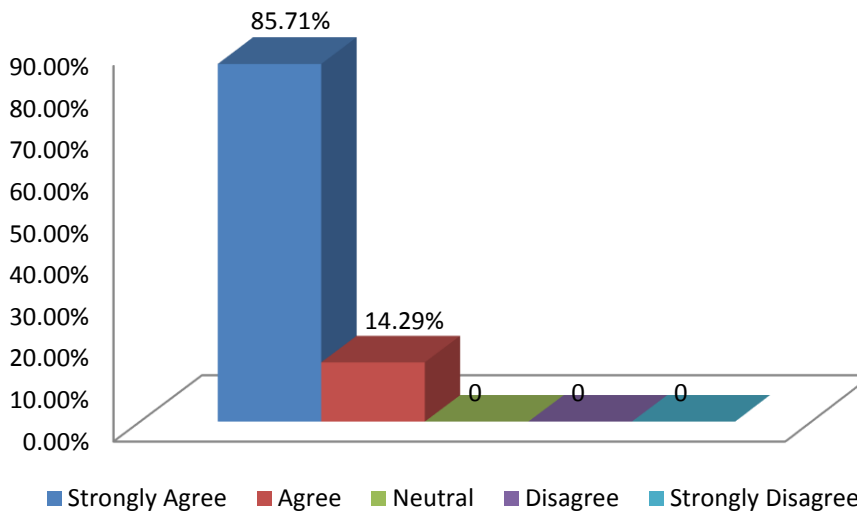


Figure 4-9. Percentages of experts' opinions on whether the content of this curriculum adequately covers the necessary content areas for high school students' introduction to band conducting.

**Band Directors:** Four band directors (80%) strongly agreed with this statement while one band director (20%) agreed (Figure 4-10). Band Director 2 stated: "The content more than adequately covers the necessary skills assessed in the student conducting category for the FBA." Band Director 3 stated: "Maybe consider including a few short excerpts of some master band and orchestra conductors in action." Band Director 5 stated: "By the end of the program, students should at least have a basic understanding of approaching a piece of music for assessment. The other materials needed for the assessment can easily be given by the Director from this point."

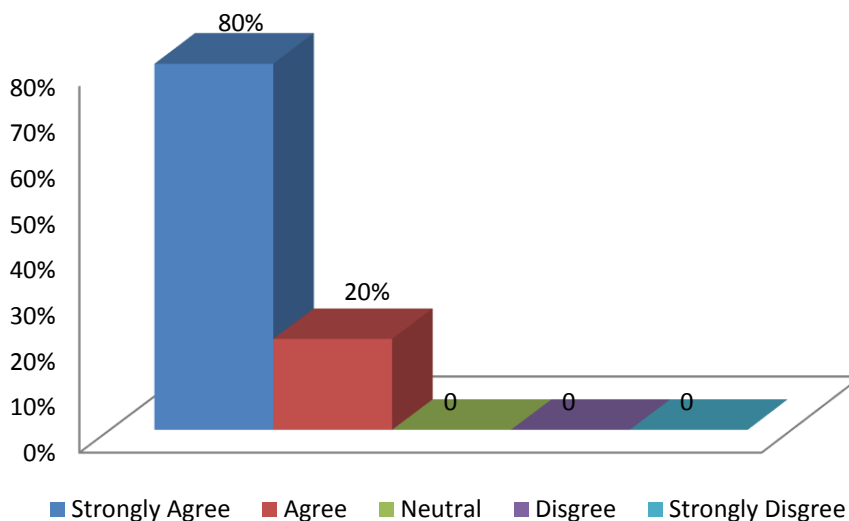


Figure 4-10. Percentages of high school band directors' opinions on whether the content of this curriculum adequately covers the necessary content areas for high school students' introduction to band conducting.

**Statement 6: The sequencing of instructional material is logical.**

**Experts:** Four of the experts (57.14%) strongly agreed with this statement. Two experts (28.57%) agreed with this statement. One expert

(14.29%) responded “neutral” to this statement (Figure 4-11). Expert 2 added: “Week 3 seems a bit disjointed. Perhaps the fermata exercise could follow the crescendo/decrescendo exercise then followed by cueing.”

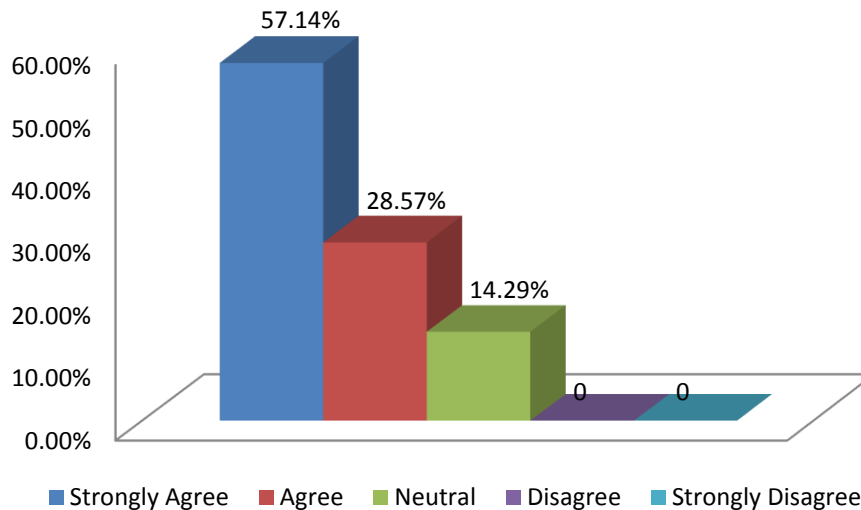


Figure 4-11. Percentages of experts' opinions on whether the sequencing of instructional material is logical.

**Band Directors:** Four band directors (80%) strongly agreed with this statement while one band director (20%) agreed (Figure 4-12). Band Director 3 added: “As discussed earlier, the theory information, while great, may work better spread out throughout the curriculum.” Band Director 5 added: “As mentioned above, the sequencing in the program is well thought out.”

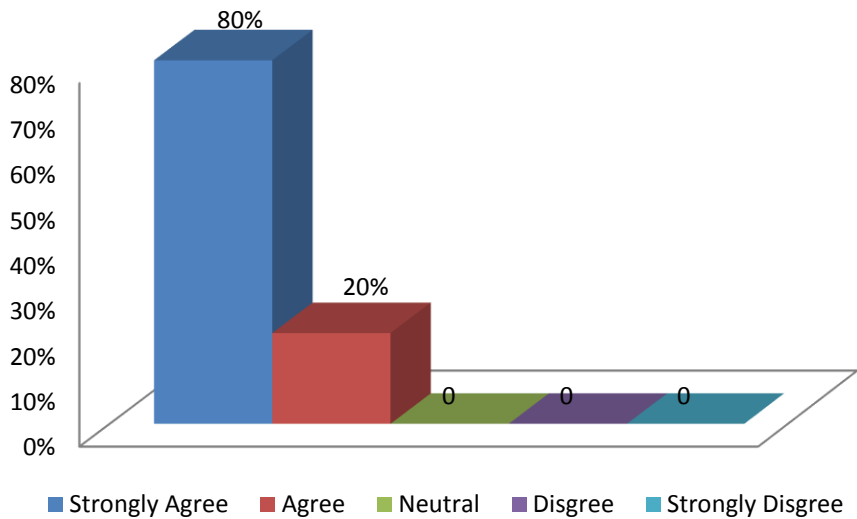


Figure 4-12. Percentages of high school band directors' opinions on whether the sequencing of instructional material is logical.

**Statement 7: The sequencing of learning activities (assignments, etc.) is logical.**

**Experts:** Five experts (71.43%) strongly agreed with this statement while two experts (28.57%) agreed (Figure 4-13). Expert 1 stated: "I miss having videos in the later sessions; however, I don't know how you would integrate them for that material."

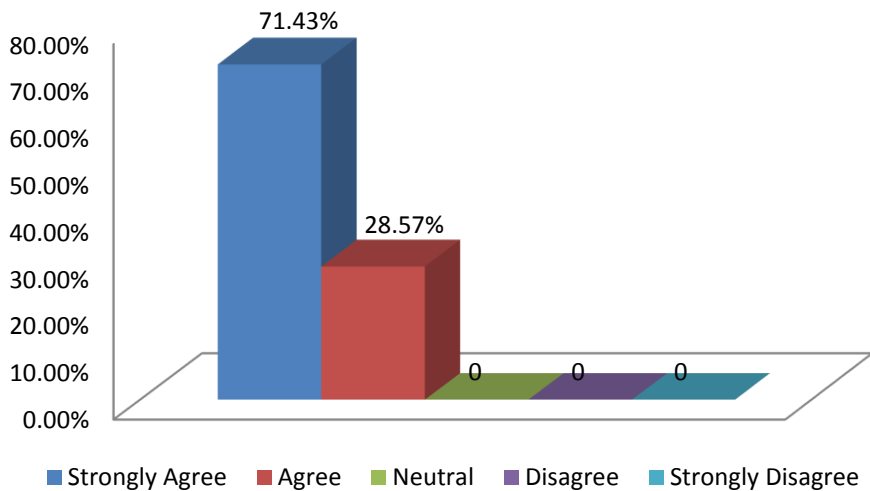


Figure 4-13. Percentages of experts' opinions on whether the sequencing of learning activities is logical.



**Band Directors:** All five band directors (100%) strongly agreed with this statement (Figure 4-14). Band Director 5 stated: “Assignments seem to be appropriate and match the learning goals.”

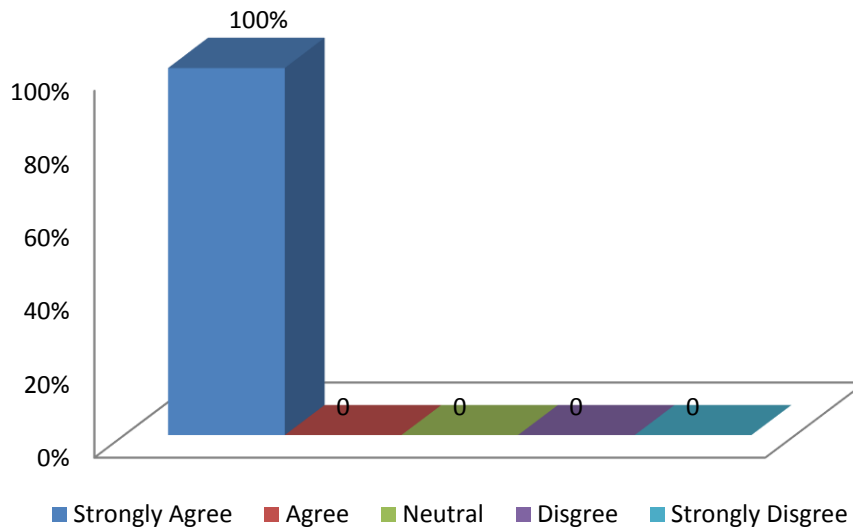


Figure 4-14. Percentages of high school band directors’ opinions on whether the sequencing of learning activities is logical.

**Statement 8: The content included in this curriculum is developmentally appropriate for high school students’ introduction to band conducting.**

**Experts:** Four of the experts (57.14%) strongly agreed with this statement. Two experts (28.57%) agreed with this statement. One expert (14.29%) responded “neutral” to this statement (Figure 4-15). Expert 1 added: “This is really great! Many band and orchestra directors would benefit greatly from this. Maybe the adults will learn along with the students. I hope this will be available soon. I want to use it with our teachers here. Thanks for all of your hard work on this.” Expert 5 added: “I would suggest that you make the journal mandatory if, for no other reason, it requires student self-examination. [The] journal could be handed in at the end of the course.”

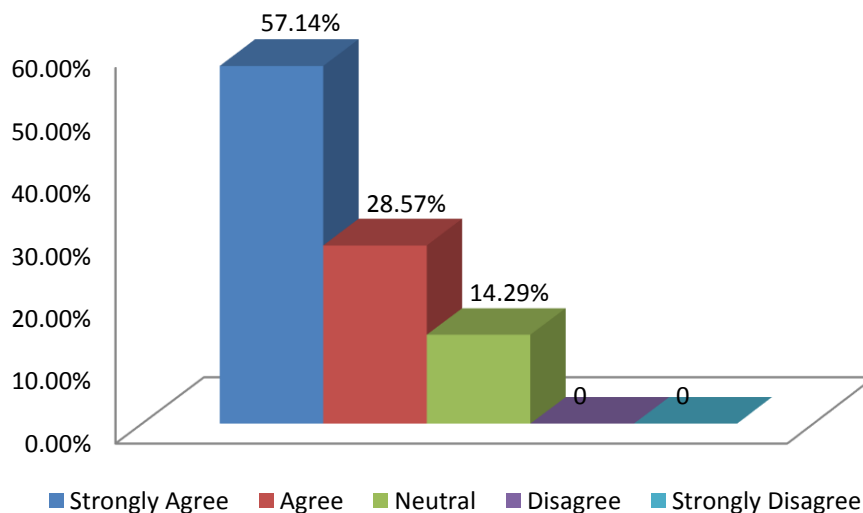


Figure 4-15. Percentages of experts' opinions on whether the content of this curriculum is developmentally appropriate for high school students.

**Band Directors:** Four band directors (80%) strongly agreed with this statement while one band director (20%) agreed (Figure 4-16). Band Director 2 added:

I think it is developmentally appropriate for high school as well as the first year of conducting in undergraduate school. Topics such as transposition are great if they know but it is not addressed by the FBA. Yes, it does help in conducting a rehearsal but how would it be assessed?

Band Director 3 added: "This needs to be a mandatory part of the FBA student conductor curriculum!" Band Director 5 added:

This program will serve all musicians in a high school band well. Maybe after viewing the curriculum and completing the assignments, a band student can better understand conductor's gestures and interpret the music in rehearsals/performances with greater ease - thus improving their musicianship.

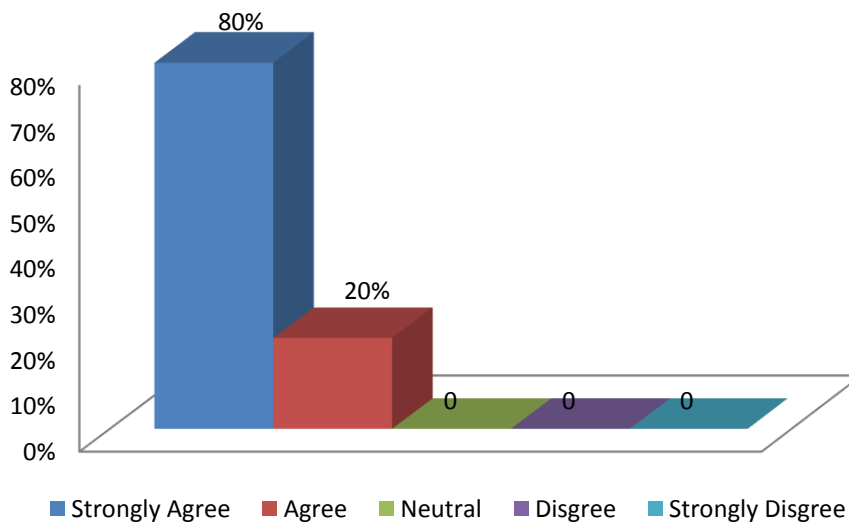


Figure 4-16. Percentages of high school band directors' opinions on whether the content of this curriculum is developmentally appropriate for high school students.

## Content Area 2: Assessment

The second section of the survey was designed to have the survey participants indicate the strength to which they agree or disagree with statements regarding the assessment method(s) of the RDSCC. The second section contained four statements.

### **Statement 9: The assessment method for this curriculum (verbal presentation and conducting performance) is clearly described.**

**Experts:** Four experts (57.14%) strongly agreed with this statement. One expert (14.29%) agreed. One expert (14.29%) was “neutral” to this statement. One expert (14.29%) disagreed with this statement (Figure 4-17). Expert 2 stated:

Assessment methods should be listed in either the introduction or week one and should be more descriptive. What kind of rubric will be used? How will the student be rated? This information should be presented at the beginning of the module and perhaps restated throughout.

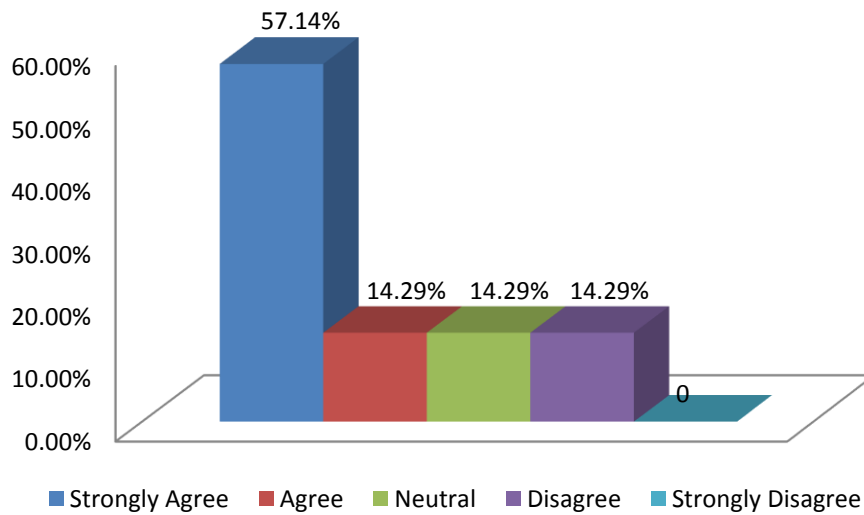


Figure 4-17. Percentages of experts' opinions on whether the assessment methods are clearly defined.

**Band Directors:** All five band directors (100%) strongly agreed with this statement (Figure 4-18). Band Director 1 stated: “The assessment methods were easy to follow.” Band Director 5 stated: “Very clear from the beginning.”

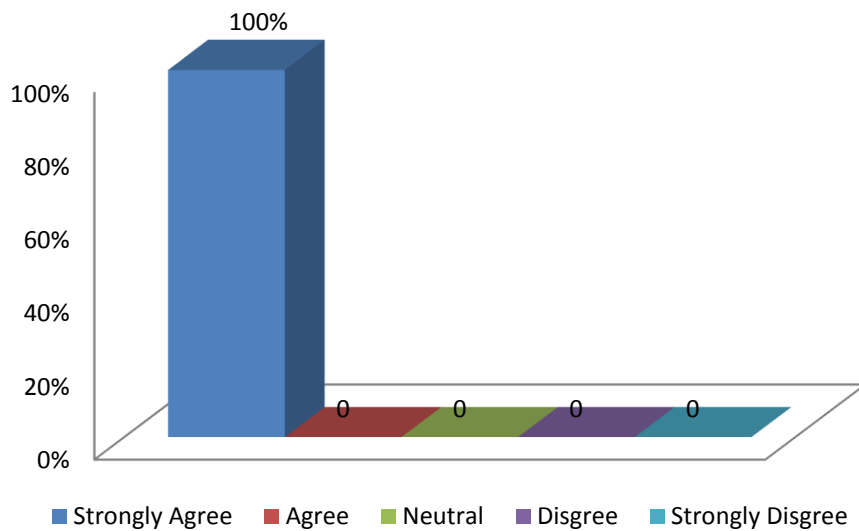


Figure 4-18. Percentages of high school band directors' opinions on whether the assessment methods are clearly defined.

**Statement 10: The verbal presentation is an adequate method by which to assess the student's score study.**

**Experts:** Four experts (57.14%) strongly agreed with this statement while three experts (42.86%) agreed (Figure 4-19).

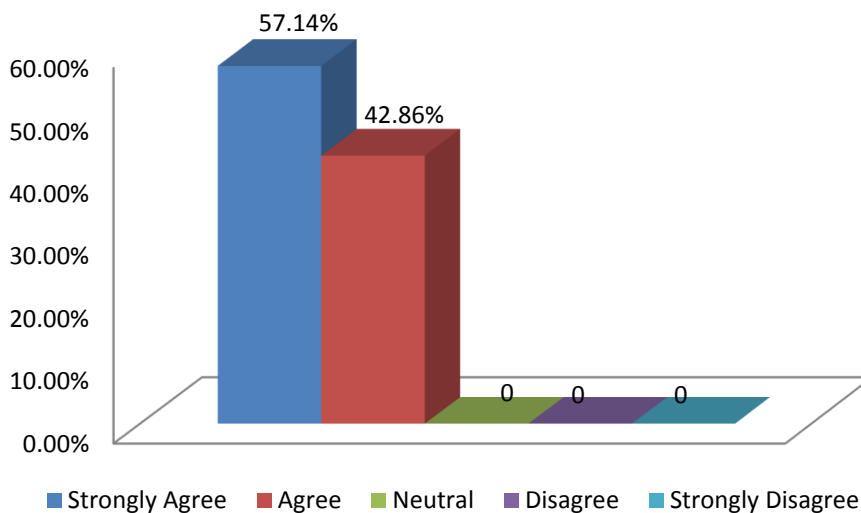


Figure 4-19. Percentages of experts' opinions on whether the verbal presentation is an adequate way to assess the student's score study.

**Band Directors:** Four band directors (80%) strongly agreed with this statement while one band director (20%) was neutral (Figure 4-20). Band Director 1 added: "Great idea, more valuable than a written presentation for use in assessment." Band Director 2 added:

I am not sure if the presentation gives everyone a chance to adequately demonstrate their score study in part due to some students' inability to speak in front of others. It is one thing to talk to people but another entirely to present information. Some students may have difficulty with [that] aspect. I agree it is necessary to communicate clear objectives in rehearsal, but some will struggle with this.

Band Director 5 added: "To pair the program with verbal presentation is to reinforce the students' knowledge of the subject matter."

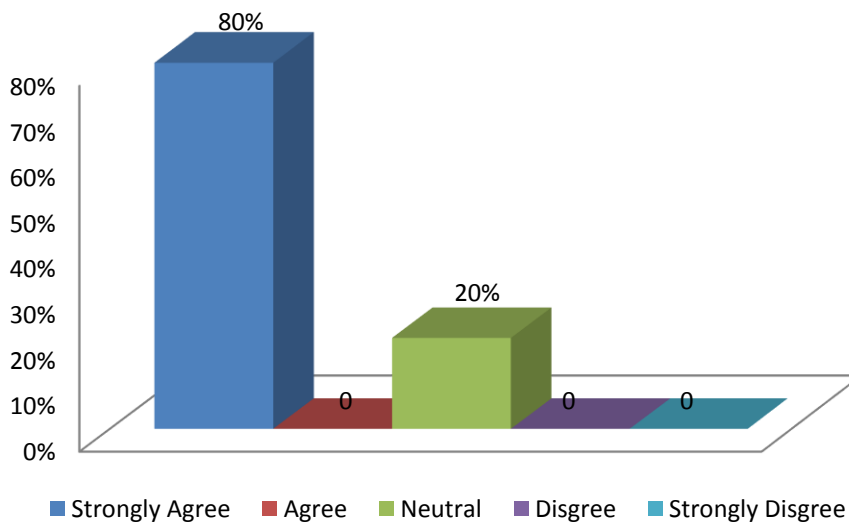


Figure 4-20. Percentages of high school band directors' opinions on whether the verbal presentation is an adequate way to assess the student's score study.

**Statement 11: The conducting performance is an adequate method by which to assess the student's conducting gesture.**

**Experts:** Five experts (71.43%) strongly agreed with this statement while one expert (14.29%) agreed. One expert (14.29%) was "neutral" (Figure 4-21).

Expert 5 added:

The performance does not indicate whether the student actually understands the transposition and score study part. In essence, they could just be in front of the group waving their hands - like a lot of band directors do (but I'm being sarcastic).

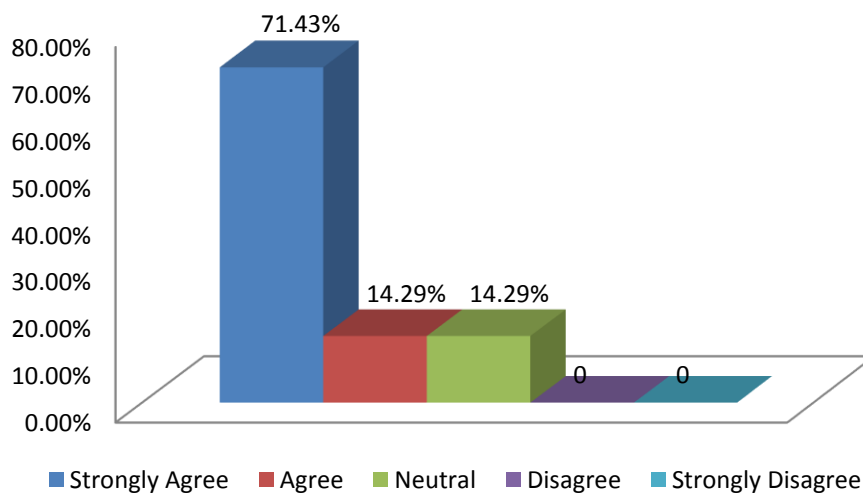


Figure 4-21. Percentages of experts' opinions on whether the conducting performance is an adequate way to assess the student's conducting gesture.

**Band Directors:** All five band directors (100%) strongly agreed with this statement (Figure 4-22). Band Director 1 added: "Strongly agree with this question - the conducting performance was a fantastic assessment to see how all of the student conductor skills came together."

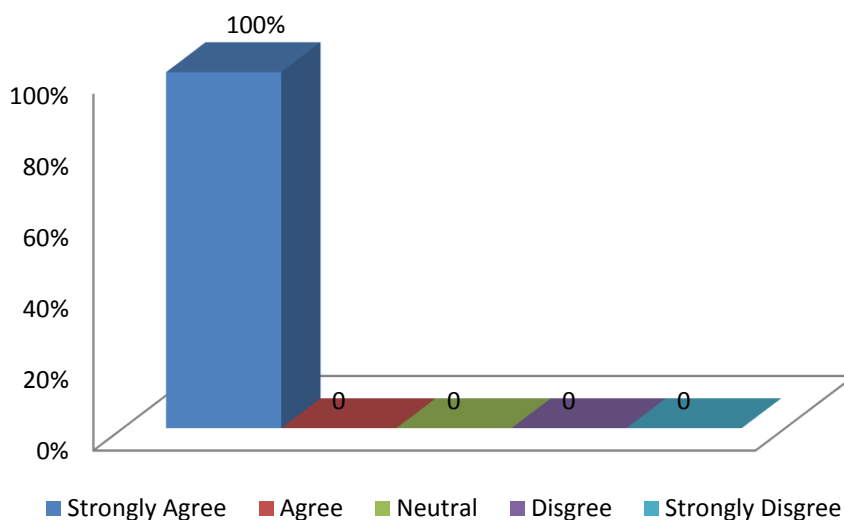


Figure 4-22. Percentages of high school band directors' opinions on whether the conducting performance is an adequate way to assess the student's conducting gesture.

**Statement 12: The combined assessment (verbal presentation and conducting performance) provides an accurate overall measure of the student's learning from this curriculum.**

**Experts:** Six of the experts (85.71%) strongly agreed with this statement while one expert (14.29%) agreed (Figure 4-23). Expert 3 added: “Emphasis on transposition is excellent.”

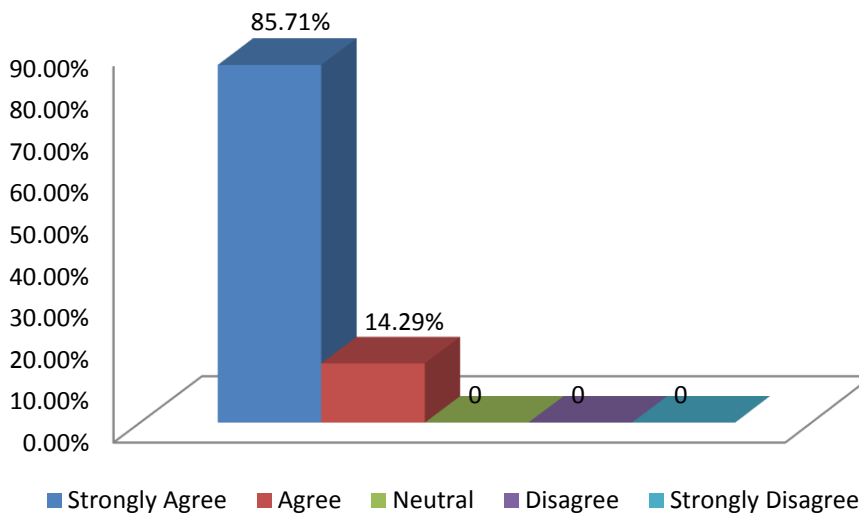


Figure 4-23. Percentages of experts' opinions on whether the combined assessment provides an accurate measure of the student's overall learning.

**Band Directors:** Four band directors (80%) strongly agreed with this statement while one band director (20%) agreed (Figure 4-24). Band Director 1 stated: “Outstanding method of assessment.” Band Director 5 stated: “What better way to assess the student - show me!”



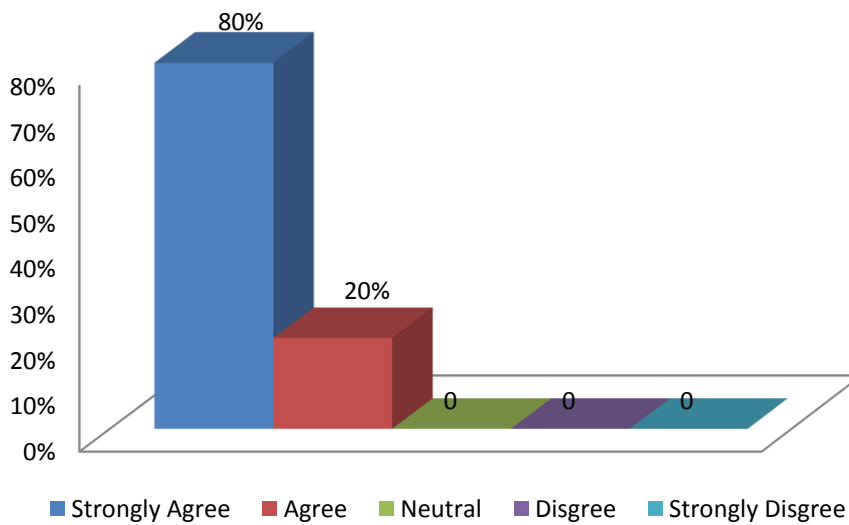


Figure 4-24. Percentages of high school band directors' opinions on whether the combined assessment provides an accurate measure of the student's overall learning.

### Content Area 3: Additional Questions

The third section of the survey was designed to provide survey participants with opportunities to respond to general statements regarding the student conductor activity and the RDSCC. In this section, statements designed for experts differed from those designed for band directors.

#### **Statement 13 (for experts): A high school student conductor activity can be a productive and worthwhile activity.**

Three of the experts (42.86%) strongly agreed with this statement. Four of the experts (57.14%) agreed with this statement (Figure 4-25). Expert 1 added:

“With this program as a resource, I believe it can.” Expert 4 added:

I strongly agree and with your curriculum the experience could be enhanced greatly. The real issue of course is the extent to which they are given the opportunity to conduct. That, however, cannot be within the scope of your curriculum.

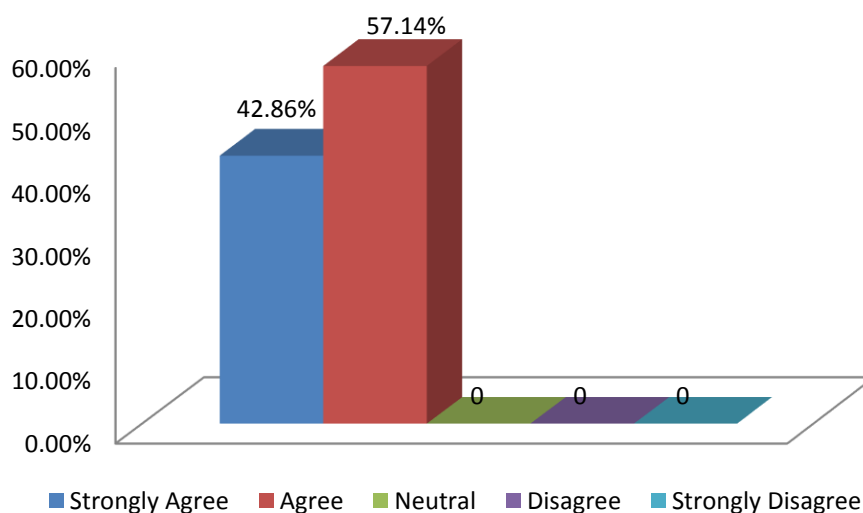


Figure 4-25. Percentages of experts' opinions on whether the student conductor activity can be a productive and worthwhile activity.

**Statement 14 (for experts): The state in which I reside offers a high school student conductor assessment.**

One expert (28.57%) indicated that he/she resides in a state that offers a high school student conductor assessment. Six experts (71.43%) indicated that they reside in a state that does not offer a student conductor assessment (Figure 4-26). Expert 1 added: "There is never enough time to thoroughly teach the students, so they end up (usually) doing the best they can to look like their director. That can be good or that can be not so good." Expert 3 added: "I am in Oklahoma, and I do not know if this is a part of high school band/music programs across the state. I do not believe so."

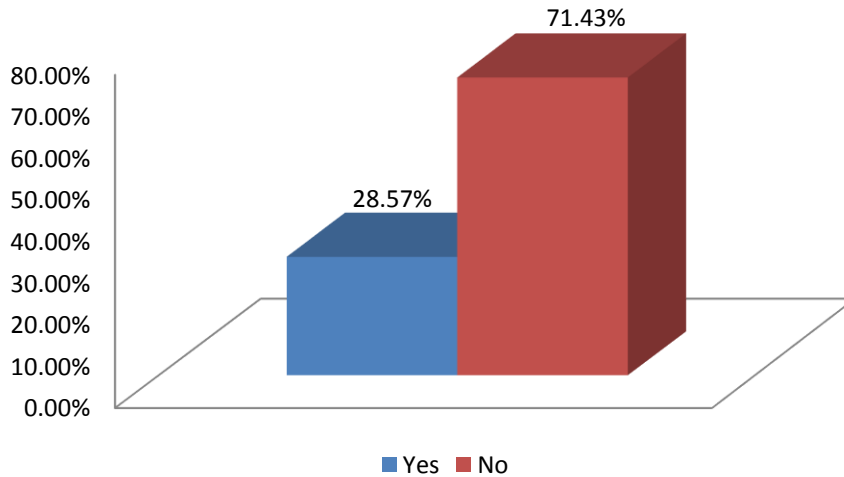


Figure 4-26. Percentages of experts' that reside in a state that offers a high school student conductor activity.

**Statement 15 (for experts): Please add any additional commentary regarding this high school student conductor curriculum.**

Expert 1 stated: "I like it!" Expert 3 stated: "Frankly, the program as I viewed it would be beneficial to many collegiate 101 type courses for beginning music ed students. Excellent materials and well presented on the videos."

Expert 4 stated:

You have done a great service to not only Florida, but to all other states who have such. It would seem to me that this would be publishable. The format is perfect for young people, for it is web based. Good luck.

Expert 5 stated:

I'm currently the Executive Administrator for the National Band Association and we're in the process of constructing a new website that will involve a variety of areas that will be of help to band directors at all levels of teaching experience. Would you be interested in us putting your project in our Video Clinics area so that directors could use it to teach student conductors (and maybe help the younger directors a little with their conducting)? Let me know.

Expert 6 stated: “Great project and greatly needed! Well done!” Expert 7 stated: “Outstanding!”

**Statement 13 (for band directors): I have previously mentored a high school student in the Florida Bandmasters Association Student Conductor Activity.**

All five of the band directors (100%) responded “true” to this statement (Figure 4-27).

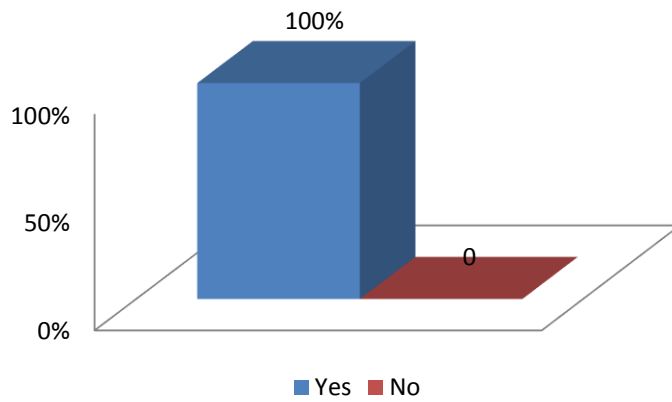


Figure 4-27. Percentages of high school band directors that have mentored an FBA student conductor.

**Statement 14 (for band directors): Please add any additional commentary regarding this high school student conductor curriculum.**

Band Director 1 stated:

I am very thankful that [the researcher] has put this curriculum together. Too often, high school conductors have been left "to their own devices" when mentoring their student conductors, with mixed results. This curriculum afforded me the opportunity to sequentially take my student conductor through a rigorous, pertinent method with outstanding overall results. The experience was worthwhile for everyone involved.

Band Director 2 stated:

I feel this curriculum has been a great deal of thought and more than adequately addresses the needs for the FBA Student Conductor category for assessment. The curriculum also builds on the basics of conducting with more theory knowledge than is assessed by the FBA making for a stronger musician and

conductor. A person completing this curriculum would have an advantage going into undergraduate conducting classes.

Band Director 3 stated:

The Florida Bandmasters Association is great for including the student conductor in its assessments. However, without any guidelines for the student, the process was quite vague. I feel this is a great way to prepare students for a successful performance and experience, which provides students with the time that most band directors can't realistically give.

Band Director 5 stated: “Thanks for your work on this. It will provide a tremendous resource to the band director in preparing students for the Student Conductor assessment.”

Table 4-1 presents descriptive statistics comparing survey statement responses from the expert group to that of the band director group. Results indicated that none of the twelve survey statements yielded a statistically significant difference between the groups.

Table 4-1. Descriptive Statistics and Independent *t*-Test Results of Experts' (*N*=7) and Band Directors' (*N*=5) Validation Survey

Survey Statements	Experts		Band Directors		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
1. The purposes and goals of the curriculum are clear and easily understood.	4.86	0.35	5.00	0.00	6	1.06	0.33
2. The instructional content related to conducting gesture is accurate.	4.71	0.45	4.80	0.40	9	0.36	0.72
3. The instructional content related to score study/preparation is accurate.	4.86	0.35	4.80	0.40	7	0.27	0.80
4. The content is clearly presented and easily understandable.	4.86	0.35	5.00	0.00	6	1.06	0.33
5. The content of this curriculum adequately covers the necessary content areas for high school students' introduction to band conducting.	4.86	0.35	4.80	0.40	7	0.27	0.80
6. The sequencing of instructional material is logical.	4.43	0.73	4.80	0.40	9	1.13	0.29
7. The sequencing of learning activities (assignments, etc.) is logical.	4.71	0.45	5.00	0.00	6	1.71	0.14

Table 4-1 continued

Survey Statements	Experts		Band Directors		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
8. The content included in this curriculum is developmentally appropriate for high school students' introduction to band conducting.	4.43	0.73	4.80	0.40	9	1.13	0.29
9. The assessment methods for this curriculum (verbal presentation and conducting performance) are clearly described.	4.14	1.12	5.00	0.00	6	2.03	0.09
10. The verbal presentation is an adequate method by which to assess the student's score study.	4.57	0.49	4.60	0.80	6	0.07	0.94
11. The conducting performance is an adequate method by which to assess the student's conducting gesture.	4.57	0.73	5.00	0.00	6	1.56	0.17
12. The combined assessment (verbal presentation and conducting performance) provides an accurate overall measure of the student's learning from this curriculum.	4.86	0.35	4.80	0.40	7	0.27	0.80

Mean scores calculated on a 5-point scale.

### Presentation of Results (Phase Two)

Phase Two consisted of interviews of the band directors and their students. Each individual (n=10) was interviewed three times: prior to beginning the curriculum, at the midpoint of the curriculum, and after the curriculum had concluded. The following presentation of results contains themes that emerged from the students' experiences as well as themes that emerged from the band directors' experiences. Each theme is supported by direct quotes from the interviews.

#### Student Interview 1

The first interview was designed to examine the students' overall perceptions of the student conductor activity. Additionally, students were asked questions regarding their participation in a curriculum designed specifically for

student conductors. Two themes emerged from the first student interview. The two themes were:

1. Understanding of the student conductor activity
2. Areas and levels of excitement/interest

**Understanding of the student conductor activity.** Prior to beginning the curriculum, most students expressed a general understanding of the purposes and activities of a high school student conductor. Several students used the phrase “learning experience,” and Student 5 used the phrase: “to spark an interest in that area of music.” Student 4 expressed: “I feel like the role of the student conductor is basically to lead and conduct the band, but more so to learn and be influenced by the director of the band.” Student 2 identified “expressing musicality” and musical interpretation as activities associated with student conducting. However, Student 3 expressed a more limited purpose saying: “I feel the role of the student conductor would be to keep the time for the drumline or for the whole band.”

The students expressed various opinions regarding prior skills and knowledge that are important for a student conductor. Students 1 and 5 believed that a general knowledge in music was important. Student 2 stated: “It’s definitely important to have been an ensemble player . . . before getting up in front of the group and expecting to lead the group.” Student 4 believed her background in AP Music Theory would be beneficial saying “the theory behind music is important for a student conductor.” Student 3 expressed a more basic view: “the main thing is how to conduct . . . where the counts are, where your hands should be at those counts and giving the right counts at the right times.” Three of the students felt that having been drum major at their respective high

schools would help them in the student conductor activity. “I’ve been through the drum major academy, so I have a great knowledge of conducting” (Student 3).

**Areas and levels of excitement/interest.** All five students expressed a level of excitement to be involved in the student conductor curriculum. Comments regarding excitement included very specific topics such as “I hope to learn . . . how to conduct multiple time signatures” (Student 1) and “I’m most interested in . . . working on my left hand” (Student 3). Some students expressed excitement in a broader sense. Student 2 shared that he was excited to “[learn] how, in the most simple way, to transmit the [musical] idea . . . to the ensemble about how you interpret the piece.” Student 3 expressed interest in “how to get into [the music] myself and to get the band to feel what I feel.” Student 4 expressed: “I’m definitely most excited about getting into the music and learning about how to improve it, and how to go along with the band, and adapting to something new and fun.”

Students also expressed low levels of excitement and interest regarding certain areas of the student conductor activity. Student 3 said he is least excited about “getting up in front of everyone and conducting concert music. I’ve never really conducted concert music. I’m a little nervous about that.” Student 4 identified expectations as a source of apprehension saying:

I don’t want to be worse than the last student conductor. . . . I’ll probably end up needing the most work when it comes to learning how to fix things in music. . . . [My band director] always knows what to go to next. . . . I feel like that is probably going to be my issue.

Student 2 referred to the amount of practice that is needed of a student conductor:



There are a lot of small nuances that come into any of the physical movements and gestures . . . and [this will] involve a lot of practice just to get them to look the way that you intend them to look.

To conclude the interview, students were asked if, at this point, they were interested in a career that involves music conducting. Student 1 responded: “Yes, very much.” Student 2 responded: “ Yes, I am. I’m interested in music education to some degree.” Student 3 responded: “Yeah, I would be interested.” Student 4 responded: “I’m not interested in a career that involves music conducting, but I’m definitely interested in making it a part of my life.” Student 5 responded: “As of now, no. But, if it sparks an interest, I’m open to anything.”

### **Band Director Interview 1**

The first band director interview was designed to examine the band directors’ perceptions of the student conductor activity in general, as well as the student conductor activity as administered by FBA. In total, the band director group has mentored over 40 students in the FBA student conductor activity. Therefore, their perceptions regarding the overall concepts of a student conductor activity, as well as the FBA’s administration of the student conductor activity, were based on vast experience. Four themes emerged from the band directors’ first interview. The four themes were:

1. Current structure of the FBA student conductor activity
3. Reasons for participation
4. Expectations of the student conductor
5. Concerns with participation in the student conductor activity

**Current structure of the FBA student conductor activity.** On the topics of purposes, learning activities, sequencing of learning activities, and evaluation of learning, the band directors expressed a general disappointment with the level of structure as defined by the FBA. Four of the five band directors

felt that the purposes of the FBA student conductor activity were not made clear. Band Director 1 stated: “They don’t really expand on why we even do the student conductor other than it’s another solo and ensemble entry.” Band Director 4 said: “I think the directors who do a student conductor all know what the purpose is, but I’m not sure FBA clearly states that.” Band Director 3 added: “Any more detail that FBA could give would be great.”

Band Director 2 said: “I don’t know that I’m aware of FBA’s philosophy.” He continued by expressing that he felt as though the FBA had begun to deemphasize the student conductor activity by removing it from the state-level assessment, saying:

If the student has worked, prepared, and conducted the piece at a successful level, they should be given the opportunity to do that at a higher level. Not just a “Here’s your medal. Thanks for participating. See you next time.

All five band directors agreed that the FBA did not identify learning activities or sequencing of activities for the student conductor activity. “It seems like it’s the one adjudicated area in all of FBA that really has no oversight” (Band Director 4). Band Director 1 expressed:

Specific to the conductor, there are no learning activities. Even the student conductor pieces are limited to four Grade 3 selections. I feel like it’s just another entry, and [FBA’s] requirements and guidelines for the student conductor are very limited in scope. I don’t think they’ve been addressed in decades.

Band Director 5 felt that the information provided by FBA regarding learning activities was “very inadequate.” He continued: “I feel like I’m left up to my own devices. I feel like I’m capable of it, but having looked at the curriculum that you’ve put together . . . ok, goodness gracious. There’s my roadmap! That

gives me a course heading.” Band Director 2 agreed on the lack of provided learning activities, but felt it wasn’t an issue. He said:

I don’t feel like it’s FBA’s place to provide curriculum. FBA’s place is to provide a structure and framework and a set of activities for students to participate in and the bylaws and rules associated with those activities. But as far as providing anything other than a best-practices white paper, I don’t think FBA has any business being in curriculum.

There was general consensus amongst the band directors that the FBA’s assessment of the student conductor was an area of relative strength. “I think that, probably, is where FBA is the strongest” (Band Director 3). Band Director 2 felt that “it merely needs to be tweaked.” Suggested improvements included adjustments to the rating sheet and training of the judges. Band Director 4 said: “There are areas that the student is being adjudicated on the actual [judges] sheet. I feel those are accurate.” Band Director 1 disagreed and felt that the judge’s sheet doesn’t distinguish between ensemble performance errors and conductor errors, saying:

They don’t take into account enough of the conductor vs. the ensemble. The conductor might have done exactly what he needed to do, but if the ensemble plays a wrong note, they’re addressing ensemble issues as opposed to what the student conductor is doing on the podium.

Band Director 4 and Band Director 5 agreed that weaknesses in the assessment included a lack of rubric and judge training. Band Director 5 said: “Half the time we’ve done it, the judge isn’t even prepared. ‘Oh you have a student conductor. Well, let me dig out that piece of paper.’” Band Director 4 expressed:

There is no rubric associated with it. I feel that it can be very very subjective, because the actual adjudicator isn’t really given much instruction. I don’t know if they’re actually ever trained in student

conductor at all. I know you get trained in concert and sight-reading but I don't even know if there is training in judging the student conductor.

**Reasons for participation.** The most prominently expressed reason for participation amongst band directors was the opportunity for their students to gain experience that would be beneficial to them as future music educators and future music conductors. Band Director 1 said: "I think one [purpose] is to help prepare . . . kids for the opportunity to get in front of an ensemble *before* [emphasis added] they get into college." Band Director 2 stated:

We encourage certain kids in our programs to pursue music education at a higher level because we feel like they would be a credit to our profession, or that they would have something to contribute to the lives of kids. But without a student conductor experience, a lot of these folks wouldn't have an experience in front of an ensemble. That's critical. A person needs to be in front of an ensemble at least a handful of times to know whether or not this profession is for them. Too often we send kids into the profession who like *band* [emphasis added]. I can't speak for my colleagues, but I know that I've had a few kids go into the profession because they like band. They find out that teaching responsibilities, conducting responsibilities, score-study preparation, that wasn't what they liked about band.

Band directors also mentioned the benefits their students' gained from having a different perspective. Band Director 3 mentioned: "I believe it gives them more of an overall musical experience being on the other side of the podium." Band Director 2 stated: "...to increase the number of students actively using their ears in rehearsal. Because the stuff they do on the podium – they can take back with them on their instrument and they're [now] listening to what's going on around them." Additionally, Band Director 4 and Band Director 5 felt that their bands benefitted from having a different conductor in front of them. Band Director 4 said: "I fully feel that bands should be in front of as many

conductors as possible.” He continued to say: “There are many times when a student can actually relate to the other students in the ensemble better and maybe explain some things in a way that maybe the director couldn’t.”

Band Director 5 identified character development as a primary reason for participating in the student conductor activity. He stated: “It’s character development, and getting them confident in front of their peers. Leadership. I can’t even imagine having done this when I was in high school. Having had this opportunity, how different I would have been eight weeks later.”

**Expectations of the student conductor.** Each band director identified several musical and non-musical expectations of their student conductor. Band Directors 1, 2, and 4 identified improvement in conducting gestures as an expectation. However, Band Director 4 stressed: “In my mind, the actual conducting is only a small portion of what a conductor’s job really entails.” Band Directors 2, 3, and 4 identified development of score reading skills as an expectation. Band Director 2 expected his student to develop “the ability to look down a score and understand how transposition works, how the notes on the page translate to the phrase . . . not seeing things vertically but also horizontally.” Band Director 4 said “They should be aware of musical hierarchy: melody, countermelody, and accompaniment.” Band Directors 1, 3, and 4 mentioned that they expected their student conductors to develop rehearsal skills. “I usually do the initial rehearsal processes, but after that I let them bring out what they want to hear in the music and fix mistakes that they hear” (Band Director 4). Band Director 2 did not expect his student to gain rehearsal skills:

I don’t believe they need to rehearse the piece. I don’t know that that is part of it. It could be seen as part of it. But, being an

effective conductor and being an effective rehearsal/educator are two very different things. . . . I just want them to be able to get from the beginning to the end of the piece successfully while communicating with the ensemble through gestures. They can learn to rehearse at another point in time.

Band Director 5 expressed that he expected to see a growth in musical curiosity from his student.

There needs to be that inherent interest in delving into things on a deeper level. Obviously, now we're not just looking at beat pattern. We're looking at form. We're looking at interpreting what's on the page. Now I have to show that through conducting. . . . I think that requires a certain level of intellect and curiosity.

Among the most prominent non-musical expectations were aspects of character development and leadership. Band Director 5 expressed: "I should be able to notice a measurable quantifiable difference in her confidence level and how she is interacting with her peers." Band Director 4 said: "Even if the student is not going to ever conduct again in their life, this whole experience is going to be a major leadership skill that they should hopefully use in the future." Band Director 3 identified peer-leadership as an expectation. "The student conductor obviously has to maintain a professional but communicative relationship with the students in front of them. It's going to be tough to be a peer but also give instruction towards the students."

**Concerns with participation in the student conductor activity.** Four of the band directors expressed concern over having enough time to devote to the student conductor activity. Common concerns included the band directors feeling as though they didn't have enough time to work one-on-one with the students as well as not providing the student with enough time on the podium. Band Director 3 said: "Time is the biggest concern right now just because I'm

looking at the whole academic and musical year and realizing how busy we are. .

. . So to add the student conductor is a big deal.” Band Director 5 expressed:

“For me, it’s just a matter of keeping up with it and making sure I’m giving the student what she needs as a resource.” Band Director 1 highlighted a common concern for band directors:

We always feel we need that one more rehearsal for that assessment. Doing the student conductor takes away time from that rehearsal. Being able to regularly schedule time for that student conductor to not only work on the conducting but also work on the student conductor piece. . . . All of it is just scheduling and appropriate planning for rehearsal.

### **Student Interview 2**

The second student interview was comprised of two sections. The first section was designed to reexamine the students’ overall perceptions of the student conductor activity. Questions 1-5 were retained from the first interview to examine the extent to which the student’s perceptions of the student conductor activity had changed over the first four weeks of the curriculum. Section two was designed to compile detailed information on the students’ experiences and perceptions as participants in the RDSCC. Six themes emerged from the second student interview. The six themes were:

1. Changes in perception of the student conductor activity
2. Areas and levels of excitement/interest
3. Perceptions of outside-of-class activities
4. Perceptions of conducting experiences
5. Time-management
6. Changes in perception regarding music as a career

**Changes in perception of the student conductor activity.** Through their responses to the second interview, the students exhibited expanded perceptions on the purposes and activities of the student conductor. Prior to

beginning the curriculum, Student 3 stated the primary role of the student conductor was “to keep the time for the drumline or for the whole band.” His responses in the second survey included additional responsibilities: “to work with the band to have them understand the dynamics, tempos of the piece, all of the fermatas, [and] key changes.” Student 1 referenced the previously unmentioned concept of ensemble balance, saying a student conductor should develop “a vast knowledge of music and what an ensemble should sound like. How every voice should be mixed all together.” Student 4 expressed a change in perception regarding a non-musical responsibility: “My perception has changed a little. I feel there is more of a quality to leading more than just conducting.”

**Areas and levels of excitement/interest.** Students shared their opinions regarding aspect of the curriculum that were exciting and interesting to them as well as aspects that were less exciting and less interesting. Some students exhibited changes in perceptions between the first interview and the second interview. In the first interview, Student 1 expressed that he was excited to conduct “legato pieces.” He was much more specific in the second interview, saying: “Fermatas. It’s a challenge when I was going through Salvation is Created. There [are] no set fermatas, but there are pauses. So, I take pauses as fermatas and experiment with the fermatas” (Student 1). Student 3, in the first interview, identified “working on my left hand” as an area of interest. After participating in the RDSCC for four weeks, he stated: “I am [now] most interested in conducting ballads, because I feel those are the most powerful music and the hardest to play. Students 2 and 4 identified “leadership” as a new area of excitement and interest. Student 4 said: “[I’m] most excited in the leadership role



that it has. I feel important, and I feel like I'm doing something I enjoy." Student 5 showed no change in what excited her about student conducting (conducting concert band music), but did say: "the more I'm in front of the students, the more comfortable I am."

When asked to identify an area of student conducting he was least excited about, Student 1 said: "the technique overall. Trying to figure out what style to use. . . . Some days it's really good. Other days it seems as if I never practiced it." Student 2 expressed a similar concern:

I know there's a lot of varying technical skills that are required, especially when you're trying to reflect different styles or passages, which I'm interested to learn about. But, that's a lot of information to take in and actually be able to practice.

Students 4 and 5 referenced areas of nervousness. Student 4 expressed a "fear of the unknown. . . . Everything that could possibly happen" as an area she was least excited about. Similarly, Student 5 said she was least excited about "things that are outside of my comfort zone. Showing expression while conducting is difficult for a student like me."

**Outside of class activities.** The students articulated the average amount of time they spent per week on the out-of-class conducting activities described in the RDSCC. The activities were: conducting gesture practice, score-study, transposition practice, and journal reflection. Time spent varied between students as well as between activities.

**Conducting gesture practice.** Students 3, and 4 spent between two and three hours per week on conducting gesture practice. Student 2 practiced conducting gestures for one hour per week, and Student 1 responded: "all the

time.” Student 5 reported the least amount of time, saying: “thirty minutes per week.”

**Score study.** On average, students spent less time on score-study than on conducting gesture practice. Students 1, 2, and 3 spent between 45 minutes to an hour on score-study, while Student 5 only spent twenty minutes. Student 4 had not spent any time on score-study saying: “I haven’t gotten my score yet.”

**Transposition practice.** There was significant variance between students on how much time was spent on transposition practice. Student 3 spent the most time (five hours). Students 2 and 3 indicated spending 30 minutes on transposition. Student 3 expressed: “I went on other websites and was trying to teach myself more about transposition.” Students 4 and 5 spent the least amount of time on transposition, responding: “I haven’t spent a lot of time on that yet either” and “not much at all,” respectively.

**Journal reflection.** Journal reflection was another area with variance. Student 5 reported the least amount of time: “ten or fifteen minutes.” Students 2, 3, and 4 spent between one and two hours per week on their journal reflections. Student 1 appeared to be the most involved in his journal reflection, saying: [I spend] a lot of time. I do more than the questions. I take notes in my documents. . . . Today, I gave [my band director] a flashdrive of all my journal reflections.”

The students were also asked to indicate to what extent they involved their band director in their out-of-class activities (i.e. checking work, asking questions, one-on-one conducting help). Student 1 said:

I was confused about transposing in the key of Bb, so we spent about fifteen to twenty minutes going over transposing on the board. And even when we’re done with class, I’ll ask him questions about how I can improve my technique of conducting.

Student 2 expressed: “A significant amount. A lot of the information I discussed with him and continue to do so fairly frequently. Almost every few days a question or something will come up.” Student 4 said: “With marching season, things are still a little hectic. But, as soon as we get over this period, I’ll definitely start doing that.” Student 5 offered: “We’ve met twice sometimes three times per week outside of class working on the music.”

**Conducting experiences.** The students were asked to indicate how many times, and for how long each time, they conducted their band during the first half of the RDSCC. They were also asked if they felt this amount of time was sufficient. Additionally, the students were asked to comment on the extent to which they felt the out-of-class activities affected their conducting sessions. Student 1 indicated that he conducting his band “five to six times per week for about twenty minutes each time.” When asked if this time was adequate, he responded:

It’s never enough. I wish I could spend the whole time going over it with them so I can truly understand. Every time I start working on it with them, it ends. So, I don’t feel like I can truly get comfortable with the piece or with the ensemble.

When asked to what extent the outside of class activities had on his conducting sessions, he said: “Very much. . . . This [conducting] course has really helped me understand certain techniques” (Student 1). Student 2 said that he conducted his band “two to three hours per week, between conducting warm-ups and conducting through the show.” It is apparent that Student 2 included his drum major conducting in this answer. Student 2 felt that this time was “Adequate, for sure. I guess more time wouldn’t hurt, but it’s definitely been adequate.” When asked to what extent the outside of class activities had on his

conducting sessions, Student 2 said: “A significant amount. It helps with understanding and defining basic technical skills. Transposition practice has actually come up a few times in use. The journal reflection definitely helps to see where you’ve come from.” Student 3 indicated that he conducted his band a total of “ten times for thirty minutes each time.” He felt that this was “adequate.” To the question of the outside-of-class activities affecting his conducting sessions, he said: “I feel that it has helped me a lot. Without that, I wouldn’t be able to give time changes, fermatas, cut-offs, cues . . .” (Student 3). Student 4 stated that she has conducting her band “about six or seven times.” She felt that this amount of time was “probably adequate.” When asked to what extent the outside of class activities had on his conducting sessions, Student 4 said: “I definitely do try to apply it to my conducting, so I do feel it has an absolute effect on me.” Student 5 responded that she has conducted her band a total of three times. When asked if this time was adequate, she stated: “I think it’s adequate considering I am planning to do score study at home, and we’re also planning to conduct more this week because marching season is over.” When asked to what extent the outside of class activities had on his conducting sessions, Student 5 said: “It’s increased my comfort level with the band.”

**Time-management.** Students were asked to comment on the extent to which it was difficult to include participation on the RDSCC into their personal schedules. Students 1, 4 and 5 expressed difficulties. “It’s been pretty difficult” (Student 5). Student 1 stated: “For the most part, very challenging considering my busy schedule. I always make time, whether I’m staying up past midnight to work on my conducting. I always make time for it.” Student 4 agreed, saying:

“Well, I am quite a busy person. I have a lot of extra-curricular activities. So, it is really difficult to include this. But, at the same time, I always make sure that I have room for it.” Students 2 and 3 expressed that it was not difficult to include the RDSCC into their personal schedules. Student 2 stated:

Not too difficult, honestly. I can get a lot of practice conducting either in class or outside rehearsals. As far as other schoolwork, I spend a few hours a week working on academic classes, but it still leaves more than enough time to work on the conducting curriculum.

Student 4 also felt like it wasn't difficult including the RDSCC into his schedule, saying: “I feel like it's not really interfering with my schoolwork. I have time to do it in class, so it helps. When I'm out of class, now that marching band is over, I have more time to work on concert music.”

#### **Changes in perception regarding music conducting as a career.**

Similar to the first interview, students were asked if, at this point, they were interested in a career that involved music conducting. Students 1 and 2 again responded affirmatively. Student 4 responded similarly to her first interview: “I don't know about a career, but I definitely see it in my future.” Student 4, having previously indicated that he was interested in a music-conducting career, appeared to have lost interest, saying: “Not so much.” Student 5 remained uninterested in a career involving music conducting.

#### **Band Director Interview 2**

The second band director interview was comprised of two sections. The first section was designed to reexamine the band directors' overall perceptions of the student conductor activity. Questions 1, 3, 4, and 5 were retained from the first interview to examine the extent to which the band directors' perceptions of

the student conductor activity had changed over the first four weeks of the curriculum. Section two was designed to compile detailed information on the band directors' experiences and perceptions as participants in the RDSCC. Six themes emerged from the second student interview. The six themes were:

1. Changes in expectations of their student conductors
2. Changes in perception of what skills and knowledge are important for student conductors to develop
3. Concerns of participation in RDSCC
4. Perceptions of their student's "podium time"
5. Perceptions of outside-of-class activities
6. Suggestions for improvement of the RDSCC weeks 1-4

**Changes in expectations of their student conductors.** After participating in the first four weeks of the RDSCC, three band directors experienced changes in perception regarding their expectations of the student conductor. Band Director 1 shared that his expectations of his student have increased: "I think it could be more than just a kid waving his arms to a prepared piece, but like a band director in training, learning transposition, and taking a more involved role in the rehearsal than just the end product." Conversely, Band Director 2 felt that his expectations had lowered:

I spent all last season trying to get [the student conductor] to emote, to show energy and emotion through body language and conducting patterns and it hasn't been successful. I think that all teenagers can be successful conductors from a technical standpoint. But, I'm not sure that all teenagers can be animated or energetic conductors, due to the natural inhibitions of the age group.

Band Director 4 conveyed that his expectations have not necessarily changed, but are more defined as a result of participation in the first four weeks

of the RDSCC: “With this curriculum, it’s very clear what exact skills they need to learn. I think my expectations are a lot more clear.”

**Changes in perception of important student conductor skills and knowledge.** Band Director 4 expressed a change in perception regarding important skills and knowledge for a student conductor: “It has to do with score study and the music theory part of it. Previously, I was really just preparing my student for the actual conducting.” He continued saying that now he stresses the “ability to look at the score and pick out different pitches based on transpositions.” Band Director 5 said that he had one change in perception: “There really needs to be some sort of component that really addresses more than the technical nature of conducting, that there’s a real emotional component to it.” While Band Director 2 did not necessarily exhibit a change in perception regarding important skills and knowledge for a student conductor, his response in the second interview was much more specific than the first: “stop gestures, ability to cue on any beat, different patterns, standard tempos, ability to internally subdivide to maintain tempos, to be able to do *rubato* and *accelerando* through internal subdivision.”

**Concerns of participation in RDSCC.** Time management remained a concern for two band directors. Band Director 1 expressed a concern similar to that which he mentioned in the first interview: “Taking time out to do student conductor stuff – it always feels like you’re taking time out of your rehearsal. A lot of it is time-management. Finding time for it without putting other things at risk.” Band Director 3 also conveyed a similar concern to his first interview saying “Time. Time I suppose. . . . Finding the time to be sure that our music in

in good shape for concert MPA, solo and ensemble, and our winter concert.”

Band Director 4 acknowledged that time management could be problematic, but felt that this wasn't a concern of his:

I feel that the [time] concerns aren't for me, because I think I know how to provide a good balance to my band program where it doesn't get in the way of our own concert MPA. My concern is that other directors, especially younger directors, may not be able to provide the accurate time management that is needed to make sure that the student conductor process is also benefiting their band. I think the feeling is this is just going to benefit the student conductor and it's going to take away time from everybody else who's in the class, and I truly feel like that is not the intention of this at all. I really feel that the entire program should benefit, not just the student conductor.

In the first interview, Band Director 2 had shared that he felt he didn't devote enough time to the student conductor activity. His response in the second interview changed to:

No concerns whatsoever. I consider it a critical part of the overall band package. In order to have a healthy band program you have to be able to offer everything that programs typically offer, and that includes [the] student conductor.

Band Director 5 also offered a different perspective, saying he was concerned about “the validity of it from an FBA perspective. He elaborated, saying he was concerned about “the credence that they give to it. The weight and importance of it. It feels like an afterthought of FBA.”

**Perceptions of the student's podium time.** The band directors were asked how many times, and for how long each time, their student conducted the band during the first four weeks of the RDSCC. Additionally, the band directors were asked the extent to which they felt this allotment of time was adequate. Band Director 1 reported that his student conducted the band two to three times each week for approximately twenty minutes each time. He added: “I never feel



it's an adequate amount of time.” Band Director 5 also felt that his student's amount of time on the podium was inadequate, noting: “on the average, once per week for twenty to twenty-five minutes. Less than adequate. We're going to be doubling our efforts in the next week. Ideally it would have been twice a week for half of the class period.” Band Directors 2, 3, and 4 described their students' time on the podium to be adequate. Band Director 4 reported his student received two to three sessions per week for approximately five minutes each time. He said: “I feel, for right now, this is adequate. . . . Right now, we're just trying to get down some basic patterns and styles (legato vs. staccato). I think it's adequate. As we move closer to the MPA date, I'm going to continually be adding on.” Band Director 3 said that his student received ninety minutes of time on the podium. He added: “I can't guarantee that he's getting time every day. It's a piece of music that I feel comfortable enough that could be put together with my assistance and him conducting so they could be successful on the concert.” Band Director 2 reported that during the first four weeks of the RDSCC, his student conducted the band “a minimum of two hours per week, maybe three.” This represents a significant discrepancy between Band Director 2 and the other four band directors. This discrepancy could potentially be explained by the combination of two assumptions: 1) the student conductor is also their marching band's drum major, and 2) the band director perceives drum major conducting as relevant to the RDSCC.

**Perceptions of outside-of-class activities.** The band directors were asked to indicate the extent to which their students involved them in their outside-of-class activities. Additionally, the band directors were asked for their

perceptions on the extent to which those activities affected their students' conducting sessions with the band. Only Band Director 1 felt as if his student involved him in the outside-of-class activities. He stated: "He's done pretty good. He's even brought in a flashdrive today to review some of his journal entries, some of his extensive work." With regard to how the outside-of-class activities affected his student's conducting sessions, Band Director 1 stated: "It's really sparked his interest. He's trying things and experimenting with his style. . . . He comes in asking questions about transposition. I think it's really been a good thing for him." Band Directors 2, 3, 4, and 5 reported low levels of involvement in the outside-of-class activities. Band Director 2 commented that his student involved him "zero percent." However, he did feel as though the activities "[have] impacted the conducting, from a technical standpoint, a great deal." Band Director 3 stated: "He hasn't come to me a whole lot. When he does have a question, he does come to me to have a human demonstrate a technique. He'll have me model for him. Then, he'll replicate that on the podium." He further commented: "I think it's evident that he's participating in [the outside-of-class activities]. . . . He's definitely giving the effort to be better." Band Directors 4 and 5 reported similar theories as to why their students did not involve them more. Band Director 4 stated: "She hasn't approached me because she probably sees me as being too busy." Band Director 5 felt as though he had to initiate the one-on-one sessions because his student was likely "trying to be really respectful of my time." Both directors felt as though the out-of-class activities were benefitting their students' conducting sessions. "I feel that her technique has greatly improved. She is not just conducting. She's stopping when things don't go right.

She's providing them with information to make it better" (Band Director 4). Band

Director 5 referenced improvements in his student's confidence:

I've seen an increased confidence in her abilities, and part of that is her understanding. I don't feel like she's been holding on to the flute part for dear life as she watches it go across the score, like we've all done. That was her [during] the first couple of times in front of the ensemble. No question about it. I think now, some of the work she's doing outside of class, whether she uses it in rehearsal or not, I think she goes into rehearsal feeling like she has more tools in her toolbox to build what needs to be built. I think the curriculum activities just give her confidence.

Band Director 5 also commented on some concerns he had with the outside-of-class activities. While he believed his student had made improvements, he added: "There is no substitute for getting up in front of sixty people in a live setting. I think it's [similar] to me sitting here and talking to [Student 1] about the ocean, or taking her to see it." Band Director 5 also mentioned having difficulty with the tutoring environment:

It's a little awkward working with a student one-on-one. It can be a weird dynamic. Some of it is our personalities. We're only able to get so comfortable with the material because of the awkwardness. It's much better when we can work in front of the band. Everything else feels so hypothetical.

**Suggestions for improvement in the RDSCC weeks 1-4.** The band directors were asked to provide suggestions for improvement in the RDSCC for weeks 1 through 4. Band Director 1 suggested more prescribed involvement from the band director:

Even after saying there's not enough time to do the stuff, I [suggest] more engagement from the band director through some type of assigned activity to follow up with the student. I feel right now, it's mostly on the student, and it's easy for the band director to kind of take a backseat and check in every once and a while.

Band Director 3 suggested adjusting the weekly content with regard to the amount of gestural instruction versus music theory instruction:

The first part of the curriculum is technique heavy and the second part is very theory heavy. Maybe just integrating those so it doesn't seem like we're learning technique at the beginning and then going on to theory later . . . mixing up the curriculum for each of the weeks.

Band Director 5 suggested adding activities that helped students get comfortable being in front of a group:

You might need exercises that really stretch you, especially as a kid. Getting them comfortable in an emotional sense in front of their peers. When I was in high school, I would have been shaking up there. Now I'm so much more comfortable up there. So, how do you accelerate that process? Public speaking. Get them to break down their barriers.

### **Student Interview 3**

The third, and final, student interview was comprised of three sections. The first section was designed to reexamine the students' overall perceptions of the student conductor activity. Questions 1-5 were retained from the first and second interviews to examine the extent to which the student's perceptions of the student conductor activity had changed over the final four weeks of the curriculum. Section two was designed to compile detailed information on the students' experiences and perceptions as participants in the RDSCC. Questions 6-10 were retained from the second interview to examine the extent to which the students' perceptions of participation in the RDSCC changed during the final four weeks. Eight themes emerged from the final student interview. The eight themes were:

1. Changes in perception of the student conductor activity
2. Student conductors' personality traits affected their participation in RDSCC
3. Perceptions of outside-of-class activities

4. Perceptions of conducting experiences
5. Time-management
6. Perceptions of online format
7. Perceptions of the assessment
8. Effect(s) of RDSCC on future involvement in music

**Changes in perception of the student conductor activity.** The students continued to exhibit changing perceptions of the purposes and activities of a student conductor. The most common change in perception was related to the role of the student conductor. Three of the five student conductors cited “leadership” as a primary role of the conductor. As Student 1 stated: “Aside from the fact that it’s a learning process as far as basic conducting, it’s a leadership experience. You’re in front of the band and have a responsibility to actually lead the ensemble.” Students stated very few changes in perception regarding the areas of student conducting in which they were least excited about and interested in. Student 4 did identify an area not previously mentioned: “I’d have to say the score study, but I know it’s one of the most important things.” Even with a lowered level of excitement in this area, Student 4 was quick to acknowledge her improvement: “I think over this process, my ability has increased. I feel much stronger in that area.”

**Student conductors’ personality traits affected their participation in RDSCC.** All five of the student conductors identified areas of their personality that affected their participation in the RDSCC. Student 2 identified himself as an “analytical sort of person.” He continued, saying: “That helps when it comes to analyzing a score and preparing for actually rehearsing the group.” Students 3, 4, and 5 felt confident being in front of their respective groups. “I’m not a shy person, so I’m not afraid to open up (Student 3). Student 5 said: “I’ve felt

comfortable expressing myself in the curriculum and in conducting the class.” Student 4 referenced an extra-musical activity that aided her in the RDSCC: “I’m president of the speech and debate club. So, I know how to speak to people. I think that quality has helped me most throughout this journey.” Conversely, one student conductor expressed that participation in the RDSCC had an effect on his personality. Student 1 characterized himself as being “normally shy.” However, he expressed that participation in the RDSCC actually improved his confidence: “Doing this . . . helped me break the barrier and become more up-front with people. Instead of being timid, I’m more confident in myself.”

**Perceptions of outside-of-class activities.** The students were again asked to articulate the amount of time spent on specified outside-of-class activities. The activities were: conducting gesture practice, score study, transposition practice, journal reflection, and development (writing/revision) of their score summary. The researcher compared the students’ reported time spent on each activity to similar reports made in the second interview.

**Conducting gesture practice.** Student 1 reported the most amount of time spent on conducting gesture saying: “Three to four hours collectively. I’m always conducting at home and practicing my piece. I’m always practicing in front of the mirror making sure I don’t look foolish.” Students 2, 3, and 4 reported spending between one and two hours per week on conducting gesture. Student 5 reported the least amount of time: “about forty minutes per week.”

**Score study.** Regarding score study, Students 1, 2, 3, and 4 reported spending between 1 and 2 hours, while Student 5 reported less time (twenty to thirty minutes). Students 1, 2, and 3 reported spending approximately one hour

per week on transposition practice. Student 4 stated: “I didn’t need a lot of practice with that because I was in AP Music Theory. So, [I practiced] about thirty minutes per week.” Student 5 reported: “the same as last time. Almost not any at all.”

**Journal reflections.** There was large discrepancy between students on amount of time spent on journal reflections. Student 2 indicated the largest amount of time spent (1.5 hours). Student 4 reported “one hour,” and Students 1, 3, and 5 each reported spending thirty minutes or less per week on their journal reflections.

**Development (writing and revision) of score summary.** There was also large discrepancy between students on time spent on the development (writing and revision) of their score summary. Student 4 reported the largest amount of time (two hours per week). Students 1 and 2 reported similar amounts of time (1.5 hours per week). Student 1 added:

When I first wrote it, it took me about an hour and a half. That was writing it and proof reading it. From there, every week, the more I would work with the ensemble, I would either add more or take away from what I previously wrote because I felt like the more I got into it, the more I needed to put into it because I understood the piece more.

Student 3 reported spending thirty minutes per week on the score summary activity. Student 5 admitted to not writing a score summary: “I didn’t spend that much time at all doing any writing.”

**Involving their band director.** Similar to the second interview, the students were asked to indicate the level to which they involved their band director in the out of class activities. Student 1 said: “For the most part, a lot. . . . I would tell him what is going well or not going well.” He added: “I wish I would

have taken more time with [my band director] on it.” Student 2 reported that he involved his band director “quite heavily.” He continued: “A lot of the conducting practice I had was with him. I got a lot of conducting feedback and opportunities to ask questions.” Student 3 indicated that he wished he had more time with the band director: “That would be better than what I got.” When asked what kept him from involving his band director more, Student 3 replied: “He’s very busy.”

Student 5 also expressed that she wished she had involved her band director more. Her reasoning was: “After marching season, things were still very busy, and not back to normal in the concert band setting. School work, for me, probably kept me from meeting with him.”

**Perceptions of conducting experiences.** The students were asked to indicate how many times, and for how long each time, they conducted their band during the second half of the RDSCC. They were also asked if they felt this amount of time was sufficient. Additionally, the students were asked to comment on the extent to which they felt the out-of-class activities affected their conducting sessions. Student 1 stated that he conducted his band “probably about six times per week for five to ten minutes.” He felt that this time was sufficient, saying: “I wish I had more time, but I’m satisfied with the time that I was given.” When asked to what extent the out-of-class activities affected his conducting sessions, he replied:

Every time I conducted before doing research on the conductor, I would just conduct it on auto. But, from doing some background checks on the piece and the composer, I was able to portray, in my opinion, the composer’s feelings in my conducting gestures.

Student 2 stated that he conducted his band for approximately two hours per week. He felt that his was “definitely a reasonable amount of time.”



Additionally, Student 2 expressed that the outside-of-class activities affected his conducting sessions “very significantly.” He referenced spending “a lot of the individual time just working on the smaller nuances of conducting and the journal reflection to really determine what my progress was each day and each week had significant impact.”

Student 3 reporting conducting his band for “twenty minutes every day.” He felt that this was adequate, and that the score study and transposition exercises helped him the most during his conducting sessions.

Student 4 stated that she conducted her band “once or twice per week for about twenty minutes each time.” She felt this was “a good amount of time.” When asked to what extent the outside-of-class activities had on her conducting sessions, Student 4 replied:

That’s a cool question, because just today I was conducting *Welsh Rhapsody*. I realized something that I was practicing in score study which was the oboe part going along with the clarinet part, and I was able to cue it in and tell the oboe what to do right then.

Student 5 responded that she “was able to spend whole class periods at a time.” She added that score study helped her the most in her conducting sessions. “[My band director] had me highlight, and had me make notes to myself of what I needed to do, and I think I improved a lot from doing that (Student 5).

**Time-management.** The students were again asked to comment on the extent to which it was difficult to include participation in the RDSS into their personal schedules, taking into account other schoolwork and other possible extra-curricular activities. Students 2 and 3 conveyed that it was not difficult to include the RDSCC in their personal schedules. Student 2 said, “I’ve always

found time for studying conducting. On days where I thought I wouldn't be able to, I would just stay up later to find time." Student 3 stated: "It wasn't difficult at all since I had some opportunities in class to conduct. As far as the [outside-of-class] activities, a couple of hours each week, split up across the days, wasn't too difficult at all." Students 4, and 5 conveyed having a more difficult time integrating the RDSCC into their personal schedules. Student 5 shared: "I do have a lot of extracurricular things. I'm very busy, but I always make sure I have time for the [RDSCC] because I know when I'm up there and conducting, I'm going to wish I had more."

**Perceptions of online format.** The students were asked to share their perceptions of the RDSCC's online format. All five of the students stated that they were comfortable with the online format, each having had previous experiences with online courses. Student 2 expressed:

It definitely made it more convenient. I could access it any time. . . . I would go back to the website throughout the day or evening if I was working on something. While it's helpful to have a person, you might only have access to them at a certain time.

Student 4 agreed that a benefit to the online platform was "access." She said: "I think it helps me a lot when I'm doing score study and I have to look back at a lesson or watch a video on what conducting techniques I'm using." Student 5 conveyed mixed feelings regarding the online platform. While she stated that "flexibility" and "doing things on my own" was a positive aspect of the online platform, she also said: "Not having anyone to tell me what to do at sometimes was a disadvantage."

**Perceptions of the assessment.** The student conductors were asked if they felt the discussion/performance was an appropriate way to show what they

learned as a student conductor. All five students responded affirmatively.

Student 1 said:

In looking back from where I was in week one, knowing nothing about conducting, to the end of week eight with my summary of the composition and with the composer, for me personally, it showed my growth in learning about student conducting and performing with an ensemble.

Student 2 agreed: “That really tied everything together, as the skills all built on each other.”

Additionally, the students were asked to rate the helpfulness of specific aspects of the RDSCC in preparing them for the discussion/performance using a 10-point rating scale, ranging from 1 (not helpful at all) to 10 (very helpful).

“Conducting sessions with the band” ( $M = 9.4$ ) and “reviewing videos of my own conducting” ( $M = 9$ ) were identified as the most helpful. “Transposition practice” ( $M = 5.8$ ) and “journal reflections” ( $M = 7.2$ ) were identified as among the least helpful (Table 4-2).

Table 4-2. Descriptive Statistics and Independent  $t$ -Test Results of Band Directors’ ( $N=5$ ) and Students’ ( $N=5$ ) reported “helpfulness” of educational activities in the RDSCC

Educational Activities	Band Directors		Students		$df$	$t$	$p$
	$M$	$SD$	$M$	$SD$			
1. Instructional videos	10.00	0.00	8.80	1.47	4	1.82	0.14
2. Conducting “checkpoints”	9.40	0.80	7.80	1.47	6	2.14	0.08
3. Transposition practice	8.80	0.98	5.80	2.48	5	2.52	0.05
4. Conducting sessions with the band	9.60	0.80	9.40	0.80	8	0.40	0.70
5. Reviewing video(s) of your own conducting	9.50	0.87	9.00	1.10	6	0.76	0.48**
6. Writing the score essay	7.40	1.74	7.40	1.62	7	0.00	1.00
7. Journal reflections	8.20	0.98	7.20	0.98	8	1.61	0.15

Mean scores calculated on a 10-point scale.

\*\* One of the band directors did not score this activity. Therefore, statistics for this activity were calculated using  $N = 4$  for the band director group.

**Effect(s) of RDSCC on future involvement in music.** The students were asked to what extent participation in the RDSCC has affected their interest

in participating in band after high school. Student 4 expressed: "I always wanted to continue in band, but this has strengthened it." Student 5 said: "I've had my decision set from before, but it influenced me just a little bit to go on in band." Student 2 shared a similar response: "Not too much, because my plans were . . . to play in the band. So, I was kind of set on that anyway."

Finally, the students were asked to indicate what extent participation in the RDSCC affected their interest in a career that involves music conducting.

Student 1 responded:

A lot. Doing this has given me the opportunity to work with an ensemble and helped me kind of gauge my feelings on if I want to continue to do this, and I do. This course has really helped me decide what I want to do with my career.

Student 2 remained consistent in his plans for considering music conducting as a career:

I was already planning on going into music education. It was useful to get a taste of what I'll experience from a basic conducting class in college. I feel like it gave me a step up on those that haven't had this experience.

Student 3 was the only student to express a change in perception regarding a potential career in music conducting. In the first interview, he responded: "Yeah, I would be interested." In the second interview, his response changed to: "Not so much." At the conclusion of the RDSCC, Student 3 expressed that his interest in a career involving music conducting "has increased. I enjoyed it!"

### **Band Director Interview 3**

The third, and final, band director interview was comprised of four sections. The first section was designed to reexamine the band directors' overall

perceptions of the student conductor activity. Questions 1 - 4 were retained from the second interview to examine the extent to which the band directors' perceptions of the student conductor activity had changed over the final four weeks of the curriculum. Section two was designed to compile detailed information on the band directors' experiences and perceptions as participants in the RDSCC. Questions 5- 9 were retained from the second interview to examine the extent to which the band directors' perceptions of the RDSCC had changed over the final four weeks of the curriculum. Section three consisted of three questions designed to obtain the band directors' perceptions of the assessment activities of the RDSCC. Section four consisted of four question designed to offer the band directors an opportunity to give concluding perceptions on the validity and relevance of the RDSCC. Nine themes emerged from the second third interview. The nine themes were:

1. Perceptions of student conductor purposes/expectations
2. Perceptions of students' "podium time"
3. Perceptions of outside-of-class activities
4. Perceptions of online format
5. Difficulties of participating in the RDSCC
6. Perceptions on the assessment(s) in the RDSCC
7. Suggestions for improvement of the RDSCC
8. Perceptions of mentoring student conductor with the RDSCC and without the RDSCC
9. Perceptions of the student conductors' futures in music conducting

**Perceptions of student conductor purposes/expectations.** Generally speaking, all five band directors expressed consistent opinions regarding the

purposes of the student conductor activity. However, Band Director 2 was more direct in his response:

You cannot know what this job is about without sitting in front of a group, leading them through a piece of music. Kids that go into this profession like playing their horns. I think they're disadvantaged because this is nothing of what we do. I think student conductor is one component of the overall package that should prepare interested students for a future in music education roles. And, not "I'm an educated band member with a degree." There's too many of those rolling around out there taking jobs and ruining programs.

With regard to expectations of the student conductor, Band Directors 1, 2, and 3 remained consistent with their opinions expressed in the second interview. Band Director 4 expressed a change in perception: "Once she started conducting the band, I think my expectations broadened [compared to] the past years. . . . I really let [the student conductor] start from the beginning rehearsing this piece." Additionally, Band Director 4 expected his student to be involved in rehearsal planning, saying: "If you're not coming in prepared to a rehearsal, your job isn't done." Band Director 5 shared his expanded expectation of leadership from his student:

We have weekly officer meetings throughout the course of the year. Is she taking a more active and vocal role in those officer meetings? Before she was more of a passive participant in it. It's not so much the case now.

Perceptions regarding the skills and knowledge required of a student conductor also changed. Band Director 1 expressed a more varied list of required skills compared to his first and second interviews. In his final interview, he said:

Poise in front of an ensemble. They need to have a concrete idea of what they want to hear. They need to lead the band instead of the band leading them. They need to have clearly defined technique or at least an understanding of what they're doing with

their body. They [need the] willingness to experiment. [They need a] lack of fear of looking silly in front of an ensemble.

Band Director 5 also expressed a more varied list of required skills than in his previous interviews. He stated:

There needs to be an inherent amount of self-confidence. . . . I think you have to be a good musician. . . . You have to have somebody up there who, when things aren't quite going well, has enough musical instinct to know how to fix it. . . . You have to have a very pleasant, even-keeled personality.

**Perceptions of students' "podium time."** The band directors were asked to comment on how many times, and for how long each time, their students conducted the band. Additionally, the band directors were asked if they felt this amount of time was sufficient. Band Director 1 said his student conducted the band "more often than the first four weeks because I've been out a lot. So he's gotten lots of opportunities to conduct and have after-school rehearsals." He indicated that this time was "sufficient for this piece." Band Director 2 commented: "Once per week for approximately thirty minutes." Band Director 3 indicated that his student conducted his band "two to three times per week for five to ten minutes." He felt this time was sufficient. Band Director 4 said that his student conducted the band "almost daily, whether it be a warm up, rehearsing a chorale, or getting into the piece." He indicated that the student conducted "two times per week for five to fifteen minutes." Band Director 4 said that he felt this time was not sufficient.

Band Director 5 shared that his student conducted three or four times per week "for about twenty minutes each time." He described a dramatic growth in his student's comfort level on the podium:

Her level of comfort and execution grew exponentially in about one week or one-and-a-half weeks before she conducted at the concert. I noticed it and the kids noticed it. It was something that suddenly started to become much more natural. . . . The kids were noticing it, and the environment that we have is such that the kids felt comfortable complimenting her and her not taking it as an insult for how she had been before. She would get done with a movement, and the kids would be like “Dang! That was really good!” It was fun for the kids themselves to see she was a whole different conductor than she was when she started.

**Perceptions of outside-of-class activities.** The band directors were asked to indicate the extent to which their students involved them in their outside-of-class activities during weeks four through eight of the RDSCC. Additionally, the band directors were asked for their perceptions on the extent to which those activities affected their students’ conducting sessions with the band.

Band Director 1 stated that his student involved him “not that much.” He stated: “I think [my] being busy held him back from coming to me more.” Band Director 1 did feel as though the outside-of-class activities helped his student: “I think it gives him a lot to think about. . . . Typically, we give our kids a piece and rehearse the piece but I think the outside activities, because it was not designed for a specific piece, gives him a broader idea of content.

Band Director 2 commented: “There were occasional questions, but [Student 2] is self-guided. He wants to go into the profession. That absolutely kept him from coming to me more. He’s very independent and able to do critical analysis on his own.” He added that as a result of the outside-of-class activities, he “saw him become a much better conductor.”

Band Director 3 said:

[Student 3] would ask me about techniques and what he should do so the students were clear about what to do musically. He would



go through the techniques on the videos and ask questions about how to apply it to the piece and our band.

Additionally, Band Director 3 felt the outside-of-class activities caused Student 3 to “think about what he was going to do before I asked him to do it. It allowed him to get a little data on himself before he went up to the podium.”

Band Director 4 stated: “[Student 4] would sometimes ask questions for clarification. She’d stop in a couple of times per week on some of the techniques and some of the theoretical things.” He felt the outside-of-class activities helped “immensely.” He continued: “With all the pressures of high school, especially band directors, there’s just not as much times as we would like to devote to [the student conductor]. So, I think the curriculum has been essential.”

Band Director 5 indicated that Student 5 involved him in the outside-of-class activities “a fair amount.” He added: “I initiated the conversation certainly as much as she did.” With regard to the extent to which the outside-of-class activities affected Student 5’s conducting sessions, Band Director 5 stated:

I don’t have the ego to sit here and say that I have all the answers. But, I certainly could guide and give direction to what she was going to do. I think the [outside-of-class activities] gave her a course-heading. . . . It was hard to tell if the improvement came solely from the one-on-one sessions or from individual work. As [the performance] was getting closer, I think she was putting in more time outside of it. . . . Just her gesturing seemed significantly different and more comfortable in the last little bit.

**Perceptions of online format.** The band directors were asked to comment on the extent to which the online nature of the RDSCC affected their students’ learning. All five directors indicated that their students had prior experiences with online learning formats. Band Director 3 stated: “Students these days are pretty knowledgeable on navigating online courses. Half of my

students are involved in online activities at some point throughout the day.” Band

Director 2 said:

Online is where we’re all headed whether you like it or not. So, I think the fact that [the RDSCC] is online is a very valuable resource. . . . The ability to go and review lessons that are already presented, as opposed to catch it once or you don’t catch it at all, I think that’s significant.

Band Director 5 expressed:

I would say it was very very helpful. Even more so than my one-on-one sessions with her. . . . She would have maybe twenty to thirty minutes with me, but that was something she had access to and as a resource whenever she wanted it. So, I think that may be even more significant.

**Difficulties of participating in the RDSCC.** Similar to the perceptions shared in their second interviews, several band directors identified the main difficulty of participating in the RDSCC as “time.” Band Director 3 shared: “Time was an issue. [Student 3] needs his time. Relinquishing that is tough to do.” Band Director 5 shared this opinion, but referenced not only the difficulty in scheduling rehearsal time for the student conductor, but also scheduling one-on-one time:

The only difficulty was time. It was just making time to give [Student 5] time in front of the students. Just figuring out the time to work with her individually, and not fill that time up with returning emails and phone calls and all the stuff that comes with this job.

**Perceptions on the assessment(s) in the RDSCC.** The band directors were asked to share their opinions on the appropriateness of the discussion/performance as an assessment tool for the student conductor activity. Band Directors 3 and 4 believed that the discussion/performance was appropriate. Band Director 4 said: “I think it was well-tailored to what a conductor does for a living, so it’s an accurate representation of how we should be

evaluating our students.” Band Directors 1 and 2 agreed that the discussion/performance was an effective method of assessing the student conductor, but both offered suggested changes. Band Director 1 offered: “Maybe there could be a question/answer session with the adjudicator. The judge could have a list of prepared questions to ask from.” Band Director 2 offered a similar suggestion: “To find out if the student did score study, the student could defend their performance. Like a juried performance. After they’ve conducted, they [would] get asked questions.”

Band Director 5 commented that his student did not prepare a score summary to verbally deliver to an audience. He expressed: “The [assessment method] you suggested should have been done. The only thing I would have done differently would be to have her speak to the experience and the piece.”

Additionally, the band directors were asked to rate the helpfulness of specific aspects of the RDSCC in preparing their student for the discussion/performance using a 10-point rating scale, ranging from 1 (not helpful at all) to 10 (very helpful). “Instructional videos” ( $M = 10.0$ ) and “conducting sessions with the band” ( $M = 9.6$ ) were identified as the most helpful. “Writing the score essay” ( $M = 7.4$ ) and “reviewing videos of [the student’s] own conducting” ( $M = 7.6$ ) were identified as among the least helpful (Table 4-2).

**Suggestions for improvement of the RDSCC.** The band directors were asked for suggestions toward improving weeks five through eight of the RDSCC. Band Director 1 suggested “illustrat[ing] different conductors and their styles and techniques through video. . . . Maybe it’s homework to go and look at different conductors and explain what you see visually like we would in conducting class.”

Band Director 2 suggested: “ramping up the challenge of the material, introducing some advanced concepts in conducting. The types of kids that are going to be involved in this type of curriculum are going to be near the top anyway.” Band Director 4 offered: “Maybe doing a few more initial activities before going right into conducting the piece. Maybe having a specific Bach chorale *Harmony in Bb* to have the kids build their confidence in being in front of a band.”

**Perceptions of mentoring student conductor with the RDSCC and without the RDSCC.** Combined, the five band directors have mentored over forty student conductors in the FBA student conductor activity (Figure 4-28). Each band director was asked to compare the experiences of mentoring a student conductor without the RDSCC to mentoring a student conductor with the RDSCC. Band Director 1 stated: “Before [the RDSCC], it was kind of like an afterthought. This curriculum here prepares not just the arms and techniques, but also the thought processes that go on behind the scenes. Band Director 2 expressed the experience was “much easier with the curriculum. Band Director 3 stated: “Using the curriculum is a big plus, because it gives the kids the fundamentals before they even get up to the podium to work the piece.” Band Director 4 expressed:

You can’t even compare. It’s been so nice for the student to have a resource to go to so they can work at home. In the past, you can give them exercises and have them go home, but there isn’t a way to check up on them. So, it’s been incredibly helpful.

Band Director 5 shared: “With the curriculum, it’s just much more thorough. [Student 5], from a conducting perspective, achieved at a higher level when all was said and done.”

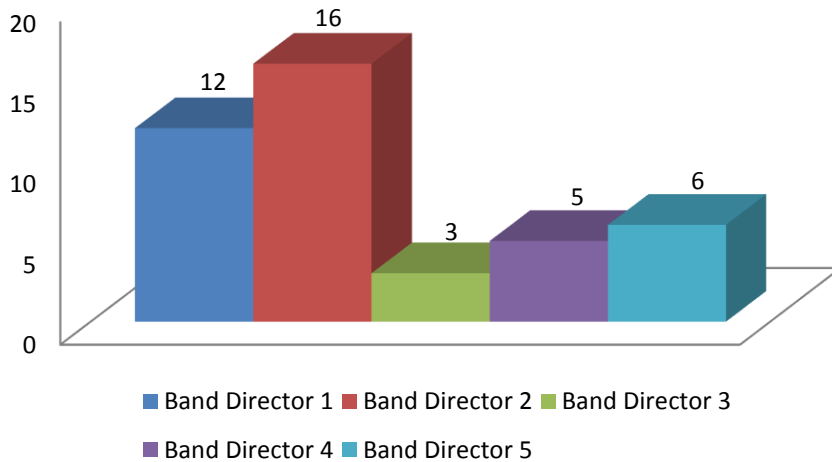


Figure 4-28. Number of students mentored in the FBA student conductor activity.

### **Perceptions of the student conductors' futures in music conducting.**

The band directors were asked to comment on the extent to which the RDSCC has prepared his student for further study in music (e.g. college/university level).

All five band directors expressed that the RDSCC had helped in this regard.

Band Director 1 stated:

I think it has sparked an interest in him. He's really wanting to be a studio musician, so I think the extra thought and consideration that's gone into this curriculum has opened up a different idea as far as teaching, conducting and managing ensembles.

Band Director 2 commented:

He'll be familiar with these things before he even steps foot in a conducting class. That's critical. That's great. We all know the kids who have abilities before they walk in the room are the kids who are successful in the classroom.

Band Director 3 expressed:

It allowed [Student 3] to relate to what we do as educators. It allowed him to sit in the driver's seat of a band that plays really well, make music, and be forced to show what he wants communicated. That's a skill that probably most freshmen collegiate conductors don't have right away. So, I think he's ahead of the game.

Band Director 4 shared a similar opinion:

I don't even think she's going into music education, but if she does decide to do this in the future, which I certainly hope she does, she will be much more prepared than many other students entering a music education curriculum.

Band Director 5 also felt as if the RDSCC helped prepare his student for future study in music: "I feel like the curriculum felt like my college experience, as far as the things we did in college. [Student 5] would definitely be ahead of most of peers, I'd imagine."

## **Summary of Results**

### **Validation by Experts**

The researcher compared the expert group's survey results to that of the band director group using an independent *t*-test. None of the items revealed a statistically significant difference between groups, indicating a strong congruence in validation of the RDSCC for high school student conductor training. In terms of curricular scope, the experts and high school band directors overwhelmingly agreed that the curriculum was appropriate for high school students. In terms of sequence, suggestions for improvement included further integration of instructional videos throughout the eight-week course and earlier integration of music theory concepts. The experts and high school band directors also validated the assessment methods of the RDSCC. A nearly significant difference ( $t(6) = 2.03, p = 0.09$ ) was found between groups on item 9. "The assessment methods for this curriculum (verbal presentation and conducting performance) are clearly described." One suggestion for improvement was to add the adjudicator's rubric to the online platform.

## **Participants' Perceptions**

Perceptions of the student conductor activity, and specifically the RDSCC, were obtained through several interviews over the duration of eight weeks. Several themes emerged from each interview. An analysis of themes revealed four over-arching themes:

### **Purposes and expectations of the student conductor activity.**

Throughout the RDSCC, students and band directors experienced changes in perceptions regarding the purposes and expectations of the student conductor activity. Band directors' statements indicated a growth in expectations, with several directors adding rehearsal techniques/skills as an expectation of their student. The students' responses indicated an expanded perception of the purposes and expectations of the student conductor, progressing from basic concepts such as "help[ing] the band stay on tempo" (Student 1, first interview) to "portray[ing] the composer's feelings in my conducting gestures."

**Perceived importance of curricular activities.** Students and band directors indicated their perceptions of the importance of the curricular activities presented in the RDSCC in various ways (e.g. reported time spent on each activity, comments regarding activities, etc.). Results indicated that some perceptions changed over the duration of the study. Additionally, each participant used a rating scale to rate the "helpfulness" of specific activities on the discussion/performance. Each item from the band director group was compared to that of the student group the using an independent *t*-test. There was a nearly statistically significant difference ( $t(5) = 1.82, p = 0.05$ ) in mean ratings between groups (band directors:  $M = 8.80$ , students:  $M = 5.80$ ) on only one item:

“transposition practice.” All other items revealed no statistically significant differences.

**Difficulties in participation in the student conductor activity.**

Students and band directors expressed various concerns with participation in the FBA student conductor activity. All five band directors voiced disappointment in the structure of the activity as administered by the FBA. However, time-management was the largest concern with participation in the student conductor activity from both band directors and students.

**Effect on students’ future participation in music.** All student conductors expressed increased interest in participating in music after high school. Students that initially indicated an interest in a career that involves music conducting (in the first interview) expressed higher levels of interest than those that were “unsure” or “not interested” in a career that involves music conducting. All five band directors felt their student’s participation in the RDSCC strongly prepared their student for further study in music.



## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to develop and determine the validity of a high school student conductor curriculum that clearly articulates and addresses specific educational outcomes. The researcher designed an eight-week web-based curriculum for high school student conductors. Seven experts in wind band conducting and five high school band directors were surveyed regarding validity of the Researcher Designed Student Conductor Curriculum (RDSCC). Research has shown that a robust curriculum validation includes input from multiple stakeholders (e.g. experts, teachers, students) (Brooker & Macdonald, 2010). Hence, further validation of the curriculum involved obtaining the perceptions of those taking part in the curriculum (i.e. teachers and students). The student conductor activity is typically extra-curricular and voluntary on the part of the band director and student, thereby adding extra credence to the band directors' and students' perceptions of the activity, and any curriculum designed for the activity. Five high school band directors and their student conductors participated in a trial run of the curriculum. Teachers' and students' perceptions of the curriculum were documented through three time-lapse interviews.

This chapter contains a summary of the data collection process followed by a discussion of the research questions. Finally, relevant issues, implications for music education, and potential future research are discussed.

### **Data Collection**

Seven experts in wind band conducting and five high school band directors evaluated the validity of the RDSCC using an electronic survey. The survey was comprised of three content areas: 1) instructional content, 2)

assessment, and 3) additional comments. The survey included Likert scale items in which the participant was asked to indicate the level to which they agree with a given statement on the curriculum (e.g. 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Each item included an area for participants to add additional comments. This data collection method was beneficial in gathering numerical data as well as accompanying commentary in a quick and efficient manner. The qualitative analysis of comments made in the validation process was highly beneficial in presenting a more detailed evaluation of the RDSCC.

Each participating band director and his/her student conductor were contacted on three occasions: prior to beginning the RDSCC, approximately halfway through the RDSCC, and at the conclusion of the RDSCC. Interview questions were designed to glean band directors' and student conductors' perceptions of the student conductor activity in general, as well as their perceptions regarding the RDSCC (Appendix J). The interview timeline had a possible impact on the results of the study. The study was conducted in the fall, concurrent with high school marching band activities. The student conductor activity, as administered by FBA, takes place in the spring, thereby relieving some of the time constraints associated with marching band. In this study, band directors' and students' perceptions regarding time-management were possibly skewed as a result of extra time commitments from marching band activities.

### **Discussion of Research Questions**

The findings of this study provided the following answers to the four research questions:

1. To what extent does the Researcher Developed Student Conductor Curriculum (RDSCC) align with experts' opinions of appropriate high school student conductor preparation?

As previously stated, the FBA has not used a formalized curriculum for the mentorship of the student conductor. A primary focus of this study was to develop such a curriculum that will strengthen and sustain this activity for the high school students of Florida, as well as in other states. Therefore, it was critical to gain validation from wind band conducting experts in order to present the RDSCC as a worthwhile curriculum. Based on results of the survey, it is evident that the seven identified wind band conducting experts found the curriculum to be valid and in alignment with appropriate high school student conductor preparation. In total, the survey statements produced 95.51% of responses in the “strongly agree” or “agree” categories. Additionally, the experts found the RDSCC to have strong validity for teaching student conductors beyond the FBA student conductor activity. Expert 5, currently the Executive Administrator for the National Band Association, expressed interest in including the RDSCC as a resource for all teachers belonging to the national organization. Based on this feedback, the RDSCC could be used not only for training student conductors, but also for current band directors wishing to improve their own conducting skills. Only one survey statement received a response of “disagree.” Expert 2 expressed that the assessment methods for the curriculum should be presented earlier in the curriculum and a rubric for evaluation should be provided. These suggestions could be implemented in a revision of the RDSCC, resulting in a stronger curriculum.

Further examination of the overall expert data revealed an interesting, albeit slight, discrepancy in responses. The majority (70.33%) of total expert survey responses were in the “strongly agree” category. However, when asked if the student conductor activity can be a productive and worthwhile activity, more experts (57.14%) marked “agreed” than strongly agreed (42.86%). It appears as though while the experts strongly validated the RDSCC as a means of preparing a student conductor, they were slightly less confident in the overall need for the student conductor activity. As only 28.57% of the experts reside in a state that promotes a student conductor activity, this could be due to a relative lack of familiarity with the activity. Perhaps with the successful implementation of the RDSCC, more wind band conducting experts would feel strongly that a student conductor activity could be a productive and worthwhile activity. As Expert 1 stated: “With this program as a resource, I believe it can.” The strong levels of validation from the wind band conducting experts presents compelling evidence that the RDSCC will provide an enriching experience for high school student as well as their conducting mentors.

2. To what extent does the RDSCC align with high school band directors’ opinions of appropriate high school student conductor preparation?

As previously stated, participation in the FBA student conductor activity is voluntary, thereby making the participants’ opinions of the activity highly pertinent. Therefore, prior to implementation of the student conductor curriculum, the researcher thought it vital to gather the opinions of current high school band directors on the appropriateness of the RDSCC. In total, the five participating band directors have mentored over forty students in the FBA student conductor activity. According to their survey responses, the band directors identified the

RDSCC as a valid curriculum for the high school student conductor, and in alignment with their opinions of appropriate high school student conductor preparation. All aspects of the curriculum (instructional content, sequencing, and assessment methods) were deemed appropriate for high school student conductor preparation. In total, the survey statements produced 98.33% of responses in the “strongly agree” or “agree” categories. These levels of agreement produce a strong statement from current band directors that the RDSCC is highly appropriate and fitting with their expectations of a student conductor activity.

The researcher compared survey results from the expert group to that of the band director group. None of the twelve validation statements yielded a statistically significant difference between groups. This data indicates a strong congruence amongst the curriculum validators regarding these specific aspects of the RDSCC. Furthermore, this data, along with the open-ended comments, provides confirmation that the RDSCC is firmly in alignment with conducting education experts’ and band directors’ expectations of a student conductor curriculum.

3. What are the students’ perceptions regarding the learning activities and outcomes in the RDSCC?

Over the eight-week curriculum, the students shared their experiences, successes, and difficulties as participants in the RDSCC. Overall, the students expressed satisfaction with the curriculum and appreciation for their involvement. Their interviews helped to provide a more thorough evaluation of the learning activities, outcomes, and online format of the RDSCC. As the study results indicated, the student voice provided the emergence of themes, changes in

perception over time, as well as differences between student perceptions and band director perceptions.

Initially, the students spent the largest amount of time on the activities of “transposition practice” and “journal reflections,” and less time on the activities of “conducting gesture practice” and “score study.” During the latter half of the curriculum, the students indicated a stark change, spending the largest amount of time on “conducting gesture practice” and “score study” and the least amount of time on “transposition practice” and “journal reflections.” It is possible that once students felt comfortable with transposition techniques, they felt less inclined to practice them. It is also likely that, as students approached the discussion/performance, they felt more pressure to spend time on the activities that would be more easily assessed. One participant (Student 5) spent significantly less time on the outside-of-class activities than the other participants. Additionally, she did not complete the discussion/performance assessment as outlined in the RDSCC. This is possible evidence of her perception of the importance of the activities and their relevance to her goals as a participant in the RDSCC.

Additional students’ perceptions were made evident by their ratings of “helpfulness” regarding various activities in preparing them for the discussion/performance. A comparison between the student group’s ratings and the band director group’s ratings illustrated some differences between their perceptions. When describing the differences between the groups’ perceptions, it is important to outline the difference between statistical significance and practical significance. On statistical significance, Gall, Gall, and Borg (2010)

stated: “in educational research, a  $p$  value of .05 generally is considered sufficient” (p. 197). However, as Gall et al. described, practical significance is not determined by the  $p$  value. Rather, practical significance is “a statistical result that has meaningful consequences for individuals to whom the result applies” (p. 559). Given these parameters, the only item to show a nearly statistically significant difference ( $p = 0.05$ ) was “transposition practice.” However, the practical significance of this data is evident in the difference in mean scores. It is, indeed, noteworthy that the students ( $M = 5.80$ ) viewed “transposition practice” as far less helpful than the band directors ( $M = 8.80$ ). This could be attributed to the band directors’ deeper understanding of the usefulness of transposition skills. To address this discrepancy, perhaps the RDSCC should include more information on the importance and usefulness of transposition. Additionally, there was notable, although not statistically significant ( $p = 0.08$ ), discrepancy between the band directors’ ( $M = 9.40$ ) and the students’ ( $M = 7.80$ ) on “conducting checkpoints.” The groups’ mean scores indicated that band directors found more value in the formative evaluations than the students. The practical significance of this data is illustrated by the development of the following question: What methods of formative evaluation would the students find most helpful? Overall, students rated the activities involving gesture (“conducting sessions with the band” ( $M = 9.40$ ), “reviewing video(s) of your own conducting” ( $M = 9.00$ ), and “instructional videos” ( $M = 8.80$ )) as the most helpful. This is not surprising, in that students likely feel more pressure to be well prepared for the conducting responsibilities than they do the score preparation aspects. Also, the student conductors’ peers witnessed their conducting gestures each time they

conducted the ensemble. That likely added elements of peer-pressure and expectation that drove the student conductors to value gestural practice more than score-study.

All five students agreed that the online platform was a key component to successful participation in the RDSCC. Typically, an individual chosen by the band director to be a student conductor is an outstanding student in the band program. Not surprisingly, he/she is usually a high achiever in several other areas (advanced academic course-loads, extra-curricular activities, etc.) The participants in the study indicated that the constant availability of the RDSCC, via the online platform, was a necessity in fitting the curriculum into their personal schedules.

Each student commented that his/her interest in music study beyond high school was increased as a result of participation in the RDSCC. Two students expressed an increased interest in majoring in music education as a result of participation in the RDSCC. These comments, along with similar affirmations made by the wind band conducting experts and band directors indicate that the RDSCC has merit as a preparatory course for music education majors.

The topic of peer leadership emerged over the course of the RDSCC. Initially, only Students 2 and 4 specifically identified peer leadership as a relevant topic for the student conductor. By the third interview, four of the students had referenced peer leadership when describing the student conductor activity. Students' perceptions of leadership in the RDSCC varied. Some students felt that leadership qualities were necessary for success as a student conductor activity. Others, following the conclusion of the RDSCC, expressed that a



fundamental purpose of the activity was to teach them leadership skills. Only Student 5 refrained from mentioning leadership in any form. At the conclusion of the study, students shared their perspectives on specific leadership qualities that were enhanced from participation in the RDSCC. Students expressed improved confidence levels, public speaking ability, and increased involvement in organizational meetings (i.e., band leadership). This supports the notion that a student conductor activity has benefits in addition to musical advancement.

As referenced in the related literature, it is valuable to capture the authentic student perspective in a curriculum (Brooker & Macdonald, 2010). Over the course of the eight weeks, the students were given several opportunities to share their opinions and perceptions of the RDSCC. As the students' knowledge of the student conductor activity grew, their perceptions regarding the activity changed and expanded to include broader musical topics as well as extra-musical topics. The overwhelming consensus was an expression of satisfaction with their participation. Their perceptions as participants contributed to a more robust analysis of the validity of the RDSCC.

4. What are the high school band directors' perceptions regarding the learning activities and outcomes in the RDSCC?

The band directors were asked to first validate the curriculum as an outside evaluator, then again as a participant. As participants, the band directors exhibited only two changes in perceptions regarding the validity of the RDSCC:

1) one band director expressed a desire for more materials specifically for the band director; 2) two band directors changed their perception regarding the discussion/performance.

The majority of band director responses regarding the format of the RDSCC indicated an appreciation for the self-guided structure. However, Band Director 1 expressed a desire for specific instructions and guidelines for the participating band director throughout the curriculum. While the RDSCC was designed specifically to require as little of the band directors' time as possible, perhaps some materials for the band directors would enhance the curriculum. Additional materials could include recommended methods for reviewing students' outside-of-class activities (i.e. transposition practice, conducting "checkpoints"), a recommended timeline for conducting sessions, and a rubric for evaluating the student's score essay.

Initially, the band directors "strongly agreed" ( $M = 4.86$ ) with the discussion/performance as an appropriate method of evaluating the students overall learning from the RDSCC. However, at the conclusion of the study, two of the band directors' comments indicated a slight change in perception. Band Directors 1 and 2 agreed that the discussion/performance was an effective method for assessing their student conductors' learning, but offered similar suggestions for changes to the summative assessment. Both band directors agreed that a question/answer format, administered by the student conductor adjudicator, would be a more effective assessment method.

The band directors expressed satisfaction with the learning activities in the RDSCC. Each director felt the outside-of-class activities positively affected the students' conducting sessions and overall learning as a student conductor. Additionally, mean scores for "helpfulness of educational activities in preparation for the discussion/performance" for the band director group were higher than the

student group in all categories. This is not surprising, given their increased understanding of how helpful the various activities are to the overall student conducting experience. Overall, the band director group rated the activities involving conducting gesture as more “helpful” than those involving score study. One possible explanation for this would be that the band directors viewed the conducting gesture portion of the curriculum as the most important, thereby attaching more importance to those activities designed for gestural improvement. An alternative explanation would be that the band directors were impressed by the innovativeness of the conducting instructional videos and the students’ unimpeded access to gestural instruction.

It is worth noting that initially, none of the band directors mentioned the learning of rehearsal techniques in their descriptions of a student conductor activity. However, over the course of the RDSCC, three of the band directors had incorporated rehearsal techniques into the curriculum. While rehearsal techniques are not covered in the RDSCC, the concepts introduced in the RDSCC do help to establish the necessary foundation for such advanced concepts. Student conductors, having learned score study techniques and transpositions, will likely be better prepared for rehearsal technique instruction.

The band directors indicated that the online platform of the RDSCC greatly assisted in the time-management of the student conductor activity. Band Director 5 referenced the RDSCC as a “roadmap” providing a “course heading,” thereby relieving him of the time it would take to develop a plan of instruction. Band Director 3 said the RDSCC “[gave Student 3] the fundamentals before [he]

even got up to the podium to work the piece,” thus creating a better prepared and more focused conducting experience.

The most consistent reason for the band directors’ participation in the student conductor activity was to provide conducting opportunities to potential music education majors. All five band directors expressed that participation in the RDSCC increased their students’ interest in future music study. Furthermore, several band directors suggested that, as a result of the RDSCC, their students would be far ahead of other freshmen music majors. Band directors reported additional benefits to their students, such as: enhanced musical expression, development of leadership skills, development of public speaking skills, and strengthened teacher/student relationships.

Based on the participants’ feedback, the researcher will make the following changes to the RDSCC.

1. Clearly defined/described assessment method(s) with accompanying evaluation rubric(s).
2. Detailed information linking the importance of score study activities to the success of one’s conducting gesture abilities.
3. Teacher resource page consisting of detailed roles/responsibilities/guidelines for the band director.

The suggestion of an alternative summative assessment consisting of a question/answer format between the adjudicator and the student conductor will not be implemented. The researcher believes that to successfully prepare the student for a question/answer format, the student would need to be provided with a list of potential questions. Prescribing exact areas of score study for the students to address would very likely limit the depth and quality of research the

students conduct. The current method of a prepared essay gives the student conductor a more realistically broad score study experience.

### **Issues**

This study highlighted some issues and concerns common amongst high school band directors. The most prominent concern in participation in the student conductor activity is the perceived lack of available time. As Band Director 1 stated, he has the most difficulty “finding time for it without putting other things at risk.” This strong language is evidence of the stress experienced by band directors. Perhaps the weight placed on the Concert MPA’s by fellow band directors, administrators, and parents, improperly balances the band program’s goals and objectives.

While the five band director participants in this study believe in the importance of the student conductor activity, not all high school band directors agree. It is possible that those who choose not to mentor a student conductor do so because of a perceived lack of benefit to the program as a whole.

Another commonly expressed issue regarding the student conductor activity was the lack of structure and information provided to the participants. Florida band directors commonly see the FBA’s lack of provided information as an implied statement on the low importance of the activity. This concern was a primary impetus behind the present research study. The creation and validation of the RDSCC was meant to provide a formalized and sequential method by which to learn clearly defined gestural techniques and score study methods for the student conductor activity. The assessment activity, as currently administered by FBA, is another source of confusion for participants. As

previously mentioned, the current FBA student conductor assessment tool addresses content areas that are only applicable if the student has been responsible for musically preparing the ensemble for performance – an unsafe assumption, as this is not presently a clearly articulated requirement for the participants.

Florida band directors have expressed various opinions on whether or not rehearsal skills/techniques should be included in a student conductor experience. Generally speaking, this should be the decision of each individual band director. He/she takes into account the level of musicianship and skill-set of the student conductor, and decides whether training in rehearsal techniques would be warranted/beneficial. In this study, three of the five band directors incorporated rehearsal techniques into the student conductor activity. The RDSCC was designed to allow for this type of customization. With respect to the student conductor activity as administered by the FBA, the researcher suggests removing any assessment criteria dealing with rehearsal of the ensemble. In doing so, the researcher further suggests implementing a revised student conductor assessment tool (Appendix K).

### **Implications for Music Education**

The current education climate places assessment of learning at the forefront. Therefore, for an activity such as the student conductor activity to be successful, the curriculum must have clearly identified objectives, learning activities designed to meet those objectives, and assessment methods designed to appropriately measure the students' learning. The RDSCC has been thoroughly validated in these aspects. Now, with the successful implementation

of the RDSCC, the student conductor activity has an opportunity to be significantly enhanced learning opportunity for Florida high school musicians.

The FBA website has documentation of a student conductor assessment dating back to 1939 (Florida Bandmasters Association). Over the past 75 years, this act of mentorship has likely influenced numerous high school band students to consider a career in music. The five student conductors in this study each indicated that their plans to participate in music after high school were strengthened by participation in RDSCC. Two of the student conductors specifically stated an increased interest in music education as a potential college major. With teacher education programs on the decline, the importance of programs that create interest in the field of music education cannot be understated (Freedberg).

Based on the results of this study, time-management is a primary deterrent for students and band directors from participation in the student conductor activity. Therefore, successful implementation of the RDSCC could significantly increase the number of participants. Band directors using the RDSCC would benefit from decreased workload with respect to mentoring their student conductor. Students would gain access to conducting instruction available to them at their convenience, making it easier to include student conducting into their personal and academic schedules.

The potential benefits derived from the student conductor activity stretch well beyond the musical growth of the student conductor. Band directors who elect to mentor a student conductor commit to relinquishing the podium to the student conductor for a certain amount of time. This can make many directors

uncomfortable, feeling as though they are losing valuable preparation time on the three concert band pieces to focus on one student. However, there are several benefits to stepping off the podium and allowing your ensemble to be led by another conductor.

The student conductor taking the podium presents a prime opportunity for the director to walk around and through the ensemble monitoring posture, technique, and behavior. The adventurous director might even pick up his/her primary or secondary instrument and perform with the ensemble. Much can be learned about your students' musicianship by sitting in the ensemble.

Each member of the ensemble can learn a great deal from witnessing the student conductor training. While the student conductor gains valuable gestural instruction, the ensemble too learns about the specifics of conducting gestures relative to desired musical responses. This heightens their conductor-awareness and sensitivity to gestures, including those of the director. Directors should frequently solicit musicians' feedback on the student conductor's effectiveness. There are no opinions more valid than those of the musicians from whom the conductor is attempting to elicit responses. The student conductor training can and should be a collaborative learning experience for all musicians in the ensemble.

The RDSCC could very easily be adapted for use outside of the FBA. The curriculum would be appropriate and beneficial to any high school band program across the United States. The discussion/performance could be administered by a local university ensemble conductor or similar. Additionally, an expanded version of the RDSCC could be offered in Advanced Placement or



International Baccalaureate programs course offering college credit to advanced high school musicians. Also, the RDSCC could be adapted for use as supplementary material for introductory conducting courses at the university level. College students could benefit from the practice materials as well as the video modeling of gestural techniques.

### **Future Research**

The purpose of this study was to determine the validity and relevance of the RDSCC through perceptions of experts as well as curriculum participants.

Future research in this area could include the following:

1. A study comparing learning gains from students participating in the RDSCC with students mentored through traditional means.
2. A longitudinal study on the correlation between RDSCC participation and completion of a music education degree.
3. A study investigating the correlation between participation in the RDSCC and quality of the band program as measured by music performance assessments.
4. Development of comparable curricula designed for high school orchestra students and choral students.

### **Conclusions**

The student conductor activity provides a remarkable experience for high school musicians. Students gain valuable insights into the activities of a music conductor, potentially increasing their desire to pursue a career in music education. Unfortunately, most band directors do not participate, citing various reasons. The RDSCC was designed to address these concerns.

Based on the results of this study, the RDSCC has been found to be a valid curriculum for high school student conductors. Wind band conducting experts and high school band directors found the instructional content,

sequencing of learning activities, and assessment methods to be appropriate for high school musicians. Additionally, as cited in the related literature, to truly understand how a curriculum functions, it is important to gain the perspectives of those closest to the instruction: teachers and students (Brooker & Macdonald, 2010). The present study suggests that participants in the RDSCC experienced an educationally sound and user-friendly curriculum that resulted in enhanced learning. Thus, the perspectives of the participants further bolstered the curriculum validity previously established by the wind band conducting experts.

It is incumbent on music educators to seek out and promote activities that strengthen interest in our field. The mentoring of student conductors is one such activity, and it deserves every effort to ensure that it not only survives, but thrives in the coming generations.

APPENDIX A  
CURRICULAR MAP OF RDSCC

	<b>Score Study</b>	<b>Gestural Training</b>	<b>Learning Activities</b>
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain a copy of the student conductor piece.</li> <li>Identify basics of a musical score (composer, title, instrument list, key signatures, time signatures, tempi, etc).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>posture, stance, conducting area, the beating plane,</li> <li>define ictus, conducting in 1</li> <li>starting, sustaining, stopping sound</li> <li>the left hand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conducting exercises 1-3</li> <li>conducting "Checkpoint" 1 (Appendix B)</li> <li>journal reflection</li> </ul>
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write a 250 word essay on the composer (musical background, training, influences).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conducting in 2/4, 3/4, 4/4</li> <li>conducting "hook" and "arc" patterns</li> <li>conducting legato style and staccato style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share 250-word essay with band director.</li> <li>conducting "Checkpoint" 2</li> <li>journal reflection</li> </ul>
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify instruments in treble and bass clefs.</li> <li>Identify transposing instruments.</li> <li>Identify form, styles, key areas, recurring rhythms, melodies.</li> <li>Translate all foreign language musical terms.</li> <li>"marking" the score</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conducting various dynamic levels, crescendo/decrescendo, accented notes</li> <li>left-hand independence: cuing and dynamics</li> <li>conducting fermata</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conducting "Checkpoint" 3</li> <li>Conduct your band through a portion of the daily warm-up or chorale.</li> <li>journal reflection</li> </ul>
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss and practice Bb transpositions. (Appendix C)</li> <li>Write a 250 word essay discussing form, instrumentation, styles, key areas, recurring rhythms, melodies, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue practicing conducting gestures.</li> <li>eye contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct the Student Conductor Piece (2 sessions).</li> <li>Record, watch, and critique conducting videos.</li> <li>journal reflection</li> </ul>
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Bb transpositions.</li> <li>Discuss and practice Eb transpositions.</li> <li>Identify areas (in score) in need of better communication.</li> <li>Play/sing through melodic lines at the piano.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Week 4 videos.</li> <li>Practice areas in need of work.</li> <li>Compose (and practice) new conducting exercises.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct the Student Conductor Piece (2 sessions).</li> <li>Record, watch, and critique conducting videos.</li> <li>journal reflection</li> </ul>
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Eb transpositions.</li> <li>Discuss and practice F transpositions.</li> <li>Revise the 250-300 word score summary as needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Week 5 videos.</li> <li>Practice areas in need of work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct the Student Conductor Piece (2 -3 sessions).</li> <li>Record, watch, and critique conducting videos.</li> <li>journal reflection</li> </ul>
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review F transpositions.</li> <li>Revise the score summary as needed.</li> <li>Practice presentation of score summary. (Appendix D)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Week 6 videos.</li> <li>Practice areas in need of work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct the Student Conductor Piece (2 -3 sessions).</li> <li>Record, watch, and critique conducting videos.</li> <li>journal reflection</li> </ul>
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make final revisions of your score summary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Week 7 videos.</li> <li>Practice areas in need of work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver your discussion/performance</li> <li>journal reflection</li> </ul>

APPENDIX B  
EXAMPLE WEEKLY CONDUCTING CHECKPOINT

**Conducting Checkpoint 1**

\*\*Conduct each line in "1"

1.  $\text{♩} = 60$   
*f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*  
2.  $\text{♩} = 90$   
*p* *f* *f* *p*  
3.  $\text{♩} = 120$   
*f* *p* *f* *p* *f*  
4.  $\text{♩} = 90$   
*p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

APPENDIX C  
EXAMPLE WEEKLY TRANSPOSITION PRACTICE

**Bb Transposition Practice**

Under each note- write in what note will SOUND  
\*First note of each is done for you.

1. Eb

2. Bb

3. C

4. C

## APPENDIX D

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRESENTATION OF SCORE SUMMARY

#### Presentation of Score Summary:

As a final activity in this curriculum, you'll be given the opportunity to give a brief verbal presentation on your summary of the Student Conductor Piece. This presentation should be no more than 2-3 minutes in length. During this presentation, you might consider having the band (or a section, or player) perform a brief musical example to highlight a portion of your presentation. To prepare you for this activity, follow these steps:

1. Look over your 250-300 word summary once again. Make any final adjustments necessary.
2. Read your summary aloud. Use a strong speaking voice.
3. Be sure to practice making eye-contact with the imaginary audience. Don't have your head aimed at your essay.
4. If you can choose to memorize the summary - great. If not, consider making note-cards to keep you on track and the presentation moving. It's not necessary that you recite your essay word-for-word. The objective is to present your material in an organized and fluid manner.
5. Practice presentation for friends and family.

APPENDIX E  
WIND BAND CONDUCTING EXPERT SURVEY

1. The purposes and goals of the curriculum are clear and easily understood.
2. The instructional content related to conducting gesture is accurate.
3. The instructional content related to score study/preparation is accurate.
4. The content is clearly presented and easily understandable.
5. The content of this curriculum adequately covers the necessary content areas for high school students' introduction to band conducting.
6. The sequencing of instructional material is logical.
7. The sequencing of learning activities (assignments, etc.) is logical.
8. The content included in this curriculum is developmentally appropriate for high school students' introduction to band conducting.
9. The assessment methods for this curriculum (verbal presentation and conducting performance) are clearly described.
10. The verbal presentation is an adequate method by which to assess the student's score study.
11. The conducting performance is an adequate method by which to assess the student's conducting gesture.
12. The combined assessment (verbal presentation and conducting performance) provides an accurate overall measure of the student's learning from this curriculum.
13. A high school student conductor activity can be a productive and worthwhile activity.
14. The state in which I reside offers a high school student conductor assessment.
15. Please add any additional commentary regarding this high school student conductor curriculum.

APPENDIX F  
HIGH SCHOOL BAND DIRECTOR SURVEY

1. The purposes and goals of the curriculum are clear and easily understood.
2. The instructional content related to conducting gesture is accurate.
3. The instructional content related to score study/preparation is accurate.
4. The content is clearly presented and easily understandable.
5. The content of this curriculum adequately covers the necessary content areas for high school students' introduction to band conducting.
6. The sequencing of instructional material is logical.
7. The sequencing of learning activities (assignments, etc.) is logical.
8. The content included in this curriculum is developmentally appropriate for high school students' introduction to band conducting.
9. The assessment methods for this curriculum (verbal presentation and conducting performance) are clearly described.
10. The verbal presentation is an adequate method by which to assess the student's score study.
11. The conducting performance is an adequate method by which to assess the student's conducting gesture.
12. The combined assessment (verbal presentation and conducting performance) provides an accurate overall measure of the student's learning from this curriculum.
13. I have previously mentored a high school student in the Florida Bandmasters Association Student Conductor Activity.
14. Please add any additional commentary regarding this high school student conductor activity.



APPENDIX G  
WIND BAND CONDUCTING EXPERT CONSENT

**Informed Consent**

**Protocol Title:** An Evaluation of an 8-week High School student conductor training program

**Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.**

**Purpose of the research study:**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the validity and participants' perceptions of a high school student conductor training program.

**What you will be asked to do in the study:**

You will be asked to review a webpage designed to provide instructional content for high school student conductors. You will be asked to complete a survey designed to solicit your feedback on instructional validity.

**Time required:**

1 hour

**Risks and Benefits:**

There are no risks to you for participating in this study.

We do not anticipate that you will benefit directly by participating in this experiment.

**Compensation:**

You will not be compensated for your participation.

**Confidentiality:**

Should you indicate a desire to do so, your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this number will be kept in a locked file in my office. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report.

**Voluntary participation:**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

**Right to withdraw from the study:**

You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

**Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:**

Archie Birkner, Assistant Director of Bands, University of Florida, 110 SBH, Newell Dr., Gainesville, FL 32611, phone 352-373-3170.

**Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:**

IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; phone 392-0433.

**Agreement:**

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX H  
HIGH SCHOOL BAND DIRECTOR CONSENT

**Informed Consent**

**Protocol Title:** An Evaluation of an 8-week High School student conductor training program

**Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.**

**Purpose of the research study:**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the validity and participants' perceptions of a high school student conductor training program.

**What you will be asked to do in the study:**

You will be asked to review a webpage designed to provide instructional content for high school student conductors. You will be asked to complete a survey designed to solicit your feedback on instructional validity.

Additionally, you will be asked to assist in the implementation of the 8-week student conductor curriculum. The curriculum is designed to be, in large part, self-guided. That is, the student will receive instruction/assignments/etc from the website. However, additional instruction, mentoring, and assignment checks will be at your discretion. Obviously, a fundamental aspect of this activity is the provided opportunities to practice conducting the ensemble. Success of the curriculum is contingent upon your willingness to afford the student said opportunities.

**Time required:**

8-weeks

**Risks and Benefits:**

There are no risks to you for participating in this study.

A potential benefit from this study could be your adoption of this organized/sequential student conductor curriculum.

**Compensation:**

You will not be compensated for your participation.

**Confidentiality:**

Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this number will be kept in a locked file in my office. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report.

**Voluntary participation:**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

**Right to withdraw from the study:**

You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

**Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:**

Archie Birkner, Assistant Director of Bands, University of Florida, 110 SBH, Newell Dr., Gainesville, FL 32611, phone 352-373-3170.

**Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:**

IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; phone 392-0433.

**Agreement:**

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX I  
PARENTAL CONSENT

**University of Florida  
School of Music  
110 SBH, Newell Dr.  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, FL 32611**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am an Assistant Instructor in the School of Music at the University of Florida, conducting research on high school student conductor training under the supervision of Dr. David Waybright. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the validity and participants' perceptions of an 8-week high school student conductor curriculum. With your permission, I would like to ask your child to volunteer for this research.

I have designed a website containing the 8-week curriculum. The curriculum is designed to provide instruction for students in preparation for the Florida Bandmasters Association's Student Conductor Assessment. Students will be expected to (outside of their regularly scheduled school-day) view brief instructional videos, read instructional content, complete occasional assignments, and practice conducting gestures. The website can be viewed at [www.fbastudentconductor.blogspot.com](http://www.fbastudentconductor.blogspot.com). Participating students will progress through the 8-week curriculum under the supervision of their high school band director. I will interview your child immediately prior to beginning the 8-week program, approximately halfway through the curriculum, and at the conclusion of the curriculum. The interview questions will include learning expectations, comfort level with curricular material, perceived successes/difficulties with curricular material, etc. Interviews will be audio recorded for transcription/analysis. At the end of the study, the audio recordings will be erased. Although the children will be asked to identify themselves at the beginning of each interview for matching purposes, their identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. I will replace their names with fictitious names. Results will only include fictitious names. Participation or non-participation in this study will not affect the children's grades or placement in any programs.

You and your child have the right to withdraw consent for your child's participation at any time without consequence. There are no known risks or immediate benefits to the participants. No compensation is offered for participation. If you have any questions about this research protocol, please contact me at 352-273-3170 or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Waybright, at 352-273-3146. Questions or concerns about your child's rights as research participant may be directed to the IRB02 office, University of Florida, Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611, (352) 392-0433.

Archie Birkner

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I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily give my consent for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in Archie Birkner's study of the student conductor training.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian Date

APPENDIX J  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

**Student Conductor Perceptions (1<sup>ST</sup> Interview)**

PERCEPTIONS OF OVERALL ACTIVITY

1. What do you feel is the role of the student conductor?
2. What skills and knowledge are important for a student conductor?
3. What areas of student conducting are you the most excited about/interested in?
4. What areas of student conducting are you the least excited about/interested in?

PERCEPTIONS OF RDSCC

5. What skills/knowledge do you have that you feel will help you with the student conductor activity?
6. What do you hope to learn from the RDSCC?
7. In what areas of student conductor training do you feel you'll need the most work?

OTHER PERCEPTIONS

8. Are you interested in a career that involves music conducting?

## **Band Director Perceptions (1<sup>ST</sup> Interview)**

### PERCEPTIONS OF OVERALL ACTIVITY

1. What do you feel is the purpose of a student conductor activity?
2. What criteria do you use in selecting your participant for the student conductor activity?
3. What are your expectations of the student conductor?
4. What skills and knowledge are important for a student conductor to develop?
5. What are your concerns about your participation in the student conductor activity?

### PERCEPTION OF STUDENT CONDUCTING ACTIVITY AS CURRENTLY ADMINISTERED BY FBA

6. What is your opinion on the information provided by FBA regarding:
  - a. purposes
  - b. learning activities
  - c. sequencing of learning activities
  - d. evaluation of learning



## Student Conductor Perceptions (2<sup>ND</sup> Interview)

### PERCEPTIONS RELATED TO THE OVERALL ACTIVITY

1. What do you feel is the *overall* role of the student conductor?
2. What skills and knowledge are important for a student conductor to develop?
3. What areas of student conducting are you the most excited about/interested in?  
Why?
  - a. How would you describe your level of ability in that area?
4. What areas of student conducting are you the least excited about/interested in?  
Why?
  - a. How would you describe your level of ability in that area?

### PERCEPTIONS RELATED TO RDSCC

5. What prior skills/knowledge do you have that you feel are helping you with the RDSCC?
6. Approximately how much time per week do you spend on the following outside-of-class activities?:
  - a. conducting gesture practice
  - b. score-study
  - c. transposition practice
  - e. journal reflection
7. To what extent have you involved your band director in the outside-of-class activities (checking work, asking questions, 1 on 1 conducting help, etc)?
8. Approximately how many times (and for how long each time) have you conducted your band during the first four weeks of the RDSCC?
  - a. Do you feel this was adequate? Less than adequate? More than adequate?
9. To what extent do you feel the outside of class activities have affected your conducting sessions?  
How?
10. To what extent is it difficult to include participation in the RDSCC into your personal schedule (school-work, other extra-curricular activities, etc.) Please describe.

### OTHER PERCEPTIONS

11. Are you interested in a career that involves music conducting?

## **Band Director Perceptions (2<sup>ND</sup> Interview)**

### PERCEPTIONS RELATED TO THE OVERALL ACTIVITY

1. What do you feel is the overall purpose of a student conductor activity?
2. Have your expectations of the student conductor changed?
3. What specific skills and knowledge are important for a student conductor to develop?
4. What are your concerns about your (and your program's) participation in the student conductor activity?

### PERCEPTIONS RELATED TO RDSCC

5. Approximately how many times (and for how long each time) has your student conducted the band during the first four weeks of the RDSCC?
  - a. Do you feel this was adequate? Less than adequate? More than adequate?
6. To what extent has your student involved you in the outside-of-class activities (checking work, asking questions, 1 on 1 conducting help, etc)?
7. To what extent do you feel the outside-of-class activities have affected your student's conducting sessions?
8. What difficulties, if any, have you experienced in implementation in/participation in the RDSCC?
9. What other suggestions/improvements do you have regarding the first four weeks of the RDSCC?

## Student Conductor Perceptions (3<sup>RD</sup> Interview)

### PERCEPTIONS RELATED TO OVERALL ACTIVITY

1. What do you feel is the overall role of the student conductor?
2. What skills and knowledge are important for a student conductor?
3. What areas of student conducting are you the most excited about/interested in? Why?
  - a. How would you describe your level of ability in that area?
4. What areas of student conducting are you the least excited about/interested in? Why?
  - a. How would you describe your level of ability in that area?

### PERCEPTIONS RELATED TO RDSCC

5. What prior skills/knowledge do you have that you feel helped you with the RDSCC?
6. Approximately how much time per week did you spend on the following outside-of-class activities?:
  - a. conducting gesture practice (not in-class)
  - b. score-study
  - c. transposition practice
  - e. journal reflection
  - d. development (writing-revising) of score summary
7. To what extent did you involve your band director in the outside-of-class activities (checking work, asking questions, 1 on 1 conducting help, etc.)?
8. Approximately how many times (and for how long each time) did you conduct your band during weeks 5-8 of the RDSCC?
  - a. Do you feel this was sufficient?
9. To what extent do you feel the outside-of-class activities affected your conducting sessions? How?
10. To what extent was it difficult to include participation in the RDSCC into your personal schedule (school-work, other extra-curricular activities, etc.)?
11. To what extent did you feel the RDSCC helped prepare you for the final discussion/performance?
12. Do you feel the discussion/performance is an appropriate way to assess your learning as a student conductor? Please discuss.
13. On a scale of 1-10, please rate the helpfulness of the following aspects of the RDSCC (1 being not helpful at all; 10 being very helpful) on preparing you for the discussion/performance:
  - a. instructional videos
  - b. conducting "checkpoints
  - c. transposition practice
  - d. conducting sessions with the band
  - e. reviewing video(s) of your own conducting
  - f. writing the score essay

g. journal reflections

14. Overall, to what extent did you feel the RDSCC helped prepare you for the final discussion/performance?
15. What other thoughts/comments do you have regarding the RDSCC?
16. To what extent has your participation in the RDSCC affected your interest in participating in band after high school?
17. To what extent has participation in the RDSCC affected your interest in a career that involves music conducting?

## Band Director Perceptions (3<sup>RD</sup> Interview)

### PERCEPTIONS RELATED TO OVERALL ACTIVITY

1. What do you feel is the overall purpose of a student conductor activity?
2. What are your expectations of the student conductor?
3. What specific skills and knowledge are important for a student conductor to develop?
4. What are your concerns about your (and your program's) participation in the student conductor activity?

### PERCEPTIONS RELATED TO RDSCC

5. Approximately how many times (and for how long each time) did your student conduct the band during weeks 5-8 of the RDSCC?
  - a. Do you feel this was sufficient?
6. To what extent did your student involve you in the outside-of-class activities (checking work, asking questions, 1 on 1 conducting help, etc.)?
7. To what extent do you feel the outside-of-class activities affected your students conducting sessions?
8. To what extent did the online nature of the RDSCC affect your student's learning?
9. What difficulties, if any, have you experienced in implementation in/participation in the RDSCC?
10. What other suggestions/improvement do you have weeks 5-8 of the RDSCC?
11. Do you feel the discussion/performance is an appropriate way to assess your student's learning as a student conductor? Please discuss.
12. On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate the helpfulness of the following aspects of the RDSCC (1 being not helpful at all; 10 being very helpful) on preparing your student for the discussion/performance:
  - a. instructional videos
  - b. conducting "checkpoints"
  - c. transposition practice
  - d. conducting sessions with the band
  - e. reviewing video(s) of his/her own conducting
  - f. writing the score essay
  - g. journal reflections
13. Overall, to what extent do you feel the RDSCC helped prepare the student for the discussion/performance?

### CONCLUSIONS

14. How many students have you mentored through the FBA Student Conductor Activity?

15. How would you compare the experience of mentoring a student without the RDSCC and with the RDSCC?
16. To what extent do you feel the RDSCC has prepared your student for further study in music, perhaps at the college/university level?
17. What other thoughts/comments do you have regarding the RDSCC?

APPENDIX K  
REVISED STUDENT CONDUCTOR ASSESSMENT SHEET

**Florida Bandmasters Association**  
**Adjudicator's Comment Sheet**  
**STUDENT CONDUCTOR**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Selection  
Conducted: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Score-Study Narrative</b>	<b>Conducting Fundamentals</b>	<b>Gestural Accuracy</b>
<p><b>Historical perspectives</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> composer  <input type="checkbox"/> influences  <input type="checkbox"/> style</p> <p><b>Theoretical perspectives</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> form  <input type="checkbox"/> phrasal analysis  <input type="checkbox"/> chordal analysis</p> <p><b>Content delivery</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> speak with appropriate volume  <input type="checkbox"/> maintains appropriate pacing of narrative  <input type="checkbox"/> identifies important concepts  <input type="checkbox"/> clarity of ideas</p> <p>(circle one)  <b>A B C D E</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Baton grip is appropriate</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Posture erect, poised, relaxed, confident, commanding</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Maintains appropriate eye-contact with ensemble</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Correct patterns utilized</p> <p>(circle one)  <b>A B C D E</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Preparatory beats properly executed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Conducts appropriate dynamics</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Conducts appropriate articulations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate cues given</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Phrasing indicated through gesture</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates left hand independence</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Uses appropriate facial expression</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> General freedom from conducting errors</p> <p>(circle one)  <b>A B C D E</b></p>

*Officials will include a + or – by the subdivisions, which mean they are noticeably good or noticeably needing improvement as related to the letter grade assigned. The absence of any marks indicates a performance consistent with the letter assigned. After completing the previous, circle an A, B, C, D or E to indicate the level of performance in each category.*

**Recommended for:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Superior, Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor)

**Write out Final Rating**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Adjudicator's Signature**



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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Archie G. Birkner IV was born in Amarillo, Texas. He received his Bachelor of Music in Music Education and Performer's Certificate from the University of Florida in 2001. He continued his studies at the University of Florida, receiving his Master of Music in Percussion Performance in 2003. Mr. Birkner studied percussion with Dr. Kenneth Broadway and conducting with Dr. David Waybright. Upon graduation, Mr. Birkner began his public school teaching career in Houston, Texas. From 2003 to 2006, he held band director positions in La Porte Independent School District, Tomball Independent School District, and Conroe Independent School District.

In 2006, Mr. Birkner was appointed the Assistant Director of Bands at the University of Florida where his duties included directing the University Concert Bands and Gator Pep Bands. He was the Associate Director of the Pride of the Sunshine Marching Band, taught courses in music education, and observed student teachers. Since 2009, Mr. Birkner has also served as an Academic Advisor for the University of Florida's freshmen orientation, "Preview."

Professor Birkner remains active as a guest conductor and clinician throughout the southeastern United States. His professional affiliations include the National Association for Music Education, Collegiate Band Directors Association, Florida Music Educators Association, Florida Bandmasters Association, and Phi Mu Alpha Professional Music Fraternity. In addition, Professor Birkner holds honorary memberships in Kappa Kappa Psi and Tau Beta Sigma.