"The Rest is Lagniappe": The Female Secondary Band Director Experience in Louisiana

Margaret M. Webb
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

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“THE REST IS LAGNIAPPE”: THE FEMALE SECONDARY BAND DIRECTOR EXPERIENCE IN LOUISIANA

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music in

The School of Music

by
Margaret Mary Webb
B.A., Louisiana State University, 2017
May 2021
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I question if I should include this section at all because it is the most difficult to complete. To put into words what it means to be understood on a resonant level is next to impossible. The word “understood” is a brash understatement. I have to add: given purpose, accommodated, believed in, and loved. My illustrious thesis advisor, Dr. Jason Bowers walked with me through my undergrad as he pursued his doctorate and later as an instructor, dedicated countless hours to making me less of a mess (an arduous task). I give thanks to the following list of professors: Dr. Jim Byo, Dr. Melissa Brunkan, Dr. Ann Marie Stanley, Dr. Dennis Llinás, Dr. Kelvin Jones and Dr. Cliff Croomes, Dr. Dan Isbell, Dr. Sarah Bartolome. I could write another paper on Seth Orgel’s influence. Inspirations I encountered in when working: my mentor Patti Roussel leading me to Katie Codina, Abby South, Nicole Mylniczak, Sheily Bell, Jessica Fain, Carlye McGregor, Bardie Roberts, Joseph Nassar, Daniel Modenbach, Joe Casselberry. Some miscellaneous folk: Brian Falcon, Liza Armshaw, the numerous friends pre and post LSU who continue to support me. To my students: An apology for bearing the brunt of my first two years teaching, accompanied by well-wishes for wherever life takes you. To all the music teachers that led me to LSU including but not limited to the Fabulous Marching Cavaliers directed by John Boyd, my horn teacher Marlene Ford, Lou Tarabick, Megan Dornbrock, Peggy Tdeschi, and Wesley Stevenson. To my family for instilling my core beliefs and loving me unconditionally. I am sure I am forgetting names just like the next person trying to thank individual people. In short, countless memories (such as a historic national championship season), medical complications, passion for making music together, and endless generosity from peers and strangers made the past twenty-five years abundantly beautiful. I look forward to what the future may bring all of us.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements........................................................................................................... ii

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. v

Chapter 1. Introduction ......................................................................................................... 1

Chapter 2. Review of Literature .......................................................................................... 3
  2.1. Historical Influence ...................................................................................................... 4
  2.2. Teacher Development and Self-Image ......................................................................... 5
  2.3. Gender .......................................................................................................................... 7
  2.4. Louisiana Culture ......................................................................................................... 8

Chapter 3. Method ............................................................................................................... 10
  3.1. Participants .................................................................................................................. 10
  3.2. Research Bias and Investigator Expertise .................................................................. 11
  3.3. Interview Protocol ...................................................................................................... 12
  3.4. Data Analysis ............................................................................................................. 12
  3.5. Trustworthiness .......................................................................................................... 13

Chapter 4. Findings ............................................................................................................ 14
  4.1. Becoming a Band Director ......................................................................................... 14
  4.2. Work-Life Balance ..................................................................................................... 22
  4.3. Female ........................................................................................................................ 26
  4.4. Buy-In ........................................................................................................................ 29
  4.5. Process versus Product ............................................................................................ 33
  4.6. Collaboration .............................................................................................................. 36
  4.7. Motivation ................................................................................................................... 40
  4.8. Louisiana and 2020 .................................................................................................... 42
  4.9. Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 47

Chapter 5. Discussion ........................................................................................................ 48
  5.1. Challenges of Living and Teaching in Louisiana ......................................................... 49
  5.2. Combatting Instant Gratification ............................................................................... 53
  5.3. Feminism ..................................................................................................................... 56
  5.4. Cajun Catholicism ....................................................................................................... 61
  5.5. Suggestions for Future Research ............................................................................... 63
  5.6. Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 65

Appendix A. IRB Approval Form ....................................................................................... 67

Appendix B. Informed Consent Form ............................................................................... 69

Appendix C. Interview Protocol ....................................................................................... 71
Bibliography ..................................................................................................................... 72
Vita .................................................................................................................................... 76
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this case study is to examine the experience of female secondary band directors in southeastern Louisiana. Six female band directors in Louisiana were interviewed using video-conferencing. Of the six, four were middle school directors and two were high school directors. The semi-structured interviews took place in three phases: 1) musical influences and experiences from birth through college, 2) early teaching experience, and 3) current teaching experience. Data analysis included four phases of coding: open, axial, closed, and selective. Coding uncovered multiple themes in the findings. Themes were categorized as the following: (1) Becoming a Band Director, (2) Work-Life Balance, (3) Female, (4) Buy-In, (5) Process versus Product, (6) Collaboration, (7) Motivation, and (8) Louisiana and 2020. Family support and inspirational teachers played an enormous role on participants’ decisions to pursue band directing. Participants communicated the fickle dance of balancing professional and personal lives, They shared stories of challenges that come with being a female band director; however, they discussed multiple factors that made their experiences successful. Buy-in from students, parents, administration, and the community was deemed necessary. Participants prioritized student's overall band experience. Providing the best band experience for students was rooted in collaboration with peers, an unspoken Louisiana principle. Challenges of living and teaching in Louisiana paired with the unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic did not stop participants from conducting their passions. The end-all-be-all for participants was not the trophies and superior ratings from concert assessments, that was the lagniappe. Participants thoroughly described the significance of continuous learning through music.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Being from Virginia and then teaching as a female high school band director in Louisiana, it has always impressed me to witness not only the visibility of female band directors in this Bayou State, but also the strength with which their programs thrive.

Personally, females in my family inspired me to pursue the band director profession. My spirited and strong-willed grandmother was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Drum and Bugle Corps in Philadelphia in the 1930s. She marched snare drum and then led the corps as drum major, an uncommon role for females at that time. Marching timpani and later bells in parades down the boulevard, my mother was a percussionist in high school. My older sister was a percussionist in the front ensemble of her high school band, then went on to lead the band as drum major. In spite of my family’s percussion influence, I switched from percussion to horn in the sixth grade (purely because of the luxurious sound and swirly looks). I decided to become a band director in the fifth grade after the females in my family imprinted the grand effects of band on me. Pursuing French horn allowed me to dive into the discipline and artistry needed to develop my musicianship. I accredit my lesson teachers for showing me this path. We focused on the “why” and “how” of making music, not just the “what notes do I play?” This higher-level thinking bled into my teaching without me knowing it. That is how much it was engrained into me. My teacher’s approach and my family’s influence fueled my passion for music.

I only remember seeing one female band director throughout my K-12 school experience in Virginia. She was at the middle school instrumental teacher level. I’m sure there were more, I just was not exposed to the band director community until teaching in Louisiana. Upon graduating with my bachelor's degrees in music education and performance, I was offered an assistant high school band director at the school where I was student teaching. Even before
officially obtaining the position, female directors in the area were incredibly supportive of me and became my good friends. They walked with me through this profession. Based on my positive experience in the female band director community in Louisiana, I would like to offer prime examples of leadership, outstanding programs, and genuine humans I have encountered in Louisiana.
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Female band directors around the United States encounter a variety of interactions in the music education profession. Particularly in southeastern Louisiana, intrinsic helpfulness emerges in times of need such as Hurricane Katrina (Gotham, 2017; Jones 2004). Whether it is post-hurricane relief or just a normal Monday afternoon, Louisiana natives open their doors to anyone they meet (Giardina & Hess, 2007; McKnight, 2011). They’ll offer help with rebuilding a house, providing a good meal, volunteering a place to stay, or countless other examples of hospitality with no expectation of anything in return (Giardina & Hess, 2007; McKnight, 2011).

Louisianians had to learn how to survive after being exiled from British-occupied Canada in 1755 for not committing to the Protestant King of England (McKnight, 2011). After settling in Louisiana, Cajuns were still discriminated against for generations to come because of their Catholic faith, the same reason for being exiled from Canada. Not until the 1960s did the term “Cajun” begin to turn away from its use as an insult alluding to “ignorance, poverty, and backwardness” (p. 148). Making up a large part of Louisiana’s culture, Cajuns resemble a theme of perseverance through various circumstances including survival as well as their innate passion to share (Bovin, 2019; McKnight, 2011). Demonstrating female band director’s passion to share their love of music with students, Bovin (2019) calls for similar research to take place in other parts of the country. The rich culture of Louisiana I was exposed to during my college and teaching years present the female Louisiana band director experience to be examined. In this case study, six female band directors were interviewed to gain insight on their upbringing, training, influences, past teaching, and current teaching experiences. This investigation in Louisiana may not answer why female secondary band directors are underrepresented but will
provide insight towards the rich and important contributions women have made in instrumental music education.

2.1. Historical Influence

Band education arose in the United States due to military history, a male-dominated profession (Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Koza, 1993; Sheldon, 2012; Sullivan, 2017). An historical survey of World War II women military band leaders (Sullivan, 2017) found it was not common and even looked down upon for women to participate in bands, let alone lead them. The generation of women band directors in Sullivan’s (2017) study, “were certainly trailblazers” for future generations of women band musicians (p. 105). By observing articles in the Music Supervisors’ Journal from 1914-1924, Koza (1993) advocated for males to enter the music profession. Koza also identified the absence of advocacy for females having careers and being leaders in their fields. Rather, staying at home and raising children were nonchalantly referred to in the journal. The cultural and gender representation of musical leaders directly affects the future leaders of music (Bovin, 2019; Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Green, 2002; Koza, 1993; Sheldon & Hartley, 2012). Fischer-Croneis (2016) referenced “women comprised approximately one half of instrumental-track music education undergraduate student bodies” but only one-third of middle school band teaching positions (p. 180). The findings from these studies indicate little change for supporting female secondary band directors for 90+ years. Additionally, Fischer-Croneis (2016) found that “as school grade levels increase, the representation of female band teachers declines,” (p. 180) further supporting questions as to why females are not well-represented and how females can become more visible in the band director profession. Though progression has been made regarding gender norms, females as band directors are still
underrepresented (Bovin, 2019; Fischer-Croneis 2016; Green, 2002; Koza, 1993; Sheldon & Hartley, 2012).

2.2. Teacher Development and Self-Image

Self-identity for music teachers develops from teacher training and support, particularly in early years of teaching (Abril & Bannerman, 2014; Chua, 2019; Dabback, 2017; Gould, 2001; Isbell, 2020; Jacobs, 2007). Isbell (2020) discussed self-identity and music competency as important factors for music educators, while Dabback (2017) and Gould (2001) show the influence of role models on musicians’ career paths. According to Dabback (2017), the development of self-image as well as perceptions of teaching and learning stemmed from personal experiences and collaboration with others. The “others” included influential teachers, cooperating teachers, and colleagues. Jacobs (2007) stressed mentorship as the most beneficial factor for cultivating a supportive group for first-year band directors. When exploring the early years of the participants, he stated there was a lack of support from local directors, negatively affecting the young directors’ programs. Abril & Bannerman (2014) suggested school district expectations and collaboration among schools in the district could maximize music programs. Furthermore, influence from school district leaders can facilitate the distribution of local school collaboration, benefitting music programs in the area (Abril & Bannerman, 2014; Dabback, 2017). The presence of local role models aids the development of music teachers and their programs (Dabback, 2017; Gould, 2001; Jacobs, 2007). These studies conclude that not only individual mentor teachers are useful but benefitting from other schools in the local community is also significant (Dabback, 2017; Gould, 2001; Jacobs, 2007). A sense of community provides support for teachers and schools alike (Dabback, 2017; Gould, 2001; Jacobs, 2007).
In addition to support, a teacher’s self-image influences a teacher’s effectiveness (Biasutti & Concina, 2017; Chua, 2019; Gould, 2001). Chua (2019) concluded that development of music teachers should look beyond competency and focus on identities. It is one thing to have the knowledge and skills, but the confidence to demonstrate this competency lies in self-identity (Chua, 2019). In Italy, Biasutti and Concina (2017) found a direct connection between level of expertise and belief in music ability. In their study, self-efficacy data from instrumental and vocal music educators was collected using preexisting surveys. The surveys used included: (1) Meta-inventory for Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness to analyze self-efficacy, (2) parts of Implicit Theory of Intelligence Scale to analyze beliefs about musical ability, and (3) Scale for Interpersonal Behavior – Italian short form version. With this data, Biasutti and Concina were able to identify self-efficacy with the following factors: (1) personal and professional traits, such as social skills; (2) beliefs about musical ability, (3) teaching experience, and (4) gender. Results showed females were less likely to initiate assertiveness and more likely to display negative feelings. Interestingly, Bovin (2019) identified assertiveness as a common trait among successful female secondary band directors. One measure of success in secondary band programs is receiving a superior rating at a concert assessment. Shouldice & Eastridge (2020) demonstrated male dominance in superior ratings at Virginia band concert assessments in comparison with females, yet assertiveness once again was found as a common trait among the female directors. Based on these studies, female band directors are less likely to display assertiveness (Green 2002), but assertiveness is a common trait in female band directors (Bovin, 2019; Shouldice & Eastridge, 2020). These data hint at the complex and under-investigated experience of female band directors.
2.3. Gender

With the military history of band (Sullivan, 2017) alongside the assertive characteristic of band directing (Biasutti & Concina, 2017; Bovin, 2019; Shouldice & Eastridge 2020), gender norms seem to play a role in the instrumental music educator profession. Self-image varies between males and females due to gender norms perpetuated in the education system (Green, 2002; Koza, 1993). Green (2002) examined how and why women were successful in music education settings and yet a minority. By interviewing students and music teachers, Green found schools in England promoted societal norms for both genders. Survey responses from teachers displayed that boys were more resistant to the teacher and girls conformed to the teacher’s values in an effort to be successful (Green, 2002). Teachers also identified boys as “more successful” than girls, yet girls were more willing to participate in music activities (Green, 2002). Green also interviewed students aged 11-16 to gain implicit assumptions, values, and expectations. Male students stated singing was a girl's activity, characterized girls as shy or embarrassed, and associated slower music with girls ’interests. Green (2002) found boys preferred fast and upbeat music as opposed to girl's preference for slower music, suggesting boys ’fear of appearing less masculine. Through these findings, Green (2002) demonstrated how gender norms are preserved in the education system.

Gender perceptions impact the forward motion of females in the band profession (Bovin, 2019; Gould, 2001; Green, 2002; Sheldon & Hartley, 2012). In a qualitative study, Gould (2001) stated the importance of gender-specific role models for female college band directors. Data collection consisted of eleven different mailed surveys, telephone interviews with thirteen participants, and small-group interviews with four of the thirteen (Gould, 2001). In addition to gender-specific role models, “heightened visibility, isolation, and stereotypical generalizations
about women” were all commonalities in the participants’ experiences. By interviewing eight female high school band directors in Connecticut, Bovin (2019) attested to the difference in perception between a strong male and a strong female. It was more accepted for male directors to do similar tasks or make the same decisions as females. “All participants encountered sexism” in that the females were spoken of negatively by male directors at some point in their careers (Bovin, 2019, p. 40). Sheldon and Hartley (2012) show the underrepresentation of women and minorities in instrumental conducting. Looking at data for gender of Midwest conductors since 1947, gender and ethnicity of graduate band conducting students from 1999-2008, and gender of participants in conducting workshops from 1996-2008, white males dominated each category except for white females dominating the middle school level. Sheldon & Hartley (2012) called to question why the civil rights movement and women’s rights have missed our profession. By asking this, the next step is to determine “how progress might be realized” (Sheldon & Hartley, 2012, p. 192). With the current focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the U. S. including the increased prominence of the Black Lives Matter Movement, it is appropriate to revisit Koza’s 1993 urge for readers to “question the unquestionable. . . . Problematizing the taken-for-granted is...one step closer to change” (p. 228).

2.4. Louisiana Culture

The phenomenon of female high school band directors studied in Bovin (2019) concluded persistance was an overarching theme of the participants’ experiences. Persisting through Hurricane Katrina and continuous natural disasters, Louisianans share this perseverance quality (McKnight, 2011; Gotham, 2017). These troubling times for survival brought the Louisiana community together, creating a tight-knit bond across the state (McKnight, 2011; Gotham, 2017; Jones 2004). Cajun culture adds to this supportive nature since Cajuns were ostracized upon
settling in Louisiana (McKnight, 2011; Jones 2004). Perceptions such as “rural backwardness” and a condescending term, “coonass” were all labels placed on Cajuns (McKnight, 2011, p. 149; Jones, 2004, p. 419). The blue-collar community of Cajuns began to proudly represent themselves as “coonasses” by the 1970s as to finally feel a sense of belonging and ownership for their French heritage (McKnight, 2011). Widespread displacement because of Hurricane Katrina and then Hurricane Rita caused economic challenges and overcrowded schools (McKnight, 2011). The government and more importantly the people of Louisiana traversed through this disaster “by embracing the concept of change while eschewing specific changes incompatible with its core values” (McKnight, 2011, p. 151).

Similar to the ostracization Cajuns experienced in Louisiana, several studies on female band directors in other parts of the United States connect gender to ostracization in the band profession (Bovin, 2019; Mullan, 2014; Jones, 2010; Sears, 2010). No study as of now has investigated the female band director experience in Louisiana. Whether it deals with directing a band or survival, it seems there can be parallels between Louisiana culture and the female band director experience (Bovin, 2019; McKnight, 2011). This study will investigate the possible impact of Louisiana culture on the female secondary band director experience. The purpose of this study is to document the experiences of six successful female secondary band directors in Louisiana and provide strategies for success for developing music teachers and young musicians who aspire to be band directors.
CHAPTER 3. METHOD

This case study captures the experience of six female band directors in Louisiana through inquiry of their professional and personal lives (Yin, 2003). Participants will be interviewed using videoconferencing. Of the six, four will be middle school directors and two will be high school directors. The semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2013) will take place in three phases: 1) musical influences and experiences from birth through college, 2) early teaching experience, and 3) current teaching experience.

3.1. Participants

In this case study, participants were chosen using mixed sampling methods (Creswell, 2013). Criterion sampling was used due to the requirement for all participants to be current female secondary band directors in Louisiana. After meeting this criterion, purposeful sampling was employed to include female band directors who have children and to vary years of teaching experience. Convenience sampling could be justified due to proximal location of participants. Below is a table displaying pseudonyms for each participant to conceal identity, years of teaching experience, current teaching position level, and if they have children or not. The table depicts two high school directors, Claudia and Francine. Claudia taught for 49 years and had two children. Francine taught for five years and does not have children. Julia, Elena, Cameron, and Susanna were middle school directors during this study. Julia taught for fourteen years, Elena for eleven, and both are not mother directors. Cameron taught for thirteen years, Susanna for eighteen, and both of these participants were mother directors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th># of years teaching</th>
<th>Current position</th>
<th>Children?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claudia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francine</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Middle school</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elena</td>
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<td>Middle school</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Middle school</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susanna</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Middle school</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. Researcher Bias and Investigator Expertise

I, the researcher, will be the main data collector. Due to previously working as a female high school band director in Louisiana, I knew four of the six participants. Three of which became my mentors and good friends due to sharing similar teaching beliefs and working together in the same district. I made efforts to conduct interviews and analyze data with minimum bias. Similar to Conway (2002), my connections and past experiences with four of the participants and my investigator expertise as a female band director in Louisiana resulted in an interview environment where participants felt comfortable to share their insights freely and deeply.
3.3. Interview Protocol

Interview protocol were modified from Bovin (2019) to capture the essence of the Louisiana female band director. The goal of the protocol was to identify musical influences and teacher development throughout the participants’ lives, illuminating the unique experience of being a female band director in Louisiana. See Appendix C for interview protocol.

Interview Process

To get a broad perspective on the participants’ experiences, interviews were conducted in three phases: 1) musical influences and experiences from birth through college, 2) early teaching experience (0-5 years), and 3) current teaching experience (past three years). Questions focused on challenges and successes throughout these stages. Semi-structured interviews will be conversational to allow space for participants to freely share experiences. Participants will be able to contact me with any additional information before and after their scheduled interviews. Interviews will take place with Zoom software for video conferencing which includes saving and transcribing the interviews. IRB approval was granted in advance of data collection (see Appendix A). Signed consent forms approved by the IRB (see Appendix B) are required for interviews of human participants to take place. Time allotted for interviews will be sufficient for participants to fully address all interview protocol.

3.4. Data Analysis

After the completion of data collection, Zoom audio was imported into Otter software to produce more accurate transcripts to read through. Transcripts were then meticulously edited and read through to create codes. Open, axial, closed, and selective coding took place. I performed open coding by identifying significant concepts after intently reading each transcript the first time (Creswell, 2013). Each concept was labeled with a particular phrase or term, called a code
as Creswell defines. Axial coding was the next phase, entailing categorizing codes into a broader theme. To confirm these themes and locate any more, a second thorough read-through of the transcripts acted as closed coding before selective coding occurs. This final stage of selective coding related the themes to the purpose of the study by specifically apply them to the research questions.

3.5. Trustworthiness

Interviews will be conducted to receive as much data as possible with specific intent to avoid leading questions or researcher bias. Triangulation involved comparing results from each interview phase within and between participants before confirming findings. I will record video interviews using zoom software with transcription and thoroughly edit all transcripts. All identifying material will be stored on my password-protected laptop and cloud drive and only used for the purpose of this study. Pseudonyms will also be used to protect participants’ identities. All transcripts for an individual participant will be presented to their corresponding participants before completing the study as a form of member checking. Weekly meetings with a thesis advisor, Dr. Jason Bowers, who is a university music education instructor will provide guidance and accountability for trustworthiness of this study. Consent forms will be signed and thesis procedure approved by the Louisiana State University Institutional Review Board (see appendix A) and committee members before data collection begins.
CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

Based on the thorough analysis of all data, emergent themes developed. These themes represent influences on becoming a director, work-life balance, the female experience in a male-dominated profession, buy-in, process versus product, collaboration, motivation, and Louisiana past and present effects. They are sequenced in a way that follows the order of interview phases combined with recurring commonalities from participants.

4.1. Becoming a Band Director

Growing up, participants were shaped into the people and teachers they are today by multiple factors. Family influenced and supported their musicianship. Involvement in activities framed by their interests persuaded participant’s educational journey. Inspirational mentors were vital to the development and decisions of participants.

Family Influence and Support

Key music experiences took place in the church setting for many participants as well as family reunions. Siblings and parents sang in church choirs or were instrumental accompanists for their churches. Family reunions or gatherings were common, and regularly involved traditional Cajun music.

“The best part about family reunions,” Elena elaborated, “to me and my family, was when we would show up there, aside from the food, because that was the best part – seeing everybody get together and they had guitars and they had drums and they had, you know, people will be singing and they would all be sitting together playing together. And so my first experience growing up was me seeing them playing together, And hearing that all the time I was thinking to myself, you know, how can I learn how to do that?”

She recalled vacation bible school as a major influencer on her participation with music. Susanna also recalled influences on her music development. She painted a picture of her family’s traditions:
“Oh, we would always have big family gatherings! I remember, my dad had this huge shed…and especially during Lent, we would have big crawfish boils, and half of my mom and dad's family would come over and we had a big party in the shed, you know, and there was music and we would dance. We always had music at home. It was more of the country, or whatever was on the radio at the time, you know, line dancing was big at that time.”

Claudia’s mother was the organist for her church. Her siblings were all in the choir and her band director was the choir director. Cameron looked back fondly on playing flute with her father who played guitar for her church.

Julia and her family were not involved with church, but her father was a DJ and she recalled:

“Music was always on in the house, and my dad DJ’ed, so at a very young age, I would go with him to parties and sit underneath his DJ booth, and he would DJ with 45 records. So I would go through the albums and said “Daddy play this one! Daddy play this one!” So that was a really huge influence on my life. We would go camping every weekend, and it was an hour and a half drive to go camping. In that hour and a half drive, we listened to 96.9 classic rock radio, and I had to name every tune on the radio, the band and the song and my dad would give me history on each song. And then when we got to where we were camping, the radio was on the whole time.”

No matter the setting or genre of music, participants attested to their parents being a direct line of musical influence. Though none of the participants’ parents were band directors, all supported their choice to enter band directing as a profession. Family music heavily influenced their lives. Some parents were their first music teacher. Claudia and Francine recalled their mothers as their piano teachers. Siblings also played a role in their development. Cameron was the oldest of six, Elena of three, and Susanne of two, instilling a sense of responsibility for their siblings. “Being the oldest sibling, that's a lot of pressure added on to it, and wanting to set the standard for my sisters,” Elena reflected. Cameron, being the oldest of six in a “big Catholic family,” she said, “I definitely had a leadership role at home.” The other three, Julia, Francine, and Claudia, were the youngest of their siblings. All of Claudia’s siblings were in band. Francine’s older brother was in band and ROTC, which she later joined as well. Julia’s older
brother, however, was an individual with special needs. “I was definitely the smartest kid in the household.” She admitted, “always the one who was supposed to be getting things right and doing things the right way.” It can be noted that the babies of the family, besides Julia and her brother, were more impressionable by their older siblings’ activities where older siblings felt more responsible for setting a good example for their younger siblings.

Activities

Involvement in different activities including band put family values into practice, developing character during formative years. Family values included discipline and commitment all while doing something they loved. Multiple participants’ parents had a policy of not allowing their kids to quit anything once they committed to it. “We weren’t allowed to quit anything once we started,” Claudia said. In Elena’s case, “You start it, you finish it.”

If involved with more than just band, participants’ commitment to band was always jeopardized by other activities, specifically sports. The participants noticed this trend with their students today as well. Both band and sports require ample time from students, making them have to choose between the two. Cameron explained in her small community growing up both sports and band needed student membership, so her band director and basketball coach compromised.

“I'm grateful for them not making me choose, because I would have been devastated either way. I enjoy both...It just would have left a sour mark on my experience like if I had to give up the other thing I liked.”

Elena was not so fortunate with her dual involvement. Her coaches made her decide when they realized she was going to always be late coming from band. To her it was a “no brainer” at that point since her love for band was greater than softball.
Susanna’s outgoing personality helped her balance sports and band, though she noted her interests always geared towards band activities.

Claudia appreciated her involvement in different agricultural clubs, sports, and cheerleading as well as band:

“It made me well-rounded, and it makes me appreciate the kids today. I’m sitting here ‘the kids are in too many activities’ and I’m thinking ‘Claudia, you did the same thing’ you know, I was in many activities, but you know to get things done you go to the busiest person and they can help you.”

Besides non-band activities, participants also accounted for their involvement with extra band-related activities whenever possible – camps, afterschool activities, honor bands, etc. When schedules allowed it or because of leadership positions, participants took extra band classes to be in that environment as much as possible. Julia was in a beginning band class as an upperclassman and organized the library. She said that gave her organizational skills and the behind-the-scenes knowledge of running a band program. Whether it was drum major, section leader, band president, or any mix of these, participants all disclosed their positions as formative experiences for their character. Confidence and leadership skills were also factors resulting from leading others. Francine testified being in leadership positions were because “[she] really loves band and [she] really loves people and [she] did service for them.” Though she did admit during those high school years her increased level of involvement could have been to garner attention from others. Elena said leadership camps “made me want to be inspiring.” Julia had a similar experience at drum major camps, “it taught me about leadership and about teaching and that was kind of my first influence on teaching and feeling successful and feeling like I could be a good leader.”
Deciding to Become a Band Director

When deciding their majors and what colleges to go to, two of the participants knew they wanted to pursue band directing early on in their education where the rest ended up switching their major or plan during college.

Originally planning to become a nurse, Elena told the story that changed her mind. A head department chair for her major at the time told the freshmen, “There are one-hundred of you in this room, ten of you will make it to clinicals.’ And I looked around and I said, ‘I don't think I want it that bad.’”

Many participants were first-generation college students and did not want to risk being unsuccessful.

Switching from accounting, Susanna explained the curriculum changed her major: “At first, I didn't want to do music. I wanted to do math and accounting but, this is silly, I started looking at the curriculum...and I hate speaking in front of big groups. I'm kind of over that now...but I was terrified to take a speech class.”

After leading classes for years, Susanna’s “phobia” of public speaking soon became subordinate. Susanna switched to music and upon telling her private lesson teacher, received special attention on music theory lessons.

With an ROTC scholarship, Francine wanted to join the Air Force after graduating as a social affairs officer, complete her commitment, have her degree in music education, “and just go back and be a band director. That was the plan.” After heavily influenced by student leader positions and drum corps auditions, she quickly realized she did not want to go to ROTC basic training camp. “The Air Force thing didn’t pan out,” she concluded.
While Elena, Susanna, Claudia, and Francine set their hearts on becoming band directors during college, Julia and Cameron decided early on. Julia stated, “Oh, yeah I always knew. I think I knew from middle school that I wanted to teach band and I wanted to be like [my middle school band director.]”

Cameron described her discernment:

“Seeing myself as someone to lead younger students like I’ve always saw myself. Almost like someone would describe it as a calling...I shared with [my high school band director] early on that I wanted to teach. But at least by then he knew that I was going for music Ed. And he actually had a conversation with me, just realistically, like, ‘make sure you know what you’re getting into.’”

Though not all participants attended Louisiana State University, the LSU Tiger Band was brought up as a goal to make by participants. “I had always dreamed of going to LSU and wanting to be in Tiger Band,” Susanna says, though she decided “to stay [home] and get married” instead. Claudia looks back fondly on her time: “Once I got into Tiger Band that was it for me, I knew what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.” She concurred that Tiger Band was a deciding factor for many band directors she knew.

**Inspirational Teachers**

When asked who specifically inspired them to go into band directing, participants answered with influential band directors and private lesson teachers who sold the profession. For Cameron, “having teachers who shared the joy and fulfillment of helping younger people learn” inspired her.

With Julia’s parents getting a divorce before she entered high school, her mom diagnosed with cancer, and continued struggles with Epstein-Barr syndrome, Julia needed band to raise her up from these challenging times. Her high school director did exactly that, she said:
“[My high school band director] saw something in me... I don’t know what he saw in me...I always wanted to be good. And I was a good worker and that but I don’t know what he saw other than the fact that I was playing well, you know?”

Elena’s high school director also “saw something” in her, encouraging and pushing her to use her charisma to lead. “He knew I was going to become one (a band director). I had no idea I was going to become a director,” she said.

Susanna went through multiple high school band directors, but one stood out to her more than the others:

“He is a huge, huge part of the reason I’m doing what I’m doing. Him and [my private lesson teacher]. They would be the ones that guided me in that direction. Yeah, they saw that there was something there that maybe I didn't see in myself, but they saw and pushed me to do more.”

Francine chased after the opportunity to lead others throughout high school first holding positions as a sophomore then holding the program together through turbulent times with multiple directors. She also went through personal hardships with her family as did Julia and Elena. Teachers of different subjects were there for her. Francine’s specific love for the marching arts was fueled by one high school director who provided challenging drill for her program. At competitions:

“We would watch other bands and say ‘we could do that like that is easy’ so I really found a love for marching band and drum corps. I would go with my friends to summer shows so there was a large part of me that was drawn to that aspect of teaching like ‘oh my gosh I really want to teach high school marching band this is the best thing ever!’”

Band director inconsistencies were a commonality between some of the participants. These rotating doors of directors led to students being more responsible for continuing traditions and holding more ownership for the program. Since all of the participants were student leaders in their high school programs, taking responsibility and ownership was especially a factor of their development as musicians, teachers, and people.
The quality that separated music teachers from each other was if they “took the time.” If it was apparent that the teacher put the effort into their program and lessons, then that teacher left a lasting impact on participants that carried over to their current teaching habits. Teachers who “took the time” demonstrated discipline as well as instilled it in their students. Susanna looked back on the three directors she had in high school and noted the ones who did not “take the time” did the following instead:

“We would run through the show music and he would go sit back in his office and for the rest of the class period we were allowed to just practice or do whatever. It was like, ‘Okay, that's good enough.’ He never did the error detection and found the mistakes and made them better and taught us how to tune and what to listen for, and how to make these chords better. And, you know, just everything that we kind of try to do with our bands now.”

The director that did make a lasting impression on her “was probably the one that pushed us the most Yeah. Respected us the most. and wanted to see the best out of us...we were the most important thing. ‘This is going to be good.’ And he didn't stop till we were.”

The flute player participants (Julia, Cameron, and Francine) referenced their use of a flute journal as a method for practicing discipline, later organizing their creation of lesson plans. For Julia, her flute teacher who instilled the practice journal was the most impactful for her. She said her teacher “lesson planned better than I've seen most band directors ever lesson plan. She would split things up into four categories tone, technique, sight reading, or etudes, and then your repertoire. Every week you had to keep track of those four categories...So from a very young age she had me writing my own lesson plans, and well, I carry that into my teaching, and that's a big influence from her.”

Cameron had the same flute teacher as Julia in college after not having access to flute lessons growing up.

“I had a background in piano and I could just do it (play flute parts in high school)...but there's so much more to developing fine skills...and I just didn't even know that was there, you
know, until I saw other players in college and their abilities and yeah, it was good for me in a way to start at the bottom of the totem pole, so to speak, have to work my way up. That was a good experience. And not just always be the best in your section.”

With flute players in her college studio being at a higher level than she was, Cameron appreciated how her flute teacher “took [her] where [she] was and brought [her] forward.”

Claudia’s middle school and high school director was the same skilled teacher she described as follows: “He was so musical. you know? He was just, I guess, one of the nicest men I ever knew besides my daddy he was just a gentle man and very kind.”

Participants’ positive experiences influenced by their loving music teachers who put in the effort resulted in a perpetuating passion for music; a passion that carries through their lives today. Family, activities, educational experiences, and influential mentors all shaped participants’ core beliefs.

4.2. Work-Life Balance

Spreading one’s energy between work life and personal life is a balancing concept. Commitments with family at home or lack thereof varied between participants and proved to be a contributing factor to their work-life balance.

Participants Who Are Mothers

Cameron, Susanna, and Claudia, being mother directors, depended on family to help with child care mainly. They went to other female directors who were mothers to share their experiences and look for advice. “She helped me through a lot of that and just trying to understand what I was feeling and just be an ear,” Susanna explained. When Cameron went to mother directors, she was surprised to learn many of them stopped teaching and returned when their child was older. She testified:
“That wasn't on my radar. I did not want to stop teaching, you know. So it was like, ‘Wait, you mean, it's impossible to pull this off? Is that what you’re telling me?’ or is it because they were expected to run the house as well at the time?”

Cameron reflected on motherhood while continuing to teach: “I do not regret becoming a mother. It does make, like I said, time management a lot more challenging, but it's totally worth it.”

Some participants were involved with marching band when first starting their careers. These positions were either at the school they taught at or connected to the feeder high school. Claudia shared a story about having her second child:

“I was in charge of the marching band. I never will forget, I was at school, teaching them how to high peak step, being nine months pregnant on a Friday. And then I had [her son] on Monday, and I was back at school Thursday...I was sick of staying at home...And then when I got back to school he was just an infant. I’d take him to the games with me...I’d shuffle them around the band kids, especially the girls who wanted to be with the baby.”

Cameron also had marching band commitments with her first job contract. She explained she taught:

“Fifth grade, sixth grade, seventh grade, eighth grade band… I would travel in my planning, through lunch to the elementary school just down the road. And I would teach fourth grade tonette or recorder. And then after school, I would go to the high school and help with marching band, just tech, basically. It was fun. I'm glad I waited to start my family, because that would have been very challenging…”

She decided to change her contract “knowing that marching band would make it a lot harder for [her] to be home with [her] kid in the afternoon, weekends, you know marching band. All the time!”

Cameron was able to change her contract, turning over assistant high school director duties to another local band director. Cameron was able to make adjustments based on her aspirations to start a family while Claudia merged the roles of mother and band director. Claudia depended on family or a paid babysitter when needed. Work shifts largely kept Claudia’s
husband from being able to watch the kids which is why they ended up attending football games with Claudia.

Partner support is a key factor for working and raising a child for mother directors. Susanna’s husband taught her the work-life balance. She said, “whatever I can get done at school I get done. The rest of it can wait till tomorrow.” Cameron and her husband dutifully shared the roles of running the household. Claudia explained it was never so simple for her husband:

“It wasn't normal for men to have wives who were band directors...it was tough. And he didn't like it, sometimes...[He] always thought that I should never go and stay away from the kids...But he could go on fishing trips...There were ups and downs...[but] he would never say anything bad, he would always build me up.”

Despite going against the flow of gender norms and having their different opinions, Claudia and her husband worked together. Claudia’s involvement with multiple activities growing up arguably prepared her for her college years. She juggled her studies, practices, and games with Tiger Band, and had her first child in college. Entering the band director profession when female visibility was less than it is now, she had to set boundaries with her male colleagues.

“I just said ‘hey bud, I’m married. I have children. Knock it off. I want to be your friend but I don’t want to be anything else.’ That’s all. And I mean you just had to set your boundaries because I mean it was new to the guys too...And besides they don’t choose me, I choose them!”

Alongside boundaries made with others, Claudia had to set up her own boundaries to balance work and raise children.

“When I'd get home with the kids I’d take care of them and cook, put them to bed, and then I'd go to bed. And then I'd get up early in the morning to grade the [playing test] tapes because when I got home, it was their time.”

Separating her job from family time was vital for Claudia creating the work-life balance. Even before having children, Susanna explained being married early on while still going to college was a financial burden. “On the income that we had first starting out, you look back and
you're like, then we even make it?...It was really tough. It makes you stronger. Makes you a better person.” Family work ethic and lessons on commitment and discipline prepared participants for these balancing acts.

**Participants Who Are Not Mothers**

Participants who did not have children struggled with work-life balance, admitting that work took precedence over personal goals. One participant admitted not being able to turn work off when getting home was why she was divorced. “I never left anything at the door. It (work) was all I ever thought about,” she said. Another participant explained after being asked about her personal goals:

“One of the reasons why I moved here is because I don’t want this program to drive my personal life…I can go home and still have a good program the next day. It's going to be what it's going to be, you know, and my kids deserve for me to be the best version of me… my goal is, personally, I want to have a family, you know, and I can't do that if I drown myself in my job.”

Aware of the balancing act, Francine shared her efforts:

“I really want that work life balance, like, I don't stay after school any longer than what we are told to leave by. So, my days of staying in the band room till all ends of the night are gone. Also, because I mean, I know how to plan a lot better.”

Francine’s awareness of work-life balance allowed her to reflect and better use her time. Not as far along in her career as other participants, she talked about her personal goals of potentially starting a family one day. Family as well as the imbalanced nature of her job are why she aspired to stop being a high school band director one day. “God forbid. I don't want to do high school band thing with a family.” During her college years and when first starting out as a director, she had a high interest in the marching arts. She took opportunities to improve her drill-writing skills and would clinic local high schools when she was teaching at an elementary school. More recently she sees the amount of work that goes into a high-quality marching experience for students and questions the extraneous effort. She stated judges award groups that
spend the money on props rather than the groups that sound good and march well. This way of awarding student groups completely alters her long-term goals when originally, she had such a fiery passion for marching arts.

Family commitment, either future, current, or past was something most participants mentioned. Whether participants have children or not, a commonality included the passion to continue their work and do well. Going through the balancing act of having kids and working taught mother directors how to handle both by “learning by doing.” They also explained the importance of support from family, setting boundaries, and recognizing “the struggle made it worth it.” All participants recognized the commitment and balance needed for work required them to focus on personal life as well. Participants’ core beliefs of discipline and commitment were instilled by family growing up. Separating work from home life was vital, that way they could be at their highest caliber for students, family, and themselves.

4.3. Female

Being female in a male-dominated field was not detrimental to participants’ overall progression as band directors. There were small incidences that arose due to being female but participants demonstrated how to learn from and move past these encounters. When asked what struggles come to mind during early and current teaching years, the following stories came to the surface.

Underrepresentation

Winter Guard International (WGI) is an indoor marching organization that has guard, percussion, and winds competitions. Francine started a marching winds group with her high school to compete in WGI. Francine shared her experience at a WGI board of directors meeting she was invited to:
“I was in a room with like 50 other people and there were only three or four girls. Um, yeah, I had a bunch of people come up to me and tell me like how important it was that I was there not just as a female but as a young female.”

She went on to explain how female leadership does not just have to come from directors with years of experience. Female leadership can be recognized earlier, as she heard from her colleagues and demonstrated with creating her own indoor winds group.

“There were some of the top band directors in the country in that meeting, like, I felt so out of place in that room because I’m like, >whispers< ‘My band is like 50 people’ (small by comparison)…but they wanted to know how we did it.”

The formation of her indoor winds group represented not only her as a female director but also her small community in Louisiana. In comparison to other programs at these competitions, her group was small and did not have the same access to funding. At critique meetings following these indoor marching competitions, “the judges would assume that the guys that worked for me were the directors and would shake their hands first,” Francine shared. These instances made it apparent to her that female leadership in the marching arts was not common.

Each participant was at one point the only female director in their area. Band directors have to communicate with each other as well as families in their school’s communities.

Participants depicted a few complications with being the only female in these situations. Elena reported a lack of acceptance in her area, where she was the only female director:

“It was a long time for me to get accepted in that area...it made me feel like I was resented by the directors...a lot of those men were like, ‘Manly Men,’ like, ‘my wife makes me dinner. That’s what she does.’...but being the only female goes back to the nurturing thing.”

Elena elaborated that the culture of her program and connection with the feeder high school over time became a major success for her program’s reputation. The high school director and she had to communicate and “align goals,” she said. Multiple participants used this terminology to describe a strong connection between middle and high schools. She admitted that
her students often had additional challenges compared to students at other programs in her district.

“I just wanted to teach everybody what I was doing that was working. People would say, ‘well, we don't have the same kids as you.’ And I'm like, Yeah, you're right. You don't. I have Title One low socioeconomic, and like, really weak academic kids.”

Students that needed profuse instruction as well as male directors that were not inviting to a female director caused tensions unnecessarily. The time spent mending area director communication and “proving” herself could have been poured into the students who needed the extra time from their teachers.

**Students Not the Problem**

Students were not a notable struggle for participants, rather the adults caused issues. Julia explained her struggles with her first job:

“Well, I guess the challenges in those first few years are just being taken seriously... I was teaching an all-boys school and I look like a 12-year-old, you know? I was fortunate I had my drive and like my meticulousness and those kinds of things, probably my stubbornness, and my demand for things to be a certain way...But [the students] appreciated it, you know the discipline that I had with them... The biggest challenges I ever faced weren't really with my own students. It was always with the alumni and they would just make comments like...they would praise the other director for things that he had no hand in because obviously ‘he's the man so he was the reason why the boys were disciplined; it was him and it was his military experience.’ And um that's not why they were disciplined! It was the one demanding that things be done a certain way...I was the first female director that [the school] ever had for the marching band…And I'll never forget, I got down off the tower. One day when we had an alumni band rehearsal and one of the alumni came up to me and said the most backhanded compliment I had ever gotten in my life. It was. ‘Oh, so a girl can teach.’”

Julia emphasized the word “can” to stress the deragatory nature of the comment from the alumnus. This position was difficult for Julia, a new teacher under the direction of a male director. He had a long-lasting rapport with the community and she was brand new; however, there were basic level needs not met that Julia found concerning. With her head director not being “as involved,” she was able to learn firsthand how to run a program. Julia’s personality served her well
with dealing with troubling situations. She concluded: “It at least allowed me to do things in the way that I thought was right for the students and right for the program.”

Julia knew what was “right for the program” even with the little experience she had teaching. Fundamental core beliefs were a part of her musical training growing up, as was the case for multiple participants with influential teachers. These beliefs strengthened overtime with experience practicing what was “right for the program.” Core beliefs and experience aided participants’ abilities to get students to buy into their teaching method. Even equipped with fundamental core beliefs, Elena struggled with inexperience. She explained plainly:

“I think a lot of mistakes of early directors are the fact that we're too young. Don’t know what we’re doing. I can barely pay my bills. You want me to teach children?! I don’t even know how to cook dinner!”

With a mind hungry to continue to learn and work on their craft, participants gained confidence by “learning by doing,” they said. It took anywhere from three to five years at a single program to understand their strengths and weaknesses. Some of these qualities included finding their rhythm, learning about their community, learning how to prioritize, and recognizing that teaching is ever-changing. The variety of learners as well as the assortment of circumstances that arise require an adaptable director to handle, they discovered.

4.4. Buy-In

Buy-in was another crucial component participants discussed. Students must trust the teacher. Parents and faculty must also trust the teacher’s ability to lead their children, the future of their communities. From when they first start, directors have to display their core beliefs clearly and efficiently to gain buy-in. The unfair reality is it takes time to expertly show one’s beliefs. The persistent personalities of participants helped them demonstrate these values and gain the buy-in needed to sustain their programs.
Power in Numbers

Recruitment and retention were deemed as vital for the strengthening of a band program. Growing the program in numbers allowed band student visibility to increase confidence for students. Julia also gave details on programs having high numbers of students:

“I think the program builds a reputation and then that attracts. So, I think it's hard to build when there's no visibility or no success, you know, behind it. So I think, if you’re just starting out, it's like, you've got to find ways to get your name out there and start to have success with your kids. So that they can be that walking advertisement.”

Cameron explained her program has about 40% of the school population in band. When she first started at her school there were 80 students in the program. That number grew to 180 in a few years. Julia continued to justify why participation in the band program was important:

“There's something about pride in numbers too, in terms of confidence because if you get on the school bus, and you're one of two kids on the school bus that's in the band, versus over half the kids on the bus or in the school, you know, in the school band, you're less likely to be bullied by it. And, you know, that kind of thing to be able to relate to people better.”

Confidence and Persistence

Julia’s fundamental core beliefs gave her the confidence needed in her teaching positions. By studying judges’ tapes, a skill she observed her high school director doing during that extra band class she took in high school, she secured her core beliefs. Because of this skill, she can assuredly say, “I know how to get a superior rating. Listen to me and I’ll get you there.” Julia admitted this approach seemed egotistical but in reality, was rooted in confidence. Claudia confirmed there is a difference between ego and confidence and you need the latter to lead.

“Every director has to be confident...I show my confidence level but I’m not always confident...my bark is bigger than my bite.” She follows through with consequences but does so in a nurturing way.
As much as students have to trust the teacher, so do the parents, administration, and community. Seeing that the majority of participants taught at the same school they attended or at least in the same parish, participants had a strong understanding of the community. With this understanding came knowing what the community wanted to see from band programs. Cameron had an issue with buy-in from the parents when requiring students to bring instruments home to practice:

“I would say there was a buy-in issue with band [at my school], at least with the previous director be it he was absent a lot or maybe didn't push like I did. Band was just meant to happen at school. It was like ‘How dare you make them bring their instrument home,’ you know, that took a while to push through...Parents would have to deal with a certain amount of beginner sounds...kids would tell me, ‘my mom told me I can't.'”

Cameron noted how some students could have used this as an excuse not to practice but after getting familiar with parents in the community she realized this reasoning was not a student-created excuse. Convincing parents of the importance of practice became an imperative battle for Cameron.

“Honestly, that's just the lack of knowledge of what it takes, what band really is, like, maybe those parents weren't in band…When you sign up for football or tee ball or whatever and it’s just show up, you do the thing, you go home, and it’s done...[I got through by] finding ways to communicate with parents that are respectful but also letting them know that, you know, I'll hear what you have to say but this is what’s happening.”

Cameron persisted with her practice policy since it is a fundamental need for students’ musical growth, differing from sports growth.

Advocating to parents and the community for band over sports was a struggle, participants mentioned. Student commitments paralleled participants’ time commitments with their own activities growing up. Besides membership, participants noticed how administration prioritized sports over band programs. For example, twenty years after her school opened,
Claudia still had the same sousaphones and uniforms from the first year. Claudia had a conversation with her administration about the equipment for band versus the football team:

“These sousas cannot be repaired anymore. They’ve been here since 1966. Do you have football helmets that have been here since 1966? Do you have shoulder pads since 1966? Do you still have a car since 1966? ’’No.’ ‘Well why are you expecting me to play on a sousaphone that’s been here since 1966. That doesn't work and we've done everything we can to get them fixed?!’”

The following year, she had five new, high-quality sousaphones. A similar encounter happened in regard to the old band uniforms that did not outfit the entire band. When administration suggested some students wear sweatpants and jacket warm-ups instead of the uniform Claudia responded, “that's a good idea. I don't have a problem with that whatsoever, as long as you pick the students that get to wear the warm-ups.” With her sarcasm, Claudia insinuated how unfair it was for some students to wear the traditional band uniform and some to not. Administration’s suggestion showed how the unfairness and student experience did not cross their mind. To prove her point, the band wore blue jeans and the white band T-shirt. “I guess it was an embarrassment,” she reflected since she was flown to a uniform company’s factory promptly and picked out new uniforms. Claudia knew these persistent conversations with administration were needed to get the basic resources needed for her program to function.

Having the confidence to get basic needs met prepared participants’ programs for successful experiences. These directors went a step further to prioritize buy-in beyond the students. Through a larger pool of buy-in, participants provided more travel and performance opportunities to enrich students’ band experiences. Participants had equally impactful moments in their years of band and testified to wanting to share those experiences with their students. To acquire buy-in beyond the students, Elena described how achievement at a performance assessment visibly proved teacher ability.
“The kids performed great. And, and I remember walking out and just holding the trophy, like I was just like, ‘Oh, here it is,’ you know, not only were the kids excited, their hands are up in the air in the photo, but you can see the parents that are standing around us, and they were just like, ‘Alright, she knows what she's doing!’ You know? And I think those are the big successes because for parents, they need to trust that you're doing what's right by their kids. And it's got to be buy-in from them too.”

Elena summed up the importance of buy-in from her experience:

“If you have the community buy-in, you have the buy-in of the faculty and staff in the school, and then you have a good relationship with the directors that are feeding in or that you're going to feed. it's just one strong bond. Music is the driver of that.”

Gaining buy-in proves teacher ability to students, parents, and the community.

Participants did not have to prioritize winning over these individuals but prioritized student growth instead. Performance opportunities, travel opportunities, and memorable experiences inside and outside of the classroom showcased student growth. Students’ growth as individual musicians was a result of the time participants took to focus on their students.

4.5. Process versus Product

Participants put students’ “best interests” first, persisting on providing an impressionable experiences with their band programs. To do so, participants prioritized the tools needed to receive superior ratings (I’s), trophies, or other awards, not just the act of receiving them.

Participants had the intention of students’ individual musicianship. Doing their best and showcasing this musicianship required setting up students for success at performance opportunities. Focusing on the learning process rather than simply the end product was a main goal for participants.

Ratings and Trophies

Susanna used the term “lagniappe” to describe superior ratings, a way to measure a band’s success as the extra stuff. This lagniappe only comes with the overall performance experience if the program is well set up.
“If you’re concentrated always on superior rating, superior rating, superior rating; you’re going to drive yourself insane. It’s not all about making I’s (superior ratings.) Yeah that’s the ultimate goal...but everything else has to fall into place. That’s the lagniappe...Their goal is to play that instrument. I want them to be able to read, I want them to be able to play the instrument, I want them to make good sounds, I want them to work together as a team. Because if those 40 people can't work together as a team, there's no way we're going to get through a piece of music...Just having them be happy in my class, having them feel like they're doing something worthwhile for them.”

Claudia concurred that “people can go play and buy a trophy” but not set up a great experience for their students. Similar to Francine questioning why marching competitions are so focused on the money over the quality of the show.

Participants explained their goals for students were not about the trophies and superior ratings but rather about the quality of the performance as well as the learning process. For Francine, “it's not so much what show you buy but how clean and how musical it is.” Not only did they continue through struggles, but each program also prioritized students’ musicianship and overall experience with band. To do so, participants set preapred and exposed them to various performance opportunities. Julia explained:

“The kids weren't making it into honor band, before I got there. And I just, I think, like, part of the culture, too, was getting them to have more individual ownership in their own thing, and, you know, their own personal achievements, in addition to like, what the group was doing.”

**Fundamentals**

Each participant had a regimented plan for students emphasizing fundamentals. Fundamentals were described as music literacy, proper instrument use, and “good sounds” to enforce independence. Opportunities such as honor bands, concert assessments, solo and ensemble, or independently preparing music for rehearsals were all heavily encouraged by participants. A concept of providing the tools for students to “not need me” was specific terminology used by multiple participants. Each participant went into detail describing how to teach rhythm when asked what makes a successful program. Taking the time to set students up
with scales and rhythm reading abilities prepared them to be lifelong musicians. There is a balance of providing for the students and setting expectations for performance-based learning. Once the tools were given to the students, they were then responsible to use the tools to solve problems such as learn a piece of music. The more students were set up for success, the more was expected of them. All the while, the director guided them towards successful experiences.

Creating a culture with these successful experiences was a main focus for multiple participants. Their program culture included positivity, performance opportunities, and setting up students for success. To provide the musical tools needed, participants focused on fundamentals from day one, setting the learning expectations. Successful experiences at various performances stemmed from expectations put in place on day one.

“...so normally, you know, playing inside your trio...is stuff that I talked to those kids about, from the very first day that they play their instrument. ‘How long can you go before you run out of breath?’ It’s about trying to get kids to play with full phrases, even before they can do anything else, you know, ‘Longest note contest!’ from day one. Let's go! That sets them up for that one [superior rating] from sixth grade.”

Detaching Emotion

Participants noticed student work ethic changed over the past decade to where students “want a trophy handed to them.” Cameron discussed how she worked through this mentality by “mold[ing] their minds to, you know, start feeling that the work part is the fun part. That way when things do get challenging, they’re excited to tackle it instead of feeling unmotivated or defeated before they even try it. It doesn’t seem like kids have that ability, or anyone really.”

Some students would not buy-in no matter their efforts, participants found throughout their years of teaching. Instead of taking it personally, moving forward was the only option, some of them explained. Detaching emotion allowed participants to move forward. Cameron explained:

“if it's important enough to do it, just do it. Don't even attach emotion to it. You know, you just go ‘Okay, this is what I got to do, this is what I want to do’ and forgive yourself [for] what ends
up not getting done, because you're not going to do everything, you know? It doesn't mean I can't be an effective teacher and my program can't be an effective program... Your vision will partly come to fruition and that's okay, you know, as long as the kids are still getting positive experience and, and they're learning and moving forward and progressing. And I'm not losing my sanity, you know. Struggle makes it worth it.”

Julia worked diligently to set students up for success all while keeping a level head. As Elena showed with performance success came buy-in from more than just students, but adults too. Julia agreed that performance success “spurs motivation.” With her program Julia explained, “it makes everything better. They (the students) feel motivated. They feel excited about coming to your class. They feel excited about music, they feel good about themselves.”

Claudia put it in simpler terms: “The job ain’t over ‘til it’s over,” a family ideal imprinted on her early on. Setting up students for success with fundamentals, performance opportunities, program culture, and instilling the patience needed to refine their musicianship all fall under the process being more valuable than the product.

4.6. Collaboration

Many of the participants were the only music teacher at their school, isolating them from the teacher community. Thankfully, area directors provided some relief.

Band Directors Wear Many Hats

As Cameron described directing a band program as “wearing many hats,” personal life was another component. Not only retention but teaching current students, organizing events, attending to their own children and personal lives are a few examples of the many hats. Funding and responsibilities of a band director were addressed by Susanna:

“Because what people don't realize is taking over a true band program is taking over a business as well. They don't teach you that at school, they don't teach you the art of taking over a band. Right? You know, our school board. I know other schools give monies to be able to purchase things, our school board gives us zero. So, everything that is put into that band account is either small band fees, or it’s fundraiser money. You know, so you got to figure out what you’re going
to do with all that. And then you can't keep monies in your room. You got to make sure it gets deposited every day. So, it's a chore to do all of that especially for when you're by yourself.”

To gain understanding of each role, participants went to directors with similar experiences, such as other mother directors, to learn from. These shared experiences united directors and created community. Band provided a community for participants growing up and at the time of this study with area directors as well. A goal participants shared was to provide that sense of community for their students by teaching collaborative musicianship.

When going to others for advice, Claudia explained, “...And so here again, I asked a lot of band directors [and] went to summer workshops.” Though teaching the longest out of all the participants, she still got other directors and clinicians to listen and work with her band. “Never stop asking for help,” is a mantra Claudia lived by and advised. She also explained her need to help others as looking out for the “lowest man on the totem pole.”

All participants admitted to having an element of competitiveness in their personality growing up, explaining the heavy involvement in sports. Other personality traits opposed each other such as outgoing versus more reserved but all shared a desire to “be the best.” Participants conveyed their experiences with band as a social outlet that built and shaped their character, highlighting their strengths. Despite their competitive nature and some being the only female in their area, participants found area directors to be supportive. Cameron explained:

“We’re very supportive of each other. A lot of us are really good friends...Everyone is very willing to help. It's not so competitive that you know, someone will snuff their nose...I know it can get that way in the music world. But I’m fortunate, everyone here is very, very friendly and also supportive of each other. You know, sharing materials, sharing ideas...”

Elena continued to describe her community as being non-competitive even though her impression of it was the opposite prior to working there:

“Everybody shares everything. And so I love that sense of camaraderie. I love the fact that we as directors are not defined by our schools. And we as directors are defined as music educators, and
that our students are just a product of us individually, but put us all in the same pool, it doesn't matter. You know, I feel the camaraderie a lot here...now that I mentioned it, that's why this place is so successful with musicians. Nobody's afraid to like, it's not about one upping somebody. It's about building each other up.”

All participants worked to establish community among directors within their districts. Setting each other up for success was as high of a priority as it was for their students.

**Aligning Philosophies**

Band programs that fed into a student’s future band program needed to establish community. This involved directors in the same feeder system using the same terminology for different musical concepts and being visibly present in the other directors’ band rooms. Aligning philosophies across feeder systems better prepared students for their future band experience.

Francine went to elementary schools to test students on different mouthpieces to determine which instrument was best fit for them. She had a strong connection with one of her feeder schools as well. Cameron, Susanna, Julia, and Elena all had feeder directors come work their bands during class periods when they were not teaching a class at the high school. Claudia had a history of working with her feeder middle schools.

Philosophies between the feeder high school and middle school needed to be established to better propel student growth. High school director visibility in the middle school band room recruits and streamlines retention. Again, aligning teaching philosophies aids retention as well so students understand expectations and how to be meet them. Early in her teaching years, Elena worked through philosophies with her feeder school until later they had a “dynasty” of a program.

“We really see eye to eye and like, we balance each other out where I am type A, he's type B, and so I'll make up for that. And where he is type A and some stuff. I'm super type B...” we didn't know how to communicate with each other, and we had to learn how to handle those things. But once that, I think the the perk of not only us being friends, but in the parents seeing us together and communicating that it created up, and I hate to say this word, but it created like a
dynasty...I think with some of the successful programs in the state, there is a correlation between how the high school and junior high operate. If they operate as one entity and they communicate with one another, you see that there is a there's better retention rates students are, they're bought in, that goes back to the community thing.”

Aligning philosophies such as fundamental terminology created a strong connection between a high school and middle school that fed each other. Francine had communication issues with her head director or rather lack of communication all together. “Communication is 100% one way,” explaining she went to him for details. “He’s a do-it-all kind of person, he’s definitely not a micromanager of any kind...It’s more or less he just wants to feel like it’s his product so I just kind of do my thing.” Throughout multiple interviews she exclaimed the struggles of not aligning philosophies within the same school. For multiple years Julia had a similar “dynasty” experience. Female high school band directors worked in her band room to teach sectionals or clinic the full middle school ensembles. Julia described this connection with other female band directors as such:

“It was cool to be around, like, such an awesome group of women that, you know, taught their butts off and had a lot of success...It was really super cool to be a part of that.”

This empowering circle of female band directors created an inclusive and relatable experience, arguably a “Good Ol’ Girls Club.” Through personal experience, the opposite club to this one was brought up in casual conversations. Julia always felt accepted by the “Good Ol’ Boys Club,” though not knowing why:

“In fact, [well-respected local male band directors] made me president of the Good Ol’ Boys Club. >chuckles fondly< I always felt like I was a part of the Good Ol’ Boys Club, quote, unquote...I do feel they had to fight, you know, to be recognized...I don't know if it's because I'm always the loudest voice in the room...I was like, ‘that's not the way it should be. It should be x, y, and z,’ you know. And I also would put it on paper and make it happen.”

The nature of band directing is often lonesome and front-loaded with multiple responsibilities all requiring excruciating attention to detail. With the help of area directors who
share their core beliefs, participants were able to learn from each other. Aligning philosophies set each other up for success and, in turn, sets students up for success.

4.7. Motivation

When asked what motivated them to stay in the profession, participants unanimously answered “the students.” They desired to share their passion for music with them in order to provide a successful band experience. Their own enriching experiences growing up reminded them of their passion.

Susanna testified that teaching band is to “make that experience more enjoyable for them.” She continued:

“It’s the kids that mean more to me than the job…To keep the kids feeling good about themselves, you know, my ultimate goal is to get them to high school and then be able to succeed [so] they're happy. They're learning.”

Elena wanted students to be exposed to a myriad of experiences through participating in her school band community. She recalled taking her students on a spring trip to Dallas, Texas and wondered why the bus was quiet and all the students were gazing out the window when entering the city. When she asked a student, he answered, “I’ve never seen buildings this big.” She remembered band trips during her education as memorable experiences as well.

“What's kept me going is seeing the success of students, affording them opportunities to do things that they would never have the opportunity to do elsewhere. and teaching them how to be good people. I know, I'm the person I am today because of being a band student.”

Julia said besides “those boogers” (her students), her personal drive had another reason that kept her in the profession. She claimed:

“I’m always looking for a way to grow and do things better and better than the year before. You know, I can be a quarter of the way done with an event. And I'm already thinking about how I'm going to do it better next year. Or if I'm teaching the lesson, it's not even over before, I'm thinking about every single thing that I'm going to do to make that lesson better the next time around...I got to have the next time so I can do it better.”
She provided opportunities for her students to teach each other and perform together in small ensembles as well as the full ensemble. This added into her motivation to continue to teach. She claimed:

“You know you’ve been successful with the kids when they come out with something other than music, whatever that is for you. You know, every teacher has their own thing. For me, it is the pride thing…wanting to help each other and be positive about it. Teaching others how to spread their love of music.”

With experience and her positive outlook on life, Claudia learned how to work through various difficult situations. She recommended:

“You’re going to always have battles in your life. It’s how you choose your battles and how you get over them, you know. I just choose to look at the glass as being half full instead of half empty. That’s a me thing.”

Claudia advised “go to the busiest person in the room,” another mantra of hers was to “go to the smartest person in the room.” Claudia as well as other participants exemplified detaching emotion in order to stay positive and get the job done. “Determination, persistence, and kindness go a long way,” Claudia stated.

Collaboration paired with setting students up for success and “not to need” the teacher, participants strived for always cultivating continuous learners. With each participant holding some leadership position among the band directors in their district at one point or another, strong female leadership was not invisible. They demonstrated how to be the busiest and smartest person in the room simultaneously. These positions were voted on by the directors in the district. To win these votes it was necessary to take the time to build programs, reputations, and trust. Students’ band experiences inspired participants to be continuous learners. Seeing the students go through their programs motivated participants to continue providing these experiences for future students.
4.8. Louisiana and 2020

During this study, there were complications with COVID-19 paired with Louisiana’s exposure to multiple strong storms. Louisiana residents arguably have experience with unprecedented times. Hurricane Katrina in 2005 followed directly by Hurricane Rita the same year affected participants in different ways. Other natural disasters such as The Great Flood of 2016 caused schools and homes to flood and displaced families.

**Hurricane Veterans**

Hurricane Katrina affected each of the participants’ educational or career journeys one way or another. Julia and Cameron’s first years teaching were right after the hurricane. Julia was teaching in New Orleans and described the culture and students at her program:

“The seniors, the year that I had gotten there, had gone into the buildings after Katrina, and pulled out every instrument and all the band uniforms and taken as many pictures off the walls...they had rescued as much as they possibly could, with no adult telling them to do that. Like, those are the kind of kids that were in that program. They were incredible human beings.”

Both Julia and Cameron were uprooted during their college careers because of Hurricane Katrina. Julia who went to college in New Orleans had to go to a different college campus to continue her studies. She explained Katrina’s effects on the start of her junior year:

“We were supposed to start school on the Monday that Katrina hit. We all just kind of waited in limbo. I don’t know how they made it work but colleges just took you if you needed to go to school. So I went to [a different school] and that was, of course a challenge. Just, you know, having to uproot your whole educational experience that you’re currently in. But it was probably one of the best educational semesters.”

She took advantage of studying with the same flute professor she had growing up that guided her towards music teaching.

In Cameron’s experience with Katrina, her and her roommates housed multiple people in their apartment. First it was one lady from New Orleans who was promptly displaced. Hurricane
Rita hit Lafayette soon after Katrina, causing her family home to flood. She described that situation:

“The main pressure for that might have been Rita because my family was personally flooded for Hurricane Rita. And so I remember they moved in with me, all the siblings and everyone, the dogs and in our apartment. Yeah, for at least two weeks, it was pretty nutty. We had quite a bunch of people sleeping on air mattresses and just tucked in corners. And that was that. I do remember that. Until they were able to go home and tend to what they had to do with all of that...I remember I was teaching myself how to play oboe at the time.”

Education continued for participants during these challenging times. Helping each other played a vital role. Besides just helping friends and family, the Cajun Navy formed after the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina to rescue anyone in need. The Cajun Navy consisted of private boat owners who brought their shallow-draft boats to flooded areas to aid with rescue.

When The Great Flood of 2016 left a neighboring school without a building, Claudia’s schedule was significantly altered. The flooded school moved into her school shared, splitting school days in half for both. This drastic alteration rolled off Claudia’s shoulders since her responsibility to the students was her priority. There is no room for competition or misunderstanding when basic needs are the priority.

Francine nonchalantly described her reasoning for going to various programs to help as “see a need, fill a need.” This phrase sums up how people in Louisiana view each other’s situations. Claudia had a student whose house caught on fire:

“And by the next day they had a house full of furniture [and clothing]. This is a gift-giving community...People want to help, you know, like right now with Laura. And then with Delta. They got people already over there in Jennings, Lake Charles, and DeRitter and all those places. Helping out.”

COVID-19 Pandemic

Nationwide, schools were closed to in-person instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some areas took the risk of in-person instruction for the benefit of student’s learning.
To compensate safely, strict rules were put in place for in-person instruction. With wind instruments in a band class spreading saliva droplets, a main cause of contamination, directors had to be creative. Walking this fine line of creative instruction and safety meant teaching outside despite inclement weather, students spread six-feet apart or more, distribution and use of bell covers and face masks, and other safety measures. Performances were cancelled, leaving the band setting with no goal to work towards. Administration kept track of contact-tracing to quarantine students who were exposed to positive cases or isolate them if they themselves were positive. This meant directors and teachers never knew who was going to be in their class each day, causing it to be next to impossible to properly plan for instruction. Governors and administration everywhere were not prepared for making the risky decisions that came with the unprecedented pandemic conditions. Atop COVID-19 difficulties, multiple storms and hurricanes approached Louisiana, threatening the safety of residents. Closures had to be made to prevent possible harm and time to prepare for these storms. Being responsible for student safety in more ways than one as well as providing a quality band experience was a new heavy hat added to the many hats directors wore. Despite this heavy hat, participants stayed committed to their programs even though there were constant changes to schedules and whether classes were in-person or virtual.

With their drive on display through assessment and competition ratings, it became evident to local directors that participants put effort into their programs. Susanna explained how this has always added pressure to the music-making process in her classroom. Cameron also attested to pressure she applied to herself in preparation for performances, pre-COVID. Susanna, Francine, and Cameron were grateful they could focus on fundamentals more; however, students were responsible for their own practice which was ineffective. Participants also said students
were discouraged when not able to play in-person. Constant changes to how instruction took place exhausted students and teachers alike. More energy was expelled to fill basic needs of a learning environment. Numbers of students in their band programs were drastically smaller than previous years, participants said. Some participants explained they had to put on a daily performance for students to keep them motivated. Cameron said:

“I’m just trying to stay upbeat with them and look on the bright side kind of thinking, not really letting them know how disappointed I really am.”

All of the participants detailed similar sentiments when approaching teaching during the pandemic. Student progress was far behind plans from previous years. Julia described her former plans to what she was able to do during the pandemic:

“I normally would do tone studies and work on balance and blending and all that...But you know, for all the whole beginnings of this, it just felt ridiculous to tune, to work on balance when they have a mask on their bell and you can barely hear what's coming. You know what I mean? And let's tune when this kid’s in the shade and this trumpet player is in the shade, but this one's in 100-degree sun.”

Participants struggled with location of rehearsals or allowance to play at all. Julia explained:

“The kids are like, just sitting wherever they can to sit in shade, you know, or, well, today was cold. So when it's cold, some of them want to be in the sun...You try to be forgiving with all that because it's miserable if you have to sit in the sun for an hour and a half.”

One participant conducted an interview at her school after a storm, not one of the large hurricanes from fall 2020, just a typical rainstorm in Louisiana. She said her ceiling was leaking in her office and oscillating fans surrounded her to try and dry up puddles. Though not intense, this was the storm that was too much for her old school’s structure.

Struggles with COVID-19 during this study created challenges while storms caused inconsistency with adjusted schedules. There was an inability to plan. Thirty named hurricanes
approached Louisiana in 2020 five of which made landfall. Schools cancelling classes multiple times created more inconsistency for teachers and students. Susanna described:

“I want to say it was almost a month AB [schedule where half of the students came one day and the other half the next.] And then finally, this is our second week with most of the kids in class, but we still have virtual on the side. So that's probably been the hardest part of this is keeping the virtual kids as well as, you know, you got your in-class kids...I feel like we’ve had about 16 first days of school, because we had virtual, then we finally had some kids coming to class and we had a hurricane. And then we had some come back to class and we had another hurricane. Now we're out again for another hurricane.”

Cameron also explained her students started in-person for the first time on Oct. 30th, 2020. She was thankful they were able to play everyday but the potential threat of playing in-person spreading the virus loomed over her head. Elena is thankful for COVID-19 calling it a “blessing in disguise” to allow her to look back on her priorities. “As long as we’re playing music, that’s all that matters. Anything else is lagniappe” she noted. Lagniappe is a Louisiana term loosely meaning “the extra stuff.”

Louisiana culture is an intrinsically helpful community partly because of the lack of access certain individuals have. For Katrina and floods, it was the lack of access to housing. For band directors helping at each other’s schools, it’s the lack of access to another teacher in the room of 50+ students. For band students it’s the lack of access to instruments. Some of the participants chose their primary instrument because “it was what was in the closet” provided by another family member as a hand-me-down. Private lessons are a luxury. The struggling Louisiana culture and band culture not only demonstrated collaboration as the key to success and survival but the struggles “make you a better person,” Susanna said, and “are worth it.” Cameron concluded.
4.9. Conclusion

Participants provided wholesome experiences for students and fellow directors. Participant time and energy was driven by their passion for music and setting students up for success. Performance opportunities, fundamentals, independent musicianship, continuous learning, and sense of community were all priorities for their bands. Family values, influential teachers, and a strong band culture impacted participants’ growth and development into the people they are today. Their goal is to share this impact with their students to cultivate a future of continuous learners and appreciators of music.

Elena gave a personal account describing strong female directors as part of the same feeder system in Louisiana she looked up to:

“Whenever I would see [the two female directors] together they made me think ‘I want to fill their shoes or be as good as them.’ And ‘what could I do to be as good as them?’ So, I'm thankful. And I know since I’ve talked to them, they had other women that were older than them, that made them feel that way. So, I think one of the things that I'm excited about as being a female band director is that there is someone else who is a female band director, who may see me or may see (two other named female directors who were well- respected) or, you know, the other female directors in our state that are very successful. And then maybe you see them at conferences or see our bands somewhere and they think to themselves, ‘How can I be as successful as them?’ To know that I may have that impact on somebody is crazy, but exciting, because, you know, that's just something I want to continue happening. I think as female band directors, we need to continue to build each other up and have a community.”
CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

With continuous learning through collaboration, female secondary band directors in Louisiana revealed various cultural influences on their meaningful teaching. Based on participants’ accounts, student success was consistently achieved despite experiencing financial strain, demanding time commitments, challenges balancing personal lives, or general lack of support. A number of challenges due to geographical location also contributed to the process of meeting the students’ needs. Louisiana as a state has a lack of access to basic needs. Female band directors are underrepresented. Lifting up and recognizing successful females in male-dominated fields needs to happen more frequently. Instant gratification mentality continues to exponentially increase much to the demise of art and creativity. Hurricanes, floods, COVID-19, civil unrest, a historical election, and balancing work and personal lives all are very real obstacles for everyone. Educators continue to serve the future generation despite obstacles. Unfair disadvantages perpetuate rather than dissipate; however, these six female band directors unapologetically served their communities through music.

This chapter will discuss various issues and situations that come with being a female band director in southern Louisiana. Living and teaching in Louisiana comes with environmental and educational circumstances residents navigate. Attention to specific learning theories help combat certain concepts such as instant gratification. The demands of band directing as well as visibility of female band directors play a role in supporting female band directors in the male-dominated field. Impacts of the Cajun Catholic culture in southern Louisiana are also discussed, all pointing towards core beliefs participants shared.
5.1. Challenges of Living and Teaching in Southern Louisiana

Louisiana faces economic challenges due to a variety of reasons, particularly environmental factors from the past. These factors will continue to negatively affect Louisiana as a whole. Ranked 48th in education, 49th for economy, and 45th in health care out of the 50 states in the U.S., Louisiana carries limitations for its quality of life according to Holiber (2021). A statistic from Morill (2014) stated Louisiana has one of the most economically unequal areas in the country, meaning there are some of the richest and poorest people in the same regional proximity. With the absence of equal opportunities comes stark differences in education, jobs, health care, and more. These statistics highlight the possible reasons why some families cannot afford extracurricular activities such as band or sports.

Environmental Factors

During the 2020 hurricane season, thirty storms approached Louisiana and five made landfall (Wells, 2020). As participants described the inconsistency with scheduling due to COVID-19, approaching storms posed a very real threat to the state atop the pandemic. Heavy rain as well as intense storms caused an abundance of property damage and took the lives of many. "Annual precipitation [in Louisiana] ranges from around 50 inches in the north to around 70 inches at some locations in the southeast" a report from Frankson (2017) said. The report also said, "A direct hurricane strike on the coast occurs about once every three years and the Louisiana coast is particularly vulnerable to severe flooding from these storms" (Frankson, 2017). Kirylo (2014) explained, "devaluing the teaching profession, the rise of the marketization of education, and the minimizing of the common good" all contributed to the mishandling of Louisiana before and after Hurricane Katrina (p. 1064). Knowing participants had students with
various needs, financial obligations were a part of those needs. Negative effects from environmental challenges will continue to be a contributing factor for educational struggles.

Frankson (2017) depicted the effects of major hurricanes in Louisiana in 2005:

“Hurricane Katrina (a Category 3 storm at landfall) caused massive damage from heavy precipitation and storm surge flooding in the eastern part of the state. New Orleans was particularly hard hit with more than 80% of the city flooded and some areas under as much as 15 feet of water. Hurricane Katrina caused more than 1,500 fatalities in the state and immense amounts of property damage. A month later, Hurricane Rita (a Category 3 storm at landfall) struck the southwestern portion of Louisiana. Rita produced rains of 5 to 9 inches and caused a 15-foot storm surge along the southwestern coast. In New Orleans, the storm caused an 8-foot storm surge, which breeched provisionally repaired levees and caused additional flooding in the area still recovering from the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina.”

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita disrupted the livelihood of Louisiana residents. A statement from Habans (2019) said, "Land loss, the risk of storm surge, and the threat of chronic inundation will be factors in the economy of southeast Louisiana for the foreseeable future.” Berardelli (2019) explained preparation and recovery for hurricanes causes them to be the most expensive natural disaster in the world. Families are uprooted from various storms and floods. They are then forced to move to different areas, changing the communities of these areas.

**Educational Effects**

Though the world was adjusting for the pandemic during this study, Louisianians adjust for storms regularly. Adjustments for the weather include delays to the start of school as well as cancellations. Cancellations a day or two before storm’s landfall allow students and families to go to the store, set out sandbags around their houses to prevent flooding entering property, or
prepare however they need to. Delays to the start of school take place depending on landfall and if there is a significant enough predicted amount of precipitation that could cause the roads to flood, blocking access to school buildings. Louisiana administration and school boards go through these decision-making processes often, even more so during the challenging year of 2020. To not cancel school or adjust schedules puts the safety of students, teachers, and faculty at risk; however, delays and cancellations force instructors to rashly adjust lesson plans and curricular goals. Interviews for this study always began with a debrief of current teaching with COVID-19 plus incoming storm challenges. Personally, it was depressing to hear these women band directors going through exhausting struggles. Experience with adjusting for both storms and the pandemic provided a learning experience for those open to evolving. Participants were committed to continuous learning, practicing work-life balance, and always asking questions to improve their craft. Already lacking resources and basic needs, the addition of hurricanes and the pandemic placed even more pressure on individual teachers. With Louisiana already low-ranking in multiple vital areas, future research may investigate why funding is not used to protect and support those areas that are disadvantaged. Time, energy, and money spent on continuous recovery from natural disasters means these three things are not spent elsewhere, such as education.

As participants discussed, administration buy-in is critical for a successful program. This allowed proper scheduling to provide the best options for students to be successful in the band programs. Time commitments for students spread across sports, core classes, and other activities. Often, arts are put on the back-burner. Core classes and sports take precedence in American educational systems (Benson, 2017; Evans, 1971; Roege, 2013). Band education remains in a commitment cycle with football. Where there is an emphasis on football, there is a need for
band, so funding goes into band programs, cheerleading programs, and other activities that support football. However, where there is strong football and sports, there is a battle with band for students’ time commitment. Participants experienced this themselves and witnessed it in their students. Parents were used to their child leaving practice at the field. They did not want to hear the beginner sounds in the house, Cameron said in Chapter 4: Findings. Not only were sports in general prioritized in participants’ communities, these sports were also male-dominated: football and baseball. Male-dominance in the band profession and then also in sports culture result in increased obstacles for females to become leaders in either area.

Beyond individual practice, private lessons are a luxury. Instrument selection sometimes comes down to what students have in their closet passed down from family members as was the case for some of the participants. When pickings are slim in the family closet, parents take on the instrument cost when enrolling their student in a band program since not every program has instruments available for students to use. Multiple participants attested to their schools receiving Title I funds. Title I “provides financial assistance to local educational agencies for children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards” (Jackson, 2019). Knowing this about their communities, participants make accommodations to provide band to students and retain participation in their programs. Whether one of six children or of two, private lessons are a luxury for parents to be able to afford for multiple years. Claudia’s conversation with her administration on the need for new band uniforms exemplifies the persistence needed to get necessities funded for arts programs. These multiple examples and more unmentioned demonstrate arts existing not in the forefront of education. Cultivating meaningful memories, lifelong learners, and delayed gratification, arts education is a highly
valuable asset for human development (Roege, 2013). Participants exemplified these vital lessons through their everyday teaching and their resulting successful programs.

5.2. Combatting Instant Gratification

Findings showed directors prioritizing the overall program experience for the students rather than the singular moment of receiving an award. As Julia pointed out, judges said the same things each year. Once these comments are well comprehended by the teacher, then improvements to their teaching took place. Traditional instrumental music instruction typically involves students sitting, being quiet, and receiving the information from the director (Isbell, 2011). Students are told how to get a superior rating and that is as far as instruction goes. Participants for this study focused on the overall experience students obtained in their band programs. Going beyond simply being receptors of information, the memories students made were the priority for participants. Collaborating with each other by enjoying bus rides to new places, sharing the excitement and nervousness before a performance – then the joy of being successful together, and listening to each other while playing as an ensemble are all factors of participants’ impressionable instruction. Teachers’ direct instruction is not the sole focus of participants’ classrooms. Student growth is individual but also group effort requiring effort from all in the ensemble. Continued refinement of fundamentals allow students to make higher level connections involving collaboration. Making these deeper connections does not happen overnight. The preparation put into the performance is the focus of the overall experience.

Learning Theories

Isbell (2011) stated music educators must be able to adapt their philosophies and teaching approaches to the learner. In his study, Isbell (2011) defined the learning theories behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, and humanism. Behaviorism is defined by the teacher reinforcing
wanted actions and behaviors of students. Teachers practicing cognitivism “assist [students] in the process of understanding the material” (20). Two methods within cognitivism are reception and discovery, where the former involves passive learning and the latter involves active learning. Both behaviorism and cognitivism specify “the role of the teacher is someone dictating content while adhering to clearly established sequence of teaching music” (21). Constructivism, however, allows students “the opportunity to interact with the content and each other in a way that they find most meaningful” (21). Finally, humanism focuses on self-actualization and development of each student’s potential. Traditional music classrooms typically represent passive learning through behaviorist and cognitivist theories, especially reception method. These theories in action are revealed by the judges’ comments and teacher-centered instruction. Good teaching involves understanding the learning theories, reflecting on one’s own teaching, being aware of a variety of learning settings, and having the capability to implement the theories to specific settings. Isbell (2011) deemed the four qualities smart, savvy, sensitive, and skilled as necessary components for the effective teacher. Isbell (2011) acknowledged the four learning theories along with the four qualities as comprising an effective teacher if they appropriate a mixture of these approaches to specific learning environments. Isbell's article detested how humanism provided a more enriching learning environment for the music student. The article concluded saying the music classroom is a balancing act for the music teacher to best suit the various students they teach.

Knowing this, participants created unique and meaningful experiences by setting up students for success. Focusing on fundamentals, exemplifying consideration with their fellow band directors, putting effort into their programs, and promoting performance opportunities, participants for this study showed constructivist and humanist approaches. Active learning and
long-lasting moments of music-making were profusely present in participants’ programs. Students were aware of and therefore have the option of auditioning for honor bands. Visibility of feeder school directors in each other’s band rooms demonstrated collaboration, as Elena explained. When students see this, they see that their feeder school puts considerate effort into their program. Family values, educational experiences, and Louisiana culture justified participants’ “gift-giving community” and program cultures they created. Cameron testified the generous efforts of her local directors always willing to help. McKnight (2011) explained the Louisiana giving culture which can be seen in feeder systems working together to align philosophies and streamline retention. Of course, participants displayed passive learning through behaviorist and cognitivist (reception method) approaches when appropriate; however, they knew the time and place for different approaches to instruction as Isbell (2011) called for. For example, emphasizing fundamentals early on falls under the more passive learning but as students become more familiar with the material, they are expected to actively apply it to music learning as they progress their individual musicianship. The process of developing musicianship prepares students for future learning endeavors. Students observing their directors adapt learning theories to the appropriate situations exuded continuous learning. Absorbing this disposition creates humans well-equipped for a myriad of callings. The participants’ complaints of students more recently not having the patience to put in the work revealed the sign of the times that instant gratification sometimes takes precedence. With the perpetuation of instant gratification in our society, arts education must find ways of combatting this issue.

Teaching for nearly fifty years, Claudia has seen a variety of learning styles and complications such as the Flood of 2016 and raising two kids when first starting her career. She learned how to deal with each one over time with experience. She proudly stated she still asks
Francine is the newest participant to the profession and looked at the way it runs objectively, questioning why certain functions happen the way they do. Claudia and Francine, two different generations of female band directors exemplified continuous learning. Experience over time in a profession can cause an individual’s perspective to become jaded or can cause them to persevere and “learn by doing.” Among participants in Bovin (2019), some were females who left the profession because of negative experiences that occurred during their careers. The essence of the female high school band director was defined by perseverance in Bovin (2019).

The experience of Louisiana female band directors showed perseverance in conjunction with the cultural influence on their careers.

5.3. Feminism

As Claudia said, “go to the smartest person in the room.” How often is this person a male? While Shouldice & Eastridge (2020) explored the question ‘How much of gender determines ratings?’ the question ‘How much are males provided the tools to be successful more than women?’ arises. Another question could examine “How much do females have to tolerate in the band director profession?” Mullan (2014) showed female band directors were hired into failing programs where interviews for this study showed the opposite. Julia, Elena, Claudia, Francine, Cameron, and Susanna all attested to being sought after at some point in their career to be at the successful programs they were currently in. Where participants in Bovin (2019) stated they reserve their membership in the Good Ol’ Boys Club and bond with female directors instead, Julia attested to being accepted by the club. They each found community with other female directors, though none mentioned anything about exclusivity between their community and the Good Ol’ Boys Club. When asked if they had any other struggles with early or current teaching, participants for this study did not have anything else to add. When asked about the
support from feeder schools and area directors, all participants stated positive sentiments. Participants in Bovin (2019) admitted to experiencing some form of sexual harassment during their career. In her podcast “Unlocking Us,” Brené Brown discussed gender norms with Melinda Gates, co-founder of the world’s largest private charitable organization (LoGrasso, 2021). They claimed employers often promote more females to higher positions in an effort to keep them from quitting. Sexual harassment is the major reason why females leave their jobs two years after the harassment, they claimed. Though Louisiana female directors for this study did not address sexual harassment directly, flirtatious or derogatory banter with male colleagues was addressed. Participants could have chosen not to share conflicting encounters though interview protocol provided an open and comfortable environment. Participants did bring up struggles early on in their teaching though the definition of harassment or intention behind the males’ comments was unclear. Future research may ask questions of sexual harassment directly to uncover encounters if they exist. Green (2002) discussed the juxtaposition of gender’s involvement in music and the perpetuation of gender norms in education systems. Contrary to findings from Green (2002), the collaborative efforts of Louisiana band directors prove to be inclusive across genders. A shared experience of wanting to provide high-quality music experiences for students moves male and female directors past gender norms to a place of serving one another.

**Demands of Band Directing**

Participants brought up the balancing act of being a mother and still teaching band. Among mother participants’ stories of having newborns while working, maternity leave was touched on specifically. The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) offers twelve weeks a year of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees (Family Medical Leave Act, 1993). This is the bare minimum employers with 50+ employees are required to provide by federal law. Each
state has the liberty to offer more benefits, some dictating paternal leave not just maternity, the Family Medical Leave Act (1993) claims. In a document from Louisiana Office of Human Resources, the state must offer six or twelve weeks of paid leave to state-employees such as teachers (Personnel Policy No. 1, 2009). Six versus twelve weeks depends on if the individual qualifies for FMLA, though both options take up all sick days. If there are complications with the pregnancy, then four months of additional leave are offered. Cameron explained the pregnancy complications have to qualify for the extension and a mother can choose how much of the extension they want to take. Raising a child is an example of unpaid labor that maternity leave does not sufficiently assist with. After having their children, mom participants described the difficulty with getting back to work and still managing their home life. Their intrinsic persistence to continue sharing their passion with their students and tend to their family lives permitted them to get both jobs done at work and home. Some of the participants without children said they want to start a family one day if they can but did not see it very possible with their current workload. Admittedly, some with and without children stated they needed to increase focus on their personal life to maintain a better balance. Others went a step further and discussed the demands of being a good band director infringe upon personal life boundaries.

Female mentality is always putting other’s needs first because of the perpetuating expectation to raise children as discussed in LoGrasso’s (2021) podcast. Systemic expectations cause women to balance their work-life responsibilities well where males are singularly focused on work, Gates said. The conversations with husbands about the work to raise children have to take place, as confirmed by participants of this study. Brown’s podcast called for difficult conversations with male counterparts such as husbands, colleagues, and employers, to take place. We hold each other accountable for being good humans. They discussed the importance of
empowering women and enlightening men. These discussions between males and females hold both parties accountable, allow for increased understanding, alignment of philosophies, and effective collaboration. Considering the demands of band directing as well as the limitations of maternity leave, female band directors may very well restrict their professional goals to start a family or vice versa. They may decide to not start a family in order to develop professional goals. Females have to make this decision but males who intend on contributing as much to the family as the wife may also find these life decisions limiting.

Destination mentality (focusing on “making it”) can be defined as achieving milestones respected and expected by societal norms. This mentality may provide goal-orientation and purpose for individuals in any career, though may completely restrict others who feel they are not advancing in personal or professional milestones. The question comes to mind if female directors who are not mothers feel obligated to work twice as hard as mother directors since they do not have the responsibility of child care at home. Similarly, the same question could be applied to males. Gender norms in our society consist of females taking care of the children and house while males are meant to work (Shouldice & Eastridge, 2020; Sullivan, 2016; Green, 2002). Female success in work environments is not well represented, but discussions on improving this continue. If family goals are not taking place, does an individual have to overly expel their energy in work to feel successful? Education perpetuates these norms rather than challenging them (Green, 2002). Rather than choosing professional over personal or personal over professional, collaborative efforts between both males and females can balance dreams and bring them to fruition. Our society’s progressing mentality means constructs such as maternity leave and gender norms must also progress. Visibility of females in male-dominated positions and vice versa aids this progression as well.
Male-dominance and Female Visibility

As aforementioned, male-dominated fields such as sports in the south, band directing, and others in Louisiana such as the oil industry cause limitations on females wanting to enter these fields. With no visibility of females in their aspired professions, an inadvertent block emerges. Females limit or change their aspirations due to what is historically expected. Males in leadership roles may also limit females from entering or holding positions in these fields. This can occur unknowingly or knowingly based on how expectations continue in these male-dominated fields. Participants claimed there was little to no visibility of female band directors in their education, especially not at the high school level. All the participants except one stated they had a female middle school director who served as a role model for their profession decision and nurturing traits they claimed to have as well. The one participant who did not have a female director was educated in the 1950s during a time when female directors were not prevalent, according to Koza (1993), Shouldice & Eastridge (2020), and Sullivan (2016). Female directors were more visible beginning in participants’ college and early teaching years. Participants viewed these examples of female directors as symbols of strength and relatability. The oldest participant was addressed by younger participants as a role model and inspiration to become a strong and successful female band director. Even though she did not have a female band director throughout her educational career, she still said her middle and high school director was a “gentle man and very kind.” She said he would correct students in a loving way where later she saw the opposite from other male directors. Her band director shared similar nurturing qualities to females, caring for students. This proves the effectiveness of being kind and is not limited to one gender over another. Knowing this, participants moved past derogatory comments from males with grace and determination. Detaching emotion to care for others and find community
through collaboration are just some examples participants deemed necessary to best serve their students.

Brené Brown brings up her dissertation titled “Acompañar,” the Spanish word for “walking”, in the podcast (LoGrasso, 2021). Her document stated the importance of walking together. In a male-dominated field, female directors can feel isolated and blinded from their own strengths. By vulnerably admitting one’s weakest areas, solutions are found. Participants affirmed that band directors, male and female, can hold each other accountable for being vulnerable and collaborate to better serve band students. There is no right or wrong between genders, as long as we have the open mind to continuously learn. This ability to continuously learn paired with always asking questions allows collaboration or walking together, as demonstrated by band directors from this study.

5.4. Cajun Catholicism

The female band director experience in southern Louisiana displayed walking together. Cajuns intrinsically know the importance of giving. McKnight (2011) gave background to the religious history of Louisiana, going back to the colonial settlement era. “The only recognized churches…were Roman Catholic,” the only faith authorized by the government for multiple decades (p. 32). With the Cajun culture being heavily Catholic based, I find it interesting to see the parallels between Brené Brown’s work, Catholicism, and Louisiana culture (Duque & Ynalvez, 2009; McKnight, 2011; LoGrasso, 2021). Intrinsic helpfulness is an overlapping theme between the three. Participants promoted collaborating and a humanistic approach of continuously learning. Their example can be connected to Catholic teachings of supporting each other or “walking together.” All participants’ family values, some directly influenced by church, molded their participation in music and character. Whether directly influenced by religion or not,
participants credited parent support for their commitment, determination, and discipline. Catholicism emphasizes the importance of family. With that support early on they were exposed to music in collaborative environments. Parent support, as some found through their own parenthood is a loving act, providing the best experience for their child.

Holding each other accountable does not merely involve judging one another but supporting each other to best serve and provide for each other. The same can be said for Catholicism. Judging others as “good” or “bad” Catholics can often be the concern of those who practice, I witness from personal experience growing up in a Catholic family and community. Like the participants said, detaching emotion (or the labels “good” and “bad”) allows clarity to “get the job done.” Instead of getting caught up in labeling others or oneself, participants were able to exemplify forgiveness and persistence. They moved past emotive qualities of judgment. Participants identified what can be improved in their programs or at home and approached these issues with caring determination. Solutions for overcoming obstacles present themselves, leaving ample room for sharing our passion for music. Walking together in faith, family, or the band room requires collaborative support from the community. Whether someone is a practicing Catholic, an individual who has fallen away from their faith, an atheist, or anywhere in between, our goal should always be to support, walk with, and love everyone no matter what the circumstance. Truly, most formed religions have an underlying principle of “love one another.” It is more about how we carry out this principle and hold each other accountable in a loving way that allows growth. With all participants from this study being partly or fully Cajun and most identified as Catholic, they demonstrated this principle. By “taking the time” to best serve their programs and home life, participants were loving. To be able to give, participants testified a balance with personal life must be strong as well. The ideals engrained in participants’
personalities, character, and teaching all reflect their core values, their passion. Having the confidence in themselves and support from others in their community such as area directors, alumni, parents, partners, other female directors, and students all attest to the loving and “gift-giving” culture Louisiana is deeply rooted in.

Seeing the civil unrest during 2020 brought racial injustice to the forefront. Looking at the disadvantaged communities in Louisiana, part of the “Deep South,” Louisiana in no way is perfect. There is racism in many forms caused by lack of access and self-inflicting practices. Racial injustice does not escape anyone, rather it is a critical reflection everyone must partake in to better think, speak, and act more lovingly. For starters, we can look to the Cajun, Louisiana culture as examples. The participants of this study are some of these examples with their commitment to serving the best band experience for their students. They are individuals who look past physical appearance and teach anyone in their band room. If there is hunger for music, these directors will fill it. Always with a door open and delicious, enriching food to offer, Louisianians do not question what you look like or who you believe in. As long as you have a stomach, you are always welcome.

5.5. Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies can observe the male experience of band directors in Louisiana to see if it parallels or differs with this study. Studies should also explore other parts of the United States and world, as Bovin (2019) called for. Homosexuality and masculinity are assumed personal characteristics of females in band director or leadership positions (Bovin, 2019; Mullan, 2014; Shouldice & Eastridge, 2020). An exploration of those who identify as non-binary and LGBTQ+ is needed to progress inclusion and a mentality of acceptance.
Future research can observe the experience of band directors that graduated from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) and HBCUs have significantly different influences including but not limited to economic, social, and cultural. Differences and similarities between Southern University (HBCU) and Louisiana State University (PWI) can specifically be examined in Louisiana. As Milburn (2019) and Bowers (2018) discuss, a history of segregation caused the creation of HBCUs and places like East Baton Rouge perpetuate this separation. Investigating why and how equal opportunities can be provided is needed research. Questioning maternity leave and Title I funding from state to state leaves the need to explore state standards for allocating funds. Seeing the importance of arts education also questions American culture prioritizing sports. Researching educational funding can examine how it is distributed, why it is distributed to certain functions and not others, and open conversations for prioritizing funding.

Mental health issues examined during COVID-19 increased exponentially. Exhaustion from the changes and extra effort to “make it work” leaves teachers, students, and families feeling isolated and out of resources. Healing from the pandemic will take time. Research can look into how certain educators are managing, gage the mental and physical exhaustion, and observe how these efforts continue when the classroom “goes back to normal.” This research can begin discussions on the “normal” efforts of unpaid labor across multiple professions.

New ways of implementing more humanist approaches to teaching band needs to be explored. Since behaviorist approaches to teaching band are most common (Isbell, 2011), applying student-centered instruction is beneficial for more student autonomy. Autonomy can then lead to better retention rates and then lifelong learners and lovers of music.
5.6. Conclusion

Living with these six participants constantly in my brain through analyzing and conducting interviews, this study has not only been an honor but an inspiring transformation for me. Hearing the successes from this study come from female band directors is an untouched source in our current day. Going to “the smartest person in the room” still very much involves male presence. Studies like this and those observing female experiences are not only Breaking the Silence but providing evidence of how and why female band directors are successful (Bovin, 2019; Mullan, 2014; Sears, 2010; Shouldice & Eastridge, 2020). I pose the question, when will females be considered “the smartest person in the room” in this male dominated profession? Furthermore, we should work to eliminate “smartest” from our terminology to coexist in a collaborative, loving, kind, and persevering culture. We are not only setting the example for our students but perpetuating gender norms in our educational setting, as Green displayed. We took on this responsibility when deciding to become educators and now it is our turn to truly take a step back and look. We can acknowledge the progression we’ve made; however, our focus can be directed to walking together to continue the forward motion.

Participants in this study demonstrate the “gift-giving community” of Cajuns in Louisiana. They exude the belief of loving one another. Collaborating with others and finding common ground displays the importance of walking together. Providing the best experience for students allows them to walk together. Participants were able to go beyond gender norms, stereotypes, lack of access, sports prioritized over arts, natural disasters, insufficient maternity leave, and work-life balance to name a few challenges. Their success with their students was not based on trophies but the concept of continuous learning. Their students were given the opportunity to create music together and continue that appreciation for music outside of the band.
room. The participants themselves always asked questions. Previous influences including Cajun culture, family support, inspirational teachers and experiences led them to providing the best experience for their students, family, and others in their community. There was not an option to decide whether or not someone’s help was needed. “See a need fill a need” one could say was a Cajun proverb shown by participants. It is groundbreaking to see these six female band directors defy obstacles out of their control and still put others first. They looked inward to continuously evolve and better inform their outward actions. When we reflect on our teaching with a broader perspective, I charge us to walk together as one unit of educators, musicians, and humans just as these Louisiana female band directors did.
APPENDIX A. IRB APPROVAL FORM

LSU Office of Research & Economic Development

TO: Bowers, Jason Paul
LSUAM | Col of MDA | Bands

FROM: Alex Cohen
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: 26-Oct-2020

RE: IRBAM-20-0303

TITLE: Experience of Female Band Directors in Southeastern Louisiana

SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial Application

Review Type: Exempt
Risk Factor: Minimal
Review Date: 25-Oct-2020

Status: Approved
Approval Date: 25-Oct-2020
Approval Expiration Date: 24-Oct-2023

Re-review frequency: Three Years
Number of subjects approved: 6

LSU Proposal Number:

By: Alex Cohen, Chairman

Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
8. SPECIAL NOTE: When emailing more than one recipient, make sure you use bcc. Approvals will automatically be closed by the IRB on the expiration date unless the PI requests a continuation.

* All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU’s Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at [http://www.lsu.edu/research](http://www.lsu.edu/research)

Louisiana State University  
131 David Boyd Hall  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
O 225-578-5833  
F 225-578-5983  
http://www.lsu.edu/research
APPENDIX B. INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent Form

1. Study Title: Experience of Female Band Directors in Southeastern Louisiana

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the experience of female secondary band directors in southeastern Louisiana. Female high school and middle school band directors will be interviewed on three separate occasions on differing topics. Data collection will include virtual video and phone interviews. Analysis will involve transcription of all interviews, multiple phases of coding the interview transcripts, and development of emergent themes.

2. Risks: There is no known risk associated with participation in this study.

3. Benefits: The study will yield valuable information about the overall experience as well as the development of female band directors. Future readers can use this study to learn how to become a band director and become more aware of the female experience in a male-dominated field.

4. Investigators: Jason Bowers, jbowe17@lsu.edu and Mimi Webb, mwebb18@lsu.edu

5. Performance Site: Interviews will be held virtually on video-conferencing.

6. Number of subjects: 6 (2 high school directors and 4 middle school directors).

7. Subject Inclusion: Subjects will include female middle and high school band directors in the southeastern region of Louisiana.

8. Subject Exclusion: You are ineligible to participate in this study if you are not a female middle or high school band director in the southeastern region of Louisiana.

9. Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

10. Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

11. Signatures:
The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. For injury or illness, call your physician, or the Student Health Center if you are an LSU student. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Alex Cohen,
Appendix B (cont.)

Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, or www.lsu.edu/research. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Subject Signature: ____________________________ Date: ______________

The study subject has indicated to me that he/she is unable to read. I certify that I have read this consent form to the subject and explained that by completing the signature line above, the subject has agreed to participate.

Signature of Reader: ____________________________ Date: ______________
APPENDIX C. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Research Questions:

1. What is the experience of female secondary band directors in southern Louisiana?
2. How did previous experiences contribute to their current teaching experience?

Interview Questions:

1. Childhood-college
   
   A. How was music a part of your life growing up?
      a. Is your family musical?
      b. Talk about your music experiences before high school.
   
   B. What inspired you to become a teacher?

   C. Describe your middle school/high school experience.
      d. Are there any moments from those years that stand out to you?
   
   D. What was your college education like?

2. Early Teaching Years

   A. Describe your first teaching position(s).
      a. What levels? Did you work with anyone?
   
   B. What were some positive sentiments you remember?

   C. Can you describe any struggles or tricky situations? How were they resolved?
   
   D. What factors caused you to stay in the profession?

3. Current Teaching

   A. Describe your current teaching situation with the adjustments due to the pandemic.
   
   B. Thinking back before this year’s changes, describe your current teaching situation.
   
   C. Compare your early teaching years to your current teaching experience.
   
   D. What does a successful band program look like to you?
   
   E. Would you consider your program successful in those terms?
   
   F. What are some goals you have for your program? (Post-COVID)
   
   G. What are some goals you have for your own career?
   
   H. Is there anything else you would like to add to this study?
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VITA

Born in Virginia Beach, Virginia, Margaret Mary Webb thoroughly enjoys music, specifically sharing it with others. She received her bachelor’s degrees in Music Education and Music Performance on Horn from Louisiana State University. She worked in Gonzales, Louisiana for two years as an assistant high school band director. Graduate school at her alma mater allowed her to continue building connections established during her undergraduate degree. The degree plan also opened up possibilities to explore other fields such as Music Therapy, Philosophy, Psychology, or pursue a doctorate in Music Education. She desires to continue to grow and apply what she learned as a student and as a teacher to future generations.