

Da Capo al Fine – Retaining High School Students in Guitar Programs

by

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Abstract

Participating in quality school music programs is beneficial to many students (Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Hallam, 2010). In addition to being a rewarding endeavor in itself, engaging in music making brings forth educational benefits (Helmrich, 2010; Southgate & Roscigno, 2009), socio-emotional benefits (Frankenberg et al., 2016; Rabinowitch, Cross, & Burnard, 2012), and health benefits (Bell & Akombo, 2017; Brooke & Meyers, 2015), which are advantageous to the 21st century learner. Despite these benefits, many high school students choose to leave their music programs prior to graduating. The focus of this action research study was to increase my understanding of retention of students in high school guitar programs. Through an online survey and student interview, I aimed to uncover the reasons why Grade 12 students from one urban school division chose to remain in guitar programs, while others chose to leave. The analyses of student responses revealed that multipotentiality, scheduling/timetabling, and competence beliefs were important factors to consider, while attitudes/beliefs, socioeconomic status, student repertoire, success/failure, parental influence, and teacher/student relationship were less so. It was also determined that several factors such as motivation, interest/passion/flow, competition, level of difficulty, and peer influence were inconclusive and required further study. Action strategies for guitar teachers were offered to retain students through to Grade 12.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

The education system in Canada has evolved since the turn of the 19th century. As the demand for an industrial workforce grew, early Canadian schools transformed from informal and decentralized systems, into highly regimented and rationalized educational organizations (Davies & Guppy, 2014). As standardized practical skills were sought and desired, an emphasis was placed on traditional subject areas that could be easily measured and tested, while subject areas such as the arts took on secondary importance (Eisner, 2004).

With the shift from the industrial to the information age, it would appear that the knowledge and skill sets produced within that initial system are no longer sufficient to meet the needs of a changing world (Pink, 2005). Although traditional competencies are still relevant, the 21st century learner is also expected to demonstrate creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills. Thus, changes to the education system are necessary.

To address this shortcoming, some progressive thinkers have suggested that the teaching and learning of 21st century competencies can be achieved, at least in part, through effective music education programming (Beegle, 2014; Shuler, 2011; Taylor, 2011). Through creating, performing, and responding to music, students have the potential to become “individuals who have developed the ideas, the sensibilities, the skills, and the imagination to create work that is well proportioned, skillfully executed, and imaginative, regardless of the domain in which an individual works” (Eisner, 2004, p. 4). However, to achieve this, a shift in thinking regarding the importance of music education is required. While acknowledging the role that traditional core subject area groups play in helping students construct knowledge, the importance of an education in the arts also needs to be recognized, not dismissed. After all, music is important. Is it not?

Music in My Life

Before proceeding any further, I would like to state openly how music has been present in my life. Employed by my current school division as a full-time educator, I have been teaching Grades 7 to 12 guitar at the same school for the past 14 years. In combination with the three years prior in another school division, I have also taught a variety of other subjects, such as animation, band, choir, computer applications, French, general music, general science, jazz band, outdoor education, technical music production, Web design, and yearbook to both francophone and immersion students ranging from Kindergarten through to Grade 12. Despite my flexibility in teaching various subjects, teaching and playing music in its various forms has and continues to be most fulfilling to me.

Music has always been a part of my life. As a young child, I remember sitting next to my mother as she played the piano, mesmerized by the melodies and harmonies that permeated my senses. The feelings of wonderment would surface yet once again, as I sat and listened to the members of the church choir as they sang their polyphonic hymns on Sundays while I tried to follow along as best I could. Later during my childhood, I had the opportunity to learn to play piano and to sing in my first festivals. At the age of fifteen, I was drawn to the powerful sounds of the guitar and technical prowess exuded by my idols. This drove me to teach myself how to play the instrument and start a rock band. Wanting to explore music further, I took private guitar, piano, and theory lessons, while continuing to sing and play guitar in a variety of university house bands. These early experiences engrained in me the desire to want to continue learning, resulting in a life-long pursuit to discover all that music had to offer.

The benefits that music had brought me to that point instilled in me a desire to want to share it with others. Having completed a 4-year Specialist in School Music program at Brandon

University in 2002, I provided instrumental lessons, conducted the local church choir, played various gigs, and taught music in various schools. Wanting to make a difference in the larger teaching community, I became an active member of the Manitoba Classroom Guitar Association, eventually taking on the role of president, a position I held for four years ending in January 2016.

Music is present in my own household. From a very young age, all four of my children have participated in pre-school music programs. They sang in a youth choir, in addition to the church choir. Currently, my 14-year-old son studies classical and electric guitar, as well as drums privately, while playing percussion in the school band and jazz band. My 12-year-old sings, studies piano, and enjoys playing flute in school. My 10-year-old studies guitar at school and bass guitar privately. Finally, my 8-year-old also takes private drum lessons, and likes to sing and play Orff instruments at school.

Music has had a profound impact on my personal and professional life. I truly believe that it can influence the lives of others as well. Consequently, providing music education to all children is of prime importance to me, especially throughout their school years.

Benefits of Music Education

Students who choose to participate in music programs will likely believe that doing so has value and meaning. Consequently, these future members of society and leaders of tomorrow may develop into music education's most powerful allies. As suggested by Elliott and Silverman (2015), when someone is actively engaged in music making, "musical-emotional experiences are much more powerful in persuading people that music matters" (p. 43). Music specialists must therefore strive to provide students with meaningful and relevant learning experiences, while anchored in a firm belief that these will be advantageous to them.

Music educators need not delve too deeply into the professional and academic literature to uncover diverse arguments that identify the benefits of a music education for their students. While the literature is oftentimes rational, ethical, and research-based, this is not always true and can consequently misguide the reader with assumptions and opinions (e.g., classical music makes children smarter, music causes achievement gains) ultimately hindering the cause for music education advocacy (Elliott & Silverman, 2015). Through critical and reflective thought, music teachers can better navigate this world of truths, half-truths, and untruths. By doing so, they may further realize that such statements cannot always be universally applied. However, this debate is not to suggest that everything that is said about learning music is untrue, and that contentions regarding the advantages of involving oneself in classroom music programs should simply be ignored or dismissed. After all, actively participating in music learning opportunities can be an enjoyable experience to most, with the potential to positively impact those who partake in it. Consequently, assertions pertaining to the benefits of music education should be critically examined further.

Music education and educational benefits. Over the course of the last fifty years, technological advances in the field of neuroscience have enabled researchers to map brain activity using various techniques, such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). Consequently, these tools have permitted neuroscientists to observe and better understand how the brain reacts, particularly when engaged in musical activity.

It has been suggested that musical activity involves nearly every region of the brain, including the corpus callosum, hippocampus, nucleus accumbens, amygdala, visual cortex, prefrontal cortex, motor cortex, sensory cortex, and auditory cortex (Levitin, 2006). In their

seminal work, Schlaug, Jänke, Huang, Staiger, and Steinmetz (1995) discovered that the anterior half of the corpus callosum that connected the right and left hemisphere of the brain was larger in practicing young musicians than that of non-musicians. Further research demonstrated that musical activity positively affected gray matter which is associated with processing and cognition, as well as white matter which is associated with communication between the various parts of the brain (Bailey, Zatorre, & Penhune, 2014; Bengtsson et al., 2005; Schmithorst & Wilke, 2002). The positive effect of musical activity on other areas of the brain such as the sensory, visual, and auditory cortex have also been investigated by other studies (Elbert, Pantev, Wienbruch, Rockstroh, & Taub, 2005; Musacchia, Sams, Skoe, & Kraus, 2007; Patston, Kirk, Rolfe, Corballis, & Tippett, 2007). Although it should be noted that the effect of musical activity on the brain appears greatest when initiated at a young age, there is an effect regardless of age. As Sacks (2007) stated, “anatomists today would be hard put to identify the brain of a visual artist, a writer, or a mathematician – but they could recognize the brain of a professional musician without a moment’s hesitation” (p. 100).

Although learning music has benefits in and of itself, certain studies have indicated that an education in music is positively associated with achievement outcomes in other subject areas. However, as Hallam (2010) specified, “the transfer of learning from one domain to another depends on the similarities between the processes involved” (p. 270). While transfers that are considered near, rather than far, are stronger and more likely to take place, both are “highly specific and must be cued, primed, and guided [as they] seldom occur spontaneously” (Perkins & Salomon, 1999, p. 19).

Given structural similarities between music and some aspects of mathematics (Bahr & Christianson, 2000; Catterall, Chapleau, & Iwanaga, 1999; Haimson, Swain, & Winner, 2011),

several researchers have sought to determine if participation in one domain can strengthen the other. In an earlier study, Gardiner, Fox, Knowles, and Jeffrey (1996) determined that elementary students who participated in school music programs were more likely to improve their mathematics skills. These findings were attributed to children's positive attitude toward learning and the application of musical skills useful in other areas. Catterall, Chapleau, and Iwanga (1999) examined the effect of the arts on achievement in mathematics, as well as other disciplines. The authors reported that students involved in performing arts programs in and outside of school achieved higher levels of mathematics proficiency by grade 12, regardless of socio-economic status. Using a small sample size in which three groups received varying amounts of Orff-Schulwerk music instruction, Whitehead (2001) found that student gains in mathematics positively related to the frequency and extent of music instruction. In a longitudinal study that was conducted with both children and adolescents, Southgate and Roscigno (2009) concluded that participation in music both inside and outside of school is a form of social capital that tends to increase academic achievement levels for mathematics and reading. However, the authors noted that additional research was required to examine the influence that other processes such as music involvement and social inequalities may have on educational performance. Other researchers investigated music instruction's effect on other facets of mathematics. In her research, Helmrich (2010) suggested, "the performance of music might strengthen the neural connections in those cortical areas of the brain used for algebra" (p. 558). By examining over 6000 Grade 9 students who had enrolled in instrumental instruction during middle years, the author concluded that achievement in algebra may be impacted by participating in such programs.

The effect of music on language acquisition has also been the topic of study in other research. Douglas & Willats (1994) demonstrated in their research that children's reading skills could be enhanced by participating in music instruction. Unlike pitch, rhythm seemed to be a determinant in 7 and 8-year-old students' abilities to develop literacy skills. The authors hypothesized that this was due to both being processed in the left hemisphere of the brain. A later study by Gardiner et al. (1996) identified that kindergarten children's reading skills could also be enhanced by having them participate in music and visual arts instruction. In her study, Gromko (2005) observed that certain aspects of kindergarten students' language proficiency benefited from receiving weekly music classes. By actively participating in music-making and movement activities, the author noted that students improved their phonemic awareness due to a near-transfer of aural skills between the two domains.

The effect of music instruction on academic achievement in other domains has also been the topic of study in other research. For example, Hetland's (2000) meta-analysis uncovered that music instruction impacted the spatial abilities of both preschool and elementary students who participated actively in music making. In addition, a Canadian study led by Gouzouasis, Guhn, and Kishor (2007) assessed the relationship between musical training and academic achievement. Although not making causal claims, the authors concluded that the Grade 11 and 12 students from their study who participated in high school choir or instrumental programs attained higher academic achievement in other core subject areas. A similar study by Southgate and Roscigno (2009) also examined the association between music instruction and academic achievement, but with children and adolescents. Although gains were not consistent for all students, increases in achievement levels were generally attained by most students who participated in music instruction both in and outside of school.

Despite the research cited previously, not all studies revealed that participation in school music programs increased mathematics skills for students. In an earlier study by Bahna-James (1991), the author determined that no significant relationship emerged between the music theory and mathematics grades of students from one high school, unless the mathematics course was of a more elementary level. In a meta-analysis of studies focusing on the topic, Vaughn (2000) suggested that although a small causal relationship was demonstrated, the small number of studies made it difficult to prove that music training enhanced mathematical performance. While investigating Grade 9 to Grade 12 students from one high school, Cox and Stevens (2006) noted that there were no statistically significant relationships between the students' participation in school music programs and their overall academic success in mathematics. However, the author revealed that the small sample size was a limiting factor in the study and that further research was warranted.

As with the research pertaining to music instruction's effect on mathematics, other researchers have been critical of the findings regarding its effect in other domains. Although Schlaug, Norton, Overy, and Winner (2005) agreed that instrumental music training positively enhanced visual-spatial, verbal, mathematical performance, they were cognizant of the fact that other factors such as intensity and duration of instrumental training, attention, motivation, and extracurricular activities, may impact them as well. Furthermore, while Črnčec, Wilson, and Prior (2006) offered near transfer as a possible explanation for spatiotemporal improvement, they also specified that the "evidence to date...[did] not support the notion that music lessons offer[ed] any advantage over and above other extracurricular education involving focused activity that a child may enjoy" (Črnčec, Wilson, & Prior, 2006, p. 585).

In spite of conflicting results, a case can be made that music education can enhance educational benefits for students. However, given the current research, evidence is mixed and therefore not conclusive. Further research is thus needed.

Music education and socio-emotional benefits. Participating, and more importantly experiencing success in quality music programs is not only a personal endeavor, but also a social activity in which students' personal and social development can be positively influenced. Within such programs, it has been suggested that music can help increase a child's "self-esteem, sense of belonging, cooperation, active engagement in learning, development of social skills, well-being, resilience, and inclusivity among students from all social, cultural, and economic strata" (Heyworth, 2013, p. 234). In so doing, the quality of each student's school life can be potentially improved.

It has been suggested that increasing a student's social and cultural capital may contribute to their academic achievement as well (Hallam, 2010). While examining the effects of participation in interscholastic sporting activities on high school achievement, Broh (2002) noted that similarities arose with extra-curricular music activities as well. As such, students who participated in extra-curricular music activities, experienced similar gains in development and social networks, as did those who participated in sports. While not the case with self-esteem and self-control, these outcomes included stronger liaisons with peers, parents, and teachers.

When a cross-cultural musical education is implemented, participation in such programs has demonstrated the ability to decrease stereotyping and prejudice, while increasing the acceptance of differences between students. In their study, Sousa, Neto, and Mullet (2005) sought to assess the effectiveness of such programs in reducing stereotyping among children. The authors noted that while children were apt to be drawn to the same music that their peers

listened to and identified with, an exposure to music produced by musicians from different cultures helped students realize that they have something in common with them as well, and that they were not so different after all.

Shehan-Campbell, Connell, and Beegle (2007) examined essay responses of teens justifying why music education should remain in school. In addition to music-specific, emotional, and life benefits of music, students also highlighted the social benefits of participating in music programs. These included meeting new people, developing a sense of belonging, diminishing boundaries between people, and providing an alternative to errant behavior.

While students may be engaged in their own learning, those who are disaffected may need to overcome certain educational disadvantages, as well as social exclusion. In Rusinek's (2008) study, the author reported that students who participated in music programs in which they were "agents of their learning, could see short-term goals with expectations of success, and could get a feeling of self-efficacy that improved their self-esteem" (p. 20). In such situations, both teachers and students alike learned that "the social character of the music learning promoted responsibility and compromise, that discipline was attained through self-regulation of behaviours instead of reprimands, and that the teacher was... a facilitator in achieving a shared goal" (Rusinek, 2008, p. 20).

Kirschner and Tomasello (2010) considered the role that music making played in encouraging cooperation in children. Building on theories that music served an adaptive function such as finding a mate, strengthening the mother-infant bond, or ensuring group cohesiveness, the authors implied that "joint music making ultimately increased prosocial commitment and foster[ed] subsequent cooperation among performers" (Kirschner & Tomasello, 2010, p. 355).

Results of their study suggested that children were more apt to come to the aid of others after having played music together.

Rabinowitch, Cross, and Burnard (2012) investigated the effect of musical group interactions on empathy. Musical components promoting empathy towards others included movement or motor resonance, imitation, entrainment, honest signaling (natural meaning in music), floating intentionality (non-verbal communication), flexibility, and disinterest (experience of pleasure without presupposing a pleasurable object). Results of the study indicated an increase in empathy for children participating in musical group interactions, while being less evident for the control group.

Frankenberg et al. (2016) had explored the effects of music education on social and cultural inclusion. Specifically, their study aimed to assess the efficacy of a music program in orienting migrants into a new culture. As indicated by the authors, this process of acculturation required “a multicultural society that endorse[d] the integration of migrants and acknowledge[d] the right of migrants to maintain their culture of origin while adopting aspects of the national culture” (Frankenberg et al., 2016, p. 117). Within such a climate, students who participated in music ensembles tended to strengthen their connection to mainstream culture, while having a positive impact on their social integration.

While participating in music programs may benefit students, results are mixed as to the impact of music on the socio-emotional lives of students. For example, in a study investigating the effects and effectiveness of school-based arts education, Harland et al. (2000) uncovered through case studies, data analysis, surveys, and interviews that student participation in arts education yielded a sense of fulfilment, social skills, self-confidence, in addition to expressive

and creative skills. However, as the authors noted, of all art forms examined, these were most evident in art, dance, and drama, while being less so in music.

A later two-part study conducted by Rickard, Bambrick, and Gill (2012) first examined the cognitive and psychosocial impact of increasing the quantity of music classes for 10 to 13-year-old males, while the second part of the study sought to investigate the psychosocial impact of introducing a quality school-based music program for Grade 5 and 6 students. Although inconsistent with previous research, the researchers' finding was that neither had a significant impact on students. To explain their findings, the authors hypothesized that benefits may be limited to younger, disadvantaged, or at-risk youth, who participated in "more focussed and intensive instruction available in private or small group tuition" (Rickard, Bambrick, & Gill, 2012, p. 68).

A similar study conducted by Rickard et al. (2013) explored the effect of increasing the frequency and quality of music education on Grade 1 and Grade 3 students' self-esteem and social skills. The researchers concluded that although participation in music programs was beneficial to both younger and older children, increases in their self-esteem could also be obtained through other arts-based programs. Furthermore, the authors revealed that the music program did not affect the children's social skills, either positively or negatively.

There seems to be some evidence that music may have socio-emotional benefits for students. However, as it is not conclusive, further research is thus warranted.

Music education and health benefits. In preparation for our year-end concert, my senior guitar ensemble had presented mini-concerts to elementary and middle-years students at several schools. During one such presentation, the Grade 2 teacher had asked my students to speak to her students about the reasons music was important to them. Some of the testimonies shared moved

students, teachers, and the principal in attendance. In addition to playing music for their personal enjoyment, many students admitted to turning to music as an adaptive coping mechanism to deal with the pressures of everyday school life. Whether students were dealing with grief, stress, anxiety, or depression, music provided them with a strategy for improving their feelings of well-being.

Although music teachers are not music therapists, they should be cognizant of the notion that music can have a profound impact on the health and wellness of those who are engaged by it. As Sacks (2007) expressed, while music “makes one experience pain and grief more intensely, it [can bring] solace and consolation at the same time” (p. 283). As such, researchers have sought to better understand the therapeutic role of music by studying its effect on the human body.

In an earlier clinical study, McCraty, Atkinson, Rein, & Watkins (1996) demonstrated that healthy adult participants who listened to designer music (i.e., music designed to facilitate mental and emotional balance), rather than rock or new wave music, tended to have enhanced positive emotional states. Physiologically, this effect was exhibited by increases in levels of salivary immunoglobulin A, a hormone contributing to greater immunoenhancement. Similarly, McKinney, Antoni, Kumar, Tims, & McCabe (1997) reported that participants in music psychotherapy sessions who listened to music that evoked imagery were more likely to experience decreases in cortisol levels, a hormone secreted in response to stress. In turn, these healthy adults were less likely to experience depression, fatigue, and mood disturbances than the control group.

While listening to music may promote positive effects on the body, participating in music may also produce similarities. In Kuhn’s (2002) study, the author noted that salivary immunoglobulin A levels were higher in groups of adults who sang and played instruments than

those who only listened to music, thus having a greater effect on their immune system. Correspondingly, Kreutz, Bongard, Rohrman, Hodapp, and Grebe (2003) determined that while listening to music did not affect salivary immunoglobulin A levels, it did decrease cortisol levels, while increasing negative moods. Conversely, actively engaging in choral singing increased positive mood and salivary immunoglobulin A secretion, while having minimal effect on cortisol responses. These positive effects of choral singing on the immune system appear to be observable in solo singers as well. Beck, Gottfried, Hall, Cisler, and Bozeman (2006) demonstrated that while solo singing, salivary immunoglobulin A levels were comparable to those attained through choral singing. However, contrary to the previous study, the singer's positive emotions about her or his singing were associated with a decrease in cortisol in their system as well.

Aside from the physiological effects, music can also promote positive psychological effects as well. Bell and Akombo (2017) acknowledged that focused music listening produced beneficial effects on blood pressure, heart rate, respiration rate, anxiety, depression, and mindfulness. As nearly 5% of Canadian children are diagnosed with some form of mental health disorder according to the Public Health Agency of Canada (2016), music may provide these individuals with a “means of expression at a time when feelings and emotions may be fragmented, elusive, and inaccessible to language” (Brooke & Meyers, 2015, p 127).

In certain circumstances, music can also be used to heal the psychological pain associated with loss and tragedy. As Merritt (1996) explained,

[w]hen conditions seem too frightening to let out your feelings, they can invite music's gentle nudge to help you express them. As you allow the music to help you experience pain and sadness, all the locked-up joy bursts forth too, releasing a vitality that kindles

interest and excitement in all aspects of your life, your work, your relationships, your studies. (p. 27)

Building on Merritt's work, Perschy (2004) proposed music activities to help students deal with loss in unfortunate circumstances. In so doing, students were given the opportunity to connect with their feelings and emotions. Similarly, McFerran (2010) suggested music making and composition in school-based programs provided fun and creative avenues for bereaved teens' need to express their grief.

Findings generated by researchers have revealed that music has the potential to enhance physical, physiological, and psychological health (Stacy, Brittain, & Kerr, 2002). Yet, others highlight a lack of consistent evidence to support the claims, especially as they pertain to mainstream schools. In analyzing certain studies, Crooke and McFerran (2014) uncovered challenges related to methodology, as well as music program attributes. In the former, the authors maintained that many studies utilized experimental designs using quantitative self-reports, which have been deemed insufficient in assessing benefits, especially when conducted with children and older children. In the latter, the authors contended that most studies had been performed in therapeutic programs, rather than typical school music classes. In such programs, benefits to students' personal and social well-being were acquired through tailored and client-centered delivery.

As with so many other areas of music education research, some researchers suggest that music education can enhance health benefits for students, while other studies do not. Overall, the evidence is mixed at this time and therefore not conclusive. The impact of music on students' health and wellness then requires closer examination.

Claims have been made regarding the importance of music education in the lives of children. Although additional research is needed to substantiate them, the findings presented in this chapter suggest that the educational, socio-emotional, and health benefits of music have the potential to positively impact 21st century learners. While a rewarding and pleasurable endeavor in and of itself, quality music opportunities not only have the potential to improve children's overall well-being but may also provide them with the tools to realize their full potential.

Relevancy of Classroom Guitar

Traditionally, students have accessed their music education in high school by enrolling in bands, choirs, or orchestras. While these music programs have played an important role in enriching the lives of many students, some authors have proposed that these tended to cater to a specific student demographic. As specified in a study by Elpus and Abril (2011), these students were predominantly white, female, English speaking, had higher academic averages, were of higher socio-economic status, and had parents that had advanced postsecondary degrees.

As several authors have suggested that as many as 80% of high school students are not involved in any form of school music activity (Abril & Gault, 2008; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Hoffer, 1989; Kratus, 2007; Sanderson, 2014), it is therefore important for schools to consider offering music electives that are enticing to the student demographic which is typically underrepresented in traditional music programs. In so doing, more students will be able to reap the benefits that music has to offer.

In many traditional music programs, music is taught through performance. Although effective for students of above-average interest and ability, Hoffer (1989) contended that performance-based programs may effectively discourage other students from participating in them as they “lack either the desire or capabilities needed to be members of most high school

performing organizations” (p. 34). Thus, music educators should consider alternatives to their approaches to teaching music. Bowman (2009) suggested that musical practices (praxes) should expand beyond performing and “include kinds of actions or ways of being musical (performing, improvising, arranging, singing, composing, and listening) and types of musical doings or categories into which these actions can be seen to fall” (p. 161). Providing such variety in one’s practice may consequently encourage more student participation in music programs. Failure to do so may hinder this effort. As Hoffer (1989) prophetically stated over thirty years ago:

[I]f music teachers do not develop courses through which nonperforming students can meet fine arts requirements, then either other areas such as art and theater will fulfill the need, or the requirements will be redefined to include courses ranging from home economics to industrial arts to foreign languages. (p. 35)

There are many alternative approaches to traditional high school music programs which are not necessarily performance based. These include but are not limited to composition, general music, guitar, music appreciation, music technology, musical theatre, piano/keyboard, and theory. After music theory, Sanderson (2014) reported that guitar and music appreciation were the second most prevalent non-band, choir, or orchestra courses to be offered in the high schools of one American state. However, unlike music theory, “these classes were highly successful in bringing new students into the music department” (Sanderson, 2014, p. 58). Similar findings were reflected in an earlier national study conducted in the United States in which Abril and Gault (2008) reported that many principals considered offering alternative courses such as these in their school “to involve more students in music through expanded course offerings” (p. 77).

Given the available alternatives, administrators and music educators who are interested in expanding and diversifying the music options at their school, and who are intent on improving

overall student participation in school music may question which course would best meet their needs and the needs of their students. Although the intention is not to disparage the value of other music electives, an argument can be made why high school classroom guitar should be considered.

First, as previously stated, classroom guitar has the potential to increase the number of students involved in music programs by attracting new students to music, without necessarily affecting enrolment in existing music programs (Sanderson, 2014; Schmid, Marsters, & Shull, 1998). In addition, it has been suggested that some guitar programs tend to appeal to boys, a population that has generally been underserved by traditional music programs (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Schmid, Marsters, & Shull, 1998). Furthermore, as will be discussed shortly, the flexibility of the program itself may make classroom guitar an appropriate choice for students who can be considered “diverse, colorful, and challenging to work with” (Eckels, 2006, p. 32).

Second, the guitar lends itself nicely not only to performance, but also to other alternatives such as learning to improvise, arrange, sing, compose, and listen. Students can explore guitar as a solo, small, or large ensemble instrument, while delving into a variety of musical genres and styles. Those who choose to learn to read music using conventional notation can do so on guitar, while others who lack the skills may opt to use tablature or numbering systems. Creativity may be fostered through improvisation, arranging, and composition. Also, the ability to play either melodies and/or harmonies while singing offers musical possibilities that are inaccessible to many other instrumental streams. As indicated by Bartel (1990), a guitar program that is flexible and that does not limit itself to performance can much easier provide for “students who have had little if any consistent music education in the years preceding high school or for students who want a meaningful musical experience” (p. 41).

Lastly, Kratus (2007) mentioned that music education had reached a tipping point as it “had become disconnected from the prevailing culture” (p. 44). Yet, along with stylistic adaptability, a music education by means of the guitar has cultural appeal that most other instruments cannot offer. Students can identify with the guitar within a multitude of “traditional and contemporary forms of folk, country, classical, jazz, rock, and world musics” (Bartel, 1990, p. 44). Compared to other instruments, it is also an instrument that many will choose to continue playing after graduation. A primary role of music educators is thus to find ways to modify their practices to continue making it relevant for their students and to develop their curricula, so it complements “the ways people actually experience music in their lives (Kratus, 2007, p. 45). As echoed by Bartel (1990), “[w]e need to apply our philosophy of music education in a culturally relevant manner using one of the most popular instruments of today – the guitar” (p. 45).

Context of the Study

Guitar programs in Canadian high schools have increased in popularity over the past fifty years. From their modest beginnings during the 1960s, school-based guitar programs have grown exponentially as more teachers, school administrators, and school boards have considered, developed, implemented, and supported alternatives to traditional instrumental and choral programs (Bartel, 1983; Bartel, 1990). Although both continue to figure prominently in many secondary schools, classroom guitar as a music opportunity for students has continued its growth, building a stronger foothold in many high schools across the country.

The presence of high school guitar programs varies significantly from province to province. Although the precise number of guitar programs in each is difficult to pinpoint, certain public documents and some personal communications with provincial department of education representatives helped to give me insight regarding the state of guitar programs in the country.

In 2010, the Coalition for Music Education in Canada conducted a survey in which results indicated that guitar (45%) was the third most common music offering in secondary schools after band (79%) and choir (58%) (Hills Strategy Research, 2010). Among survey participants, Ontario boasted the highest percentage of high school guitar programs in Canada at 58%, while western secondary schools were well below the national average at 33%. Although these data seem impressive, it must be noted that the sample size was small and only represented 299 of 3300 (9%) secondary schools in Canada (413 of 3300 when including mixed elementary and secondary schools). Given that over 90% of secondary schools did not participate in the survey, caution is needed when interpreting the results.

Information on guitar programs offered by high schools in other provinces was uncovered. Ontario provincial government documents indicated that only 13,633 of 2,003,237 (0.68%) high school students were enrolled in Grade 9 to Grade 12 guitar programs during the 2014-2015 school year in that province (Government of Ontario, 2017a; Government of Ontario, 2017b). Of 391 Saskatchewan high schools, 20 of them offered a Grade 10 guitar course, while 18 offered a Grade 11 guitar course, and another 14 offered a Grade 12 guitar course during the 2015-2016 school year (R. Warnock, personal communication, April 29, 2017). Although it is unclear whether all three courses were offered at the same schools or not, with an average of 17 schools offering guitar programming, it can be roughly calculated that approximately 4% of Saskatchewan high schools offer guitar. In Newfoundland and Labrador, certain schools offer music making experiences via guitar, although course enrolment information by type of music instrumental program is not gathered (M. Dinn, personal communication, May 17, 2017). In Prince Edward Island, 5 out of 10 high schools provide guitar instruction through their regular band and jazz programs. It has also been indicated that a new curriculum document presently in

development will have a guitar specific component for Grades 4 to 12 (V. Allen-Cook, personal communication, May 9, 2017). In Nunavut, no data is collected specific to guitar programs.

Schools offer specific types of music classes depending on instructor and instrument availability. Furthermore, courses and programs are developed locally as decided upon by the Local District Education Authority and school administrations (M. Mendillo, personal communication, May 4, 2017).

In Manitoba, high school guitar programs are common in the music programming of certain school divisions, while being less so in others. Based on data amassed by the Manitoba Classroom Guitar Association, 38 of the 317 (12%) Manitoba high schools were offering classroom guitar to its students during the 2016-2017 school year (Manitoba Classroom Guitar Association, 2017). Among these, one Manitoba school division has an established tradition of offering classroom guitar instruction. Located in a large urban centre, it currently offers guitar programming in 25 of 40 (63%) of its elementary, middle years, and high schools. Based on student enrolment, high school guitar programs in this division have taken many forms, including guitar orchestras, large ensembles, and small ensembles, in addition to guitar clubs. Supported by the framework of the provincially approved music curriculum, the main objective of its divisional guitar programs is to provide outlets for making, creating, connecting with, and responding to music for all students enrolled in them.

Approximately 600 students attend the French immersion school where I am employed within this division from Grades 7 to 12. On average, approximately 16% of the school's population has taken part in the school's guitar program over the last 14 years (see Figure 1 and Appendix A). In addition to fostering individual and group performance skills, the aim of the program is to provide guitar students with opportunities to expand their knowledge of theory and

history, as well as to develop their reading, listening, improvisation, arranging, and composition skills. In so doing, the program addresses the new Grades 9 to 12 Manitoba music curriculum learning outcomes.

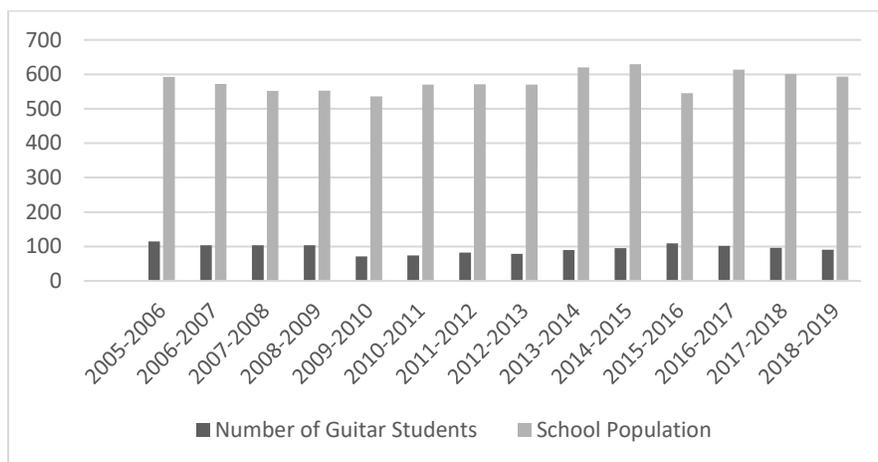


Figure 1. Guitar enrolment trends.

This figure illustrates the researcher's school Grade 7 to Grade 12 guitar enrolment trends from 2005 to 2019.

The school's students represent a diverse cross-section of society whose life experiences are influenced to different degrees by ethnicity, family composition, gender, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. This eclectic mix of students is equally found in its guitar program. Most times, the heterogeneity in student composition enriches the program, but it does occasionally create new challenges for the music specialist as well. Despite this conundrum, embracing these challenges is part of what makes teaching these students such an interesting and rewarding experience.

Research Problem

General music programs are offered to all students of elementary schools in this school division. As the students enter middle years however, they are provided with an array of options

to pursue, such as music, art, drama, and dance. Given the variety of courses offered from school to school, some students opt to withdraw from music at this stage. A similar situation occurs when students transition from middle years to their first year of high school, when even more electives are being offered. Despite having participated in music programs up to this point, it is interesting to note that of those who continue, many will leave their music programs later during their high school years, resulting in lowered enrolment numbers in programs at the Grade 10, Grade 11, and Grade 12 levels.

Despite its uniqueness in additionally offering middle years' guitar programming within its walls, the school where I teach is one of seven schools in the division providing guitar programs at the high school level. Course enrolment data demonstrate that as students progress through high school, there is a gradual decrease in guitar enrolment at the Grade 10, Grade 11, and Grade 12 levels (see Figure 2 and Appendix B). Consequently, reduced class sizes at these higher-grade levels have resulted in a rise of combined classes to run the courses.

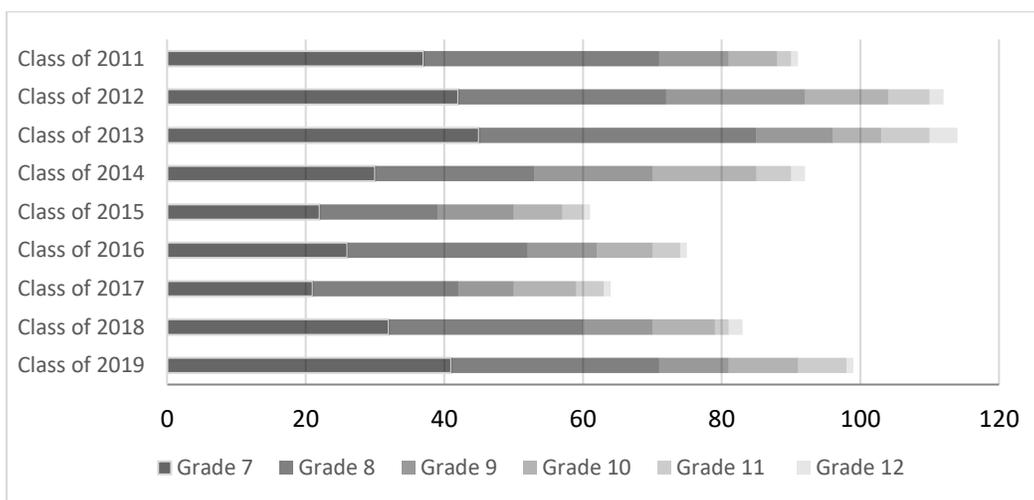


Figure 2. Guitar enrolment trends by graduating class.

This figure illustrates the researcher's school guitar enrolment trends by graduating class from 2011 to 2019.

As participating in quality school music programs may bring forth educational, socio-emotional, and health benefits that are advantageous to the 21st century learner, music educators must find ways to help students persevere with their music education. As it appears that many high school students will choose to leave their music programs prior to graduating, music educators must therefore identify and understand the factors that affect student retention and attrition. Doing so may assist these music educators in making positive changes to their programs for the benefit of all students.

Research Questions

As some students in elementary schools make conscious decisions to enrol in middle years' guitar programs and then purposely decide to remain in them as they transition to high school, one may question why they leave guitar programs in Grade 10, Grade 11, or Grade 12. Therefore, the research questions that were the impetus for this study were as follows:

1. What student enrolment trends were evident by grade level in guitar programs in a large urban school division in Manitoba?
2. What factors impacted the guitar enrolment trends?
3. What strategies could be implemented to improve student retention in my guitar program through to graduation by addressing these factors?

Delimitations of the Study

The first research question was investigated by examining the student enrolment trends in Grade 9 to Grade 12 guitar programs in each of the seven high schools of one urban school division offering such programs. The purpose was to determine if student enrolment trends were similar or not in each school. As such, any school within this division that did not offer high

school guitar programming for each of these grade levels for a minimum of twelve consecutive years were excluded from the current study.

The second and third research questions were investigated using an action research methodology by means of a mixed data collection strategy, undergirded by pragmatism as the theoretical framework. The purpose was to uncover the reasons why certain students remain in high school guitar programs, while others choose to leave, and to create an action strategy based upon what I learned. Responses were limited to Grade 12 students who were still currently enrolled in guitar at the time of the study and those who decided to leave the program in Grade 10, Grade 11, or Grade 12.

The literature review presented in chapter 2 examines music education literature that pertains to factors affecting student retention and student attrition in music programs. Although an effort had been made to gather literature relevant to high school guitar programs specifically, there was little scholarship related specifically to guitar music education. Consequently, the literature review had been expanded to include all high school instrumental programs such as band and choir, and in some cases, middle years and elementary music programs as well.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is comprised of six chapters. The current chapter elaborates on the role of music in my life, the benefits of music education, the context of the study, the research problem and questions, and the delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 presents the literature reviewed and the theoretical framework used for this study. I further define both retention and attrition and explore the factors impacting both in school music programs. Chapter 3 makes explicit pragmatism as the theoretical framework for the methodology and describes how the study was conducted. Chapter 4 presents findings emerging from data analysis as they pertain to each

research question. Chapter 5 expands on each research question through an interpretive discussion of the findings. The final chapter summarizes the research, proposes action strategies for guitar teachers, acknowledges limitations and advantages of the study, and offers recommendations for further research. References and appendices are found at the end of the document.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

For some, life is about choice. However, choice is not without consequence. Although some decisions that we make may have little impact on our lives, others can greatly alter the path that we tread. The same can be said for students. As Schwartz (2005) explained, they “are required to make choices about education that may affect them for the rest of their lives. And they are forced to make these choices at a point in their intellectual development when they may lack the resources to make them intelligently” (p. 17). If there is any truth to this statement, exploring the factors that influence student decision-making may be worthwhile.

As stated earlier in the introductory chapter, students tend to make decisions regarding their school music programming as they move from elementary (Kindergarten to Grade 6) to middle years (Grades 5 to 8), and again as they transition from middle years to their first year of high school (Grades 9 to 12). Although some research has examined recruitment strategies, as well as the reasons for the attrition and retention of students at these two earlier stages, research literature on these topics appear less evident as students complete their subsequent years of study. This void is especially true when the focus is on high school guitar programs. Consequently, the following literature review incorporates some of the information gathered pertaining to student retention and attrition at all grade levels and in all instrumental streams, with a focus on high school guitar when readily available.

Theoretical Framework

Eisenhart (1991) defines a theoretical framework as “a structure that guides research by relying on a formal theory constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships” (p. 205). Once established, it can then be used by researchers to

guide their study, which may in turn enhance and give credibility to their research. As Reimer (2008) declared, “theory without practice is empty, and practice without theory is blind” (p. 193).

In a content analysis of the *Journal of Research in Music Education*, Miksza and Johnson (2012), uncovered nearly 144 different theoretical frameworks used in music education studies. These included theories and models which were developed specifically for the field of music education (e.g., Leblanc’s Interactive Theory of Musical Preferences), as well as a myriad of others from other fields of studies (e.g., Piaget’s Genetic Epistemology, Weiner’s Attribution Theory). Although not among those listed in the analysis, the theoretical framework that underpinned my study and which is presented in the literature review will be self-determination theory, more specifically its sub-theory of basic psychological needs. This particular theory holds potential to explain student attrition and retention in guitar programs and as such, is a reason it was selected as the lens for this study.

Self-determination theory was proposed and developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan during the 1970s. Their theory posits that individuals are motivated and engaged when their basic needs are met. As specified by the authors, these identifiable needs are innate, psychological, and essential for well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When these are hindered in social contexts, individuals tend to “move away from activities or situations” (Evans, McPherson, & Davidson, 2012, p. 603).

Self-determination theory is an approach that “begins with the assumption that people are active organisms, with evolved tendencies toward growing, mastering ambient challenges, and integrating new experiences into a coherent sense of self” (Self-Determination Theory, 2017, “Meta-Theory”, para. 1). It suggests that individuals seek to be self-determining through several forms of motivation, from amotivation, through extrinsic motivation, and ultimately to intrinsic

motivation (see Figure 3). As an individual experiences intrinsic motivation, he or she becomes self-determined in wanting to succeed and pursue an activity or endeavor.

Behavior	Non Self-Determined ←————→ Self-Determined					
Motivation	Amotivation	Extrinsic Motivation				Intrinsic Motivation
Regulatory Styles	Non-Regulation	External Regulation	Introjected Regulation	Identified Regulation	Integrated Regulation	Intrinsic Regulation
Perceived Locus of Causality	Impersonal	External	Somewhat External	Somewhat Internal	Internal	Internal
Relevant Regulatory Processes	Nonintentional Nonvaluing Incompetence Lack of Control	Compliance Exernal Rewards Punishment	Self-Control Ego-Involvement Internal Rewards Punishments	Personal Importance Conscious Valuing	Congruence Awareness Synthesis With Self	Interest Enjoyment Inherent Satisfaction

Figure 3. Self-determination theory continuum.

This figure illustrates how an individual’s behavior is reflected through changes in motivation, regulatory styles, perceived locus of causality, and relevant regulatory processes. Adapted from “Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being” by R. M. Ryan and E. L. Deci, 2000, *American Psychologist*, 55(1), p. 72.

Self-determination theory can be separated into six sub-theories, each addressing a facet of motivation. First, cognitive evaluation theory focuses on intrinsic motivation. Framed in terms of social and environmental factors, it seeks to identify how these “external events which pressure people to think, feel, or behave in particular ways, can undermine [intrinsic motivation]” (Vansteenkiste, Niemiec, & Soenens, 2010, p. 105). Second, organismic integration theory examines extrinsic motivation in its various forms. As external motivation is sometimes required when tasks or endeavors which are necessary, but unpleasant or disinteresting, the sub theory attempts to explain how contextual factors “either promote or hinder internalization and integration of the regulation for these behaviors” (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 72). Third, causality

orientations theory explores how motivation is affected by different situations that are encountered. It suggests that three causality orientations exist to various degrees within each individual (Vansteenkiste, Niemiec, & Soenens, 2010). Individuals demonstrating autonomy orientations will tend to perceive that they have more control in their lives than those demonstrating control or impersonal orientations. Fourth, basic psychological needs theory posits that an individual's psychological health and well-being is dependent on having his or her psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness met. Proponents of this theory claim that these "needs are universal and must be satisfied in all cultures for people to be optimally healthy" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 246). Fifth, goal contents theory considers both intrinsic and extrinsic goals and their influence on motivation and wellness. Whereas intrinsic goals (e.g., personal growth, close relationships, community contribution, and physical health) may foster the satisfaction of basic psychological needs, extrinsic life goals (e.g., money, fame, and image) may have a different effect (Vansteenkiste, Niemiec, & Soenens, 2010). Lastly, relationships motivation theory emphasizes the relations that individuals form and their effect on well-being. This sub-theory advances that "interactions are not only desirable for most people but are in fact essential for their adjustment and well-being" (Self-Determination Theory, 2017, "Formal Theory", para. 7).

For this study, I used basic psychological needs theory as its theoretical framework. It postulates three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Synthesizing the definitions of other authors, Johnston and Finney (2010) defined autonomy as "the need to feel that one's behavior and resulting outcomes are self-determined, or self-caused, as opposed to being influenced or controlled by outside forces" (p. 280). They further described competence as "the need to feel effective and capable of performing tasks at varying levels of difficulty"

(Johnston & Finney, 2010, p. 280). Finally, the authors explained relatedness as “the need to feel connected to, supported by, or cared for by other people” (Johnston & Finney, 2010, p. 280). When all three of these needs are fulfilled, individuals can achieve optimal function, growth, and psychological well-being.

Autonomy refers to the ability of an individual to make choices freely. Evans (2009) suggested that self-regulation plays a role in an individual’s sense of autonomy as “the more individuals internalize regulation, the more they are intrinsically motivated, and therefore likely to feel as though their actions are self-endorsed and self-governed” (p. 47). As such, regulation of one’s self can be expressed through varying degrees of extrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan (2000) identify (a) external regulation, (b) introjection, (c) identification, and (d) integration being the highest form of extrinsic motivation.

Competence refers to the ability of an individual to accomplish a task effectively. Feelings of competence have roots in what is known as ‘effectance motivation’, which is a “function of the central nervous system that provides short-term feelings of pleasure from having an effect on the environment” (White, 1959). In turn, effectance motivation leads to competence motivation which can be defined as “experiences of pleasure that come from not just having an immediate effect on the environment, but from effectively engaging in activities that lead to less immediate goals” (Evans, 2009, p. 22). Consequently, such behavior can aid individuals to better adapt to changing environments.

Relatedness refers to the ability of an individual to connect and feel understood by others. The need is theorized to have evolved because of selective pressure, where cooperation, connection, and internalization of group needs and values would have been advantageous to the individual and to his or her social group (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Self-determination theory

hypothesizes “that intrinsic motivation will be more likely to flourish in contexts characterized by a sense of secure relatedness” (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 235). As Patrick, Canevello, Knee, and Lonsbary (2007) noted, individuals are apt to encounter enhanced psychological and relational functioning, experience more intimacy, and achieve better relationship satisfaction and security when the needs for relatedness are met.

As previously stated, the basic psychological needs theory has been used in this study to undergird the literature pertaining to student retention and attrition in music programs. Based on this theory, it is proposed that students for whom their psychological needs are met will be more likely to remain in music, while those for whom their psychological needs are not addressed, will be more likely to leave.

Student Retention

Retention can be broadly defined as the act of keeping someone in some place or something for a given time. According to music educator Hartley (1996), retention can be explained as “[i]nstrumental music students who, once started, remained enrolled in the... [music] program” (p. 306). Similarly, Gouzouasis, Henrey, and Belliveau (2008) described retention as when students “[continue] with music throughout their high school career” (p. 75). Given these definitions, student retention for this study signifies keeping students enrolled in music programs until the end of their Grade 12 year.

Student Attrition

Attrition can be broadly defined as the act of having someone leave something before a certain time. It can further be defined as “when students leave a...programme and choose not to continue music in high school (Gouzouasis, Henrey, & Belliveau, 2008, p. 75). This definition complements that of Ng and Harwig (2011) who refer to it as students’ “declining participation

in music learning in school” (p. 125). Based on these definitions, the definition of student attrition for this study signifies students leaving their music programs before their Grade 12 year.

Contributing Factors in Student Retention and Attrition

Several researchers have explored various factors affecting student retention and attrition. In spite of the fact that there does not yet seem to be a consensus in the literature about student retention and attrition, there are several common themes. Whereas positive experiences can encourage students to remain in music programs, negative experiences can have the opposite effect. To have a better understanding of the reasons why students choose to remain or leave music programs, parental influence, teacher influence, and student motivation are examined in more detail.

Parental influence. It is without question that parents play a significant role in their children’s educational lives. The influence that parents have on their children can be expressed through their “beliefs, expectations, aspirations, attitudes, behaviours, and affective components” (Gonida & Vauras, 2014, p. 349). However, it has been suggested that this influence changes over time as children mature and become more autonomous (Spera, 2005). Consequently, given its complex nature, it is sometimes difficult to determine which aspect has the most impact, when it has the most impact, and to what extent.

Certain studies have indicated that parents play a role in the academic choices that their children make. By means of a quantitative survey as well as teacher and student interviews, Corenblum and Marshall (1998) examined the effect of socioeconomic level, perceived school support, and teacher evaluations on Grade 9 students’ intentions to remain in high school band programs. Their findings uncovered that in addition to socioeconomic status and teacher evaluations, the perceived attitudes of parents towards music were considerable factors in

determining student retention. These attitudes are moulded by cultural norms, values, and beliefs, which in turn “exert pervasive influence on behavior” (Corenblum & Marshall, 1998, p. 136).

The influence of parents was a determining factor in later studies as well. Using a quantitative approach, Sichivistsa (2004) examined the effect of parental musicianship and support in music, previous musical experience, self-concept of musical ability, academic and social integration, and value of music on Grade 4, Grade 5, and Grade 6 students’ intentions to pursue music. The author revealed in her study that:

middle years students who perceived their parents to be personally interested in music and supportive of their children’s musical learning felt better about their musical ability, were comfortable in music classes academically and socially, felt supported by the music teachers, valued music, and finally were motivated to continue studying music in the future. (Sichivistsa, 2004, p. 35)

Sjoberg (2011) sought to determine why certain Grade 6 students from a suburban school district in Manitoba chose music as an option in Grade 7, while others did not. Data from both student and teacher participants were collected by means of a qualitative approach. Although findings indicated that student choices were based primarily on their passions, the author of the study indicated that parents and peers further influenced the decision. The researcher specified that it was the “parents’ attitudes toward the importance of a subject [that was] a factor in the choice...by their children” (Sjoberg, 2011, p. 208).

It has been suggested that a parent’s expectation of their child’s success in an activity is a contributing factor in whether he or she remains in music programs. Referencing the works of Ericsson, Tesch-Romer, and Krampe (1993), Dai and Schader (2002) explained that “if parents and their children invest a great deal in an activity, often at the expense of other options and

interests, they must be confident that the potential for success in the activity is high” (p. 135). Once committed to the activity, the expectations that parents have for their child can have various effects (McPherson, 2009). When parents expect their child to do well, that child has a greater chance of self-actualization, and consequently, may be more apt to continue in music. Conversely, parents who do not expect their child to do well in music oftentimes have a detrimental effect on him or her. This effect can be compounded when parental perceptions of the quality of instruction are deemed insufficient, and the value of music education in general is diminished (Dai & Schader, 2002). Therefore, the more parents hold fixed views of their child’s competence, either positive or negative, “the more self-fulfilling is their perception” (McPherson, 2009, p. 96).

Contrary to what has been stated thus far, a recent mixed-methods study in which Grade 4 to Grade 12 students from a suburban school district in New York participated, suggested that although parental support was deemed important by students, it did “not appear to be a strong influence on whether...students join and remain in band (Dray, 2014, p. 72). This was especially true at the elementary, middle years, and high school levels, while being less so at the junior high level. While examining a variety of factors such as parental support, teacher-student relationships, peer involvement, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, financial issues, competition/ego, and success/failure, the author determined that intrinsic motivation and success/failure were predominant factors affecting student retention (Dray, 2014).

Many parents believe that music is important for their children. As Dai and Schader (2001) affirmed, parents recognize that music plays many roles in their children’s development, such as enhancing self-concept, self-esteem, discipline, and diligence. Through their attitudes, expectations, and beliefs, they attempt to instill in their children a desire to want to pursue music.

Although the extent to which it affects a student's decision to remain in music programs may be contested, most teachers recognize the importance of maintaining positive relationships with parents to recruit their children into their music programs and to help retain them afterward (Sjoberg, 2011).

Teacher-student relationships. Along with parental influence, a music teacher's relationship with students can also have an impact on their decision to remain in music. According to some researchers, building positive teacher-student relationships is a key process. Dray's (2014) mixed-method study discussed earlier attempted to determine which factors motivated Grade 4 to Grade 12 students to enroll and remain in instrumental music programs in a suburban school district in New York. Although Dray (2014) purported that evaluating a teacher's influence was difficult, the author did suggest that students who like their teacher, especially if they were supportive and helpful, were more likely to remain in the program than those who did not. This was especially true for students at the elementary level, as well as the junior high level.

Using a mixed methods approach, Davidson, Sloboda, and Howe (1995) sought to examine the impact that parents and teachers play on the levels of achievement attained by young instrumental learners. Following interviews with Grade 3 to Grade 12 students, as well as their parents, results of the study indicated that persistent learners tended to have an intrinsic and self-sustaining motivation, in addition to having parents who were musically involved in their learning. Additionally, contrary to students who discontinue music, these students tended to be appreciative of the differences in personal and professional characteristics of their teachers. As such, "in the early stages of teaching, personal warmth [was] a vital characteristic of the

instrumental teacher. Pedagogic competence [was] not enough” (Davidson, Sloboda, & Howe, 1995, p. 44).

A similar conclusion was obtained in a quantitative study conducted by Davidson, Moore, Sloboda, and Howe (1998) which examined how the characteristics of music teachers impacted student musical development. Grade 3 to Grade 12 students from various locations in the United Kingdom were interviewed and placed in categories ranging from highly successful to musical dropouts. Findings suggested that the rapport a student’s first teacher establishes with that student is of high importance. As the children mature, that relationship remains important, but students also seek to view their teachers as competent performers. As the authors stated, “if a child does not establish a good personal relationship with the first teacher, it may be particularly detrimental to long-term commitment to continue receiving lessons from that teacher” (Davidson, Moore, Sloboda, & Howe, 1998, p. 157).

One study consisting of small focus groups of Grade 8 students in the Perth metropolitan of Western Australia revealed that teacher-student relationships were only part of the equation. The study exposed that in addition to students’ perceptions of the value of music, the students’ perceptions of their competence in music was another determining factor in whether they would continue in music. Lowe (2012) determined that due to their fragile competence beliefs, students sought more positive reinforcement from their teachers. Consequently, the author suggested that teachers could solidify the teacher-student relationship and encourage retention by providing “comfortable and non-threatening learning environments, taking in interest in their students, and selecting appropriate repertoire” (Lowe, 2012, p. 240).

Building positive student-teacher relationships appears to be an effective way of retaining students in music programs. As such, the teaching and learning that takes place “within a

supportive and encouraging environment seems relevant to lesson satisfaction and perhaps continuation” (Costa-Giomi, Flowers, & Sasaki, 2005, p. 236).

Student motivation. Student motivation has been the subject of various studies in multiple fields. As with other factors contributing to student retention, student motivation is complex and multi-faceted. It can be affected by extrinsic and intrinsic reasons, student attitudes and beliefs, and passion to name but a few. Regardless of the form it takes, any one of them can potentially compel a student to remain in music programs.

Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation are two forms of motivation that may influence students. Intrinsic motivation can be defined as “the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one’s capacities, to explore, and to learn” while extrinsic motivation can be defined as “the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 71). In one study, both played significant roles in students’ decision to remain in music, with intrinsic motivation being the dominant factor for all students from Grade 4 to Grade 12. As Dray (2014) avowed, “[i]ntrinsic motivation [was] the largest influence among students to join and remain in instrumental music” (p. 74). The author further affirmed that as students mature, extrinsic motivators such as grade point averages, trips, and awards tended to play a greater role in their decisions (Dray, 2014).

Using motivational and interest theory as a foundation for their research, Renwick and McPherson (2002) examined case studies to determine the impact of student-selected repertoire on practice behavior. Data were collected by interviewing Grade 4 students enrolled in instrumental studies, their parents, and their teachers over a three-year period, while videotapes of student home practice sessions provided additional information. Findings of their study

demonstrated that “when students are interested in an activity and feel free to choose whether or not to do it, they are more likely to engage in higher-level cognitive functioning, find it easier to concentrate, persevere, and enjoy their learning” (Renwick & McPherson, 2002, p. 173). As such, students that are given a choice in repertoire tend to be more interested, focused, and involved in the learning process, resulting in more persistent practice and perseverance in the activity itself.

In a three-year longitudinal study in which Australian Grade 3 and Grade 4 students were interviewed, McPherson (2000) examined the expectancy and value beliefs of children as predictors of achievement. More specifically, the author sought to determine their abilities to predict how long they believed they would continue learning their instruments after commencing instruction. The author discovered that learning an instrument provided similar responses to learning a new sport or hobby. Some children were intrinsically motivated in learning an instrument but considered the utility value of doing so as being somewhat limited. Only a small proportion of children considered learning an instrument as possibly leading to a future career in music. Those who valued the experience and believed themselves to be competent were more likely to continue with their instruction.

Not all researchers agree that motivation plays a considerable role in student retention. Building on a literature review that examined predictors of success and retention in instrumental music, Klinedinst (1991) sought to investigate how a range of factors influenced Grade 5 students including: musical aptitude, scholastic ability, math achievement, reading achievement, general music teacher rating, and attitude toward music, self-concept in music, music background, motivation, socio-economic status, and instrument adaptation. In terms of student retention, findings demonstrated that socio-economic status, self-concept in music, reading and

math achievement, and scholastic ability seemed to be the strongest predictors. Although stating that student retention is easier to predict than student dropout is, the author highlighted that peer pressure, conflicts with other activities, student-teacher relationships, and family considerations can influence a student's decision to continue or to cease music activities (Klinedinst, 1991).

Student attitudes and beliefs. Certain researchers have examined the effect of student attitudes and various beliefs on student retention in music programs. These attitudes and beliefs can encompass the aspects of an activity a student believes is valuable, the features of an endeavor that a student perceives as being useful, in addition to the degree of competency that a student believes themselves to be at in relation to a certain task. Being cognizant that attitudes and beliefs can be influenced by other factors, those that students hold play a part on whether they choose to remain in music.

One researcher intended to identify what students perceived as being meaningful in their participation in high school guitar programs. Using a qualitative case study approach, Cape (2013) interviewed five Grade 11 and Grade 12 students, their teacher, and the school administrator to explore what aspects of ensemble participation they found most meaningful and to what extent the groups' praxis played a role in facilitating meaningful engagement among students. Acknowledging the small sample size, the author determined that in addition to being contributing factors in their willingness to want to continue learning guitar, participants emphasized achievement, a sense of belonging, self-expression, making music that they valued, student input and choice in repertoire, and personal agency as significant dimensions of their experience.

In their study, Ng and Hartwig (2011) used a quantitative approach to broach the question of declining participation in general and instrumental music programs. Surveying teachers

specifically, each was asked to share to what extent he or she perceived the decline, reasons for it, and the facilitating and constraining personal, cognitive, and social factors affecting it.

Consistent to findings brought forth by Corenblum and Marshall (1998) and Sjoberg (2011), teacher responses indicated that, in addition to parental support and low curriculum status, student retention depended primarily on students' personal interest, students' valuing of music programs, and students' confidence in their abilities. As explained, "students' continued participation in music learning involves supports from parents and peers and is embedded in complicated social beliefs and values related to music learning" (Ng & Hartwig, 2011).

In his doctoral dissertation, Evans (2009) conducted a longitudinal mixed-method study to better understand what motivated elementary students to pursue musical experiences or to cease altogether. Taking the psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness into consideration, the author found that early music experiences were crucial in shaping beliefs and values that influence participation in musical activities. As the author stated, "many people hold beliefs about their ability in music, beliefs about ability in general, and beliefs about music learning which are likely to influence their behavior" (p. 163). When students' psychological needs are met, they are likely to pursue the activity.

Similarly, Evans, McPherson, and Davidson (2012) also sought to identify the reasons why students continue or cease playing instruments from a basic psychological needs perspective. Having surveyed elementary band students, the authors determined a combination of these needs contributed to the continuation or cessation of musical studies. As similarly determined in the research of Ng and Hartwig (2011), Evans (2009), and Lowe (2012), the results of this study suggested that in addition to feelings of autonomy and relatedness, the feeling of competency in musical abilities played a significant role in both cases. The authors

suggested that teachers who made their classrooms optimally challenging and interesting for all students were more apt to retain them in their classrooms (Evans, McPherson, & Davidson, 2012).

Over the course of a three-year study, Wigfield et al. (1997) sought to examine Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3 students' competence beliefs and subjective task value in a variety of domains, including music. The data collected revealed that: (a) younger students tended to be more optimistic in their self-evaluations of achievement beliefs, while older students tended to be more realistic; (b) despite having limited experience with an activity, students who devalued it and had low competence beliefs about it were less likely to engage in it; (c) differences in domain specific competence beliefs were apparent between genders, as girls' competence beliefs in music tended to be higher than boys; and (d) students' competence beliefs and subjective task values declined over the childhood years, especially when coupled with the perceived usefulness of the activity. The study suggested that when students fail to recognize the usefulness of an activity, ignore its supposed value, and perceive themselves to have low competency in it, they were more likely to discontinue the activity altogether as the years progress.

A quantitative study conducted by Hallam (1998) examined the relationship between time spent learning, ability factors, and aspects of perseverance on music learning outcomes of Grade 1 to Grade 9 students. In addition to determining that length of time learning was more significant in predicting music achievement than the length of time practicing, research findings suggested that student attitudes and parent/teacher support were key factors in determining if a student would remain in the instrumental program or dropout. As Hallam (1998) noted, "the child's self-determination is of central importance in relation to motivation to continue to play an instrument" (p. 129).

Passion. Student passion is another form of motivation to consider in the retention of students in music programs. If students enjoy the music environment and enjoy learning about the subject matter, they will be apt to want to remain in the course, depending on the intensities of the challenges faced. Using an analogy of flowing along in a current, Csíkszentmihályi (2014a) explained flow as “when there is a fit between the skills of the self and the challenges afforded by the environment” (p. 24). When students find themselves in a gentle current (i.e., experiences are pleasurable with just the right amount of challenges), they move along freely, taking in the experience they are engaged in. However, if the current becomes turbulent (i.e., experiences are too challenging), students may experience the initial rush of the moment, but anxiety will force them out. If the current stops altogether (i.e., experiences are not challenging enough), they may relax for a while, but boredom will quickly settle in. As described by Csíkszentmihályi (2014b), “we experience [flow] as a unified flowing from one moment to the next, in which we feel in control of our actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment; between stimulus and response; or between past, present, and future” (p. 137). Finding the right flow is therefore important in maintaining the passion that students have.

Other considerations. As stated previously, the factors that affect student retention and attrition are numerous. Although many have been discussed, there are a few more, which could be considered in the retention of students in music programs. The factors presented here were not necessarily the primary focus of any given study examined for this literature review, but they were occasionally mentioned in certain literature reviews or findings. It should be noted that these are presented in alphabetical order, not in order of priority or importance.

Competition. In certain circumstances, the thrill of individual or group competition can impel some students to consider remaining in music programs. As Dray (2014) explained,

“[h]ealthy competition can be beneficial for students as it may motivate them to try harder and work more efficiently” (p. 78). For some students, competition drives them to become the best musician they can be, or with their music classmates, the best group they can be. For others, competition “deters students and may have a negative effect on their education if competition is too high or too low” (Dray, 2014, p. 78). Additionally, while competition with other school groups is preferred by most, competition amongst peers is disliked as it oftentimes disrupts relationships.

Level of difficulty. Not unlike students’ competency beliefs discussed previously, students’ perception of the level of difficulty of school courses may also contribute to retention or attrition of students in music programs. This perception may lead some students to believe that pursuing other options might produce lighter workloads (Sjoberg, 2011). For others, the time and effort needed to become proficient at playing an instrument is daunting. As Hallam (1998) noted, the child’s positive attitude and determination are necessary if the student is to remain motivated when learning an instrument. If students believe that their chances of success are diminishing, they tend to become less motivated and eventually lose interest in the activity altogether.

Multipotentiality. The concept of multipotentiality suggests that all individuals have the innate ability to develop in multiple ways. As students are presented with opportunities to explore different options, they discover that they may have multiple interests. As acknowledged by Dai and Schader (2002):

[t]he issue of multipotentialites, or what Gagné (1999) called *polyvalence*, is relevant for most musically inclined children. Not only is good academic performance a prerequisite for conventional pathways to success, but extracurricular activities such as athletics are also seen as highly popular and inviting. (p. 136)

Given these situations to explore their capacities in a range of areas, students may experience a shift in priorities and foster a passion for new things. As attested by both teachers and students alike, passion for other activities is a determining factor in student attrition from music programs (Sjoberg, 2011).

Peer influence. The influence of peers on adolescent perceptions and behaviour is subject for debate. The same holds true in student decisions to remain or leave music programs.

Although Klinedinst (1991), Sjoberg (2011), and Cape (2013) agree that peer influence plays a contributing role, others contend that this influence may be limited. In her study, Dray (2014) concluded that peer influence was not a significant factor in remaining in music programs, stating, “[s]tudents indicated that being with friends was important to them but not the sole reason for participation” (p. 74). This appears to be supported by previous findings from Ng and Hartwig (2011) in which teachers believed that peer influence was a lesser social factor contributing to retention or attrition.

Socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status can affect many aspects of a student’s life. Whereas families with high socioeconomic status can provide more opportunities for their children, those with lower socioeconomic status may be limited in doing so. As had been alluded to in the studies by Corenblum and Marshall (1998), and Ng and Hartwig (2011), socioeconomic status can also have an impact on whether students participate in music programs or not. Albert’s (2006) qualitative study demonstrated much of the same. By gathering data through informal parent, teacher and administrator interviews, in addition to observational field notes, Albert (2006) examined strategies for the recruitment and retention of band students in low socioeconomic status school districts. As families with low socioeconomic status did not necessarily have the means to purchase instruments, or to participate in instrumental programs,

the author suggested, “proactive teacher strategies, culturally relevant ensembles, and student ownership of ensemble processes can aid in the recruitment and retention of students in low SES districts” (Albert, 2006, p. 53). In addition to creating an inviting and safe classroom for students, involving students in their learning was especially important as “students felt like their input was vital to the instrumental music program, thus compelling them to continue participating” (Albert, 2006, p. 67).

Timetabling. The introduction of compulsory subjects in student schedules has compelled some students to opt out of their music electives. This trend is further compounded by timetabling issues, which may make it difficult for students to choose the courses they wish to take. As compulsory subjects such as mathematics, language arts, and physical education are locked into the schedule, little room is left for electives, disadvantaging “music and in fact all arts subjects” (Hartwig, 2003, p. 124).

As has been stated earlier, the literature review presented in the current chapter examines studies that pertain to factors affecting student retention and student attrition in music programs. It should be noted that since literature relevant to high school guitar programs has proven difficult to obtain, the literature review has been expanded to include all instrumental programs taking place at the high school, middle years and elementary levels.

Researchers have identified parental influence, teacher-student relationships, student motivation (extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, student attitudes and beliefs, passion), competition, level of difficulty, multipotentiality, peer influence, socioeconomic status, and timetabling as important factors to consider. Despite this, music educators should be cognizant of the idea that they can only influence a select few, while others remain out of their control. The former would include factors such as teacher-student relationship, competition, level of

difficulty, and timetabling to some degree, while the latter would include factors such as parental influence, student motivation, multipotentiality, peer influence, and socioeconomic status.

Chapter Summary

As has been proposed, factors contributing to attrition and retention can be supported by Deci and Ryan's (2000) psychological needs theory, and each can be purportedly traced to one or more of the three basic psychology needs of autonomy, competency, and relatedness (see Appendix C). For example, teacher-student relationships may be attributed to relatedness, while parental influence literature may possibly suggest an attachment to a combination of all three needs. Another example might demonstrate that students' competency beliefs may be associated to competency, while students' value or utility beliefs may be linked to a combination of needs as well.

Although the preceding examples are straightforward, there are other factors for which basic psychological needs theorists would have more difficulty explaining. The factor of multipotentiality poses one such dilemma. A student who has multiple interests, including that of participating in music programs, would not necessarily leave the program due to thwarting of the needs of competence or relatedness. However, as the student cannot possibly participate in every activity that he or she wishes, it may be argued that his or her autonomy is affected by the imposition of constraints outside of his or her control.

Parental influence, teacher-student relationships, student motivation, as well as other considerations are some of the factors that may affect students' decisions to remain or leave music programs. One could expect that similar factors will contribute to student retention and attrition in high school guitar programs as well. In this study, I sought to determine if this expectation was justified or not, while the findings enabled me to recommend changes to

existing guitar programs to maximize student retention. The next chapter outlines the methodology used for this process.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

In the first chapter, I discussed that an education in music has the potential to positively impact students with many educational, socio-emotional, and health benefits. Although some of these claims are inconclusive and further research is required, it should be noted that the existing body of research literature does not suggest that participating in school music programs is detrimental to a student's well-being in most situations. As benefits seem to outweigh the risks, retaining students in music programs should be of primary concern to music educators. By identifying and understanding the reasons for retention and attrition, positive changes can be made in their approaches to teaching music, thus encouraging more students to remain in their music programs.

In Chapter 3, I outline the methodology used to study the reasons why students choose to remain or leave music programs. This discussion entails a justification and rationale for using action research, an explanation of the theoretical framework used to support it, a description of the setting, an elaboration of the method applied to each research question, as well as a clarification about how research quality and an ethical research process was ensured.

Justification for the Methodology

As the intention is to make changes in my teaching practice to improve the retention of high school students in guitar programs and to enhance the guitar learning experience for them, an action research methodology was used to address the issue. This type of research design can be described as “a systemic investigation conducted by practitioners to provide information to immediately improve teaching and learning” (McMillan, 2012, p. 343). In action research, teacher-researchers conduct their own investigations into their teaching situations, thus providing

the unique perspective of insiders. As intimated by McNiff and Whitehead (2011), all that is required from the practitioner is “curiosity, creativity, and a willingness to engage” (p. 18).

The proposed research design is based on Zuber-Skerritt’s (1995) action research spiral (see Figure 4) and represents the completion of the initial full cycle.

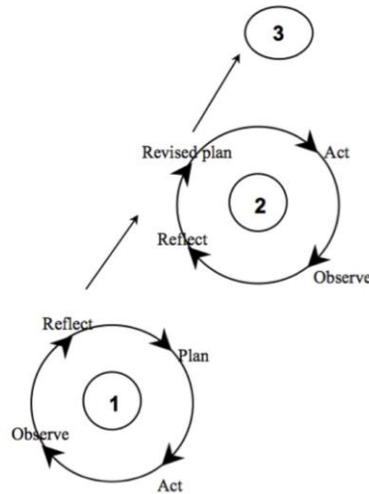


Figure 4. Zuber-Skerritt’s (1995) Action research spiral.

Characterized by the cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting first proposed by Kurt Lewin in 1946, the Zuber-Skerritt (1995) model’s “upward spiral indicates continued improvement of practice and extension of knowledge” (Hartwig, 2003, p. 43). In the planning stage of the cycle, the problem is identified, and a strategy is elaborated to investigate it. Once established, the plan is implemented during the acting stage. This implementation of the action strategy is then followed by the observation stage that includes noting the impact of the plan on the problem and/or participants. Finally, the reflection stage permits the researcher to draw practical and theoretical conclusions, which may lead her or him into the next cycle of improvement or change.

I used a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data collection strategies (see Table 1) to formulate answers to my research questions.

Table 1

Data Collection Strategies

Research Questions	Data Source		
	Divisional Enrolment Records (Quantitative)	Student Surveys (Quantitative and Qualitative)	Focus Group Discussions (Qualitative)
What student enrolment trends were evident by grade level in guitar programs in a large urban school division in Manitoba?	X		
What factors impacted the guitar enrolment trends?		X	X
What strategies could be implemented to improve student retention in my guitar program through to graduation by addressing these factors?		X	X

Stringer (2008) explained that using “multiple sources diminish the possibility that one perspective alone will shape the course or determine the outcomes of investigation” (p. 55). A study is thus strengthened by providing multiple data sources through the process of triangulation. Furthermore, as both quantitative and qualitative approaches have their limitations, combining them enables the researcher to build on their strengths, while avoiding some of their weaknesses when answering important research questions. Based on the type of data collection strategy used, an appropriate method of interpreting and analyzing the data is needed to derive conclusions, which may aid in addressing the problem.

Rationale for Using Action Research

Action research has become a popular and effective form of enquiry used to investigate a variety of questions in the field of educational research (McMillan, 2012; Stringer, 2008; McNiff

& Whitehead, 2011). Possible reasons for this are that action research empowers teachers, engages individuals, and acts as a powerful professional development activity. McMillan also suggests that it “changes the climate of a school to a more open atmosphere in which it is standard practice to openly ponder teacher methods, take risks, and depend on others to design studies and to understand the usefulness of results” (p. 345).

McMillan (2012) emphasizes the word *action* as being a key feature in distinguishing action research from traditional research methods. As a teacher-researcher’s intent is to change her or his practice, she or he must do so while relying on more than their own experiences or suggestions from others. To achieve this, action research must therefore ensure “a clear systematic process, participation of various stakeholders, collaboration, and a focus on social change” (McMillan, 2012, p. 344).

McNiff and Whitehead (2011) differentiate action research from other traditional forms of research by examining the underpinning assumptions of the design. These include ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions, as well as the social purposes of action research.

Ontology can be defined as “the science of being in general, embracing such issues as the nature of existence and the categorical structure of reality” (Honderich, 2005, p. 670). As such, these perceptions influence how individuals view themselves in relation to others. In action research, ontological assumptions held by the researcher are characterized as being value laden and morally committed. Specifically, researchers are to understand that they are “in relation with everything else in the research field, and [can influence], and [are] influenced by, others” (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011, p. 30).

Epistemology can be defined as a “branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of knowledge, its possibility, scope, and general basis” (Honderich, 2005, p. 261). In other terms, epistemology entails how knowledge is acquired and constructed. In action research, epistemological assumptions held by the researcher are characterized by the acceptance that they are personally accountable and invested in the issue, by the realization that knowledge is uncertain and open to modification, and that it is created collaboratively with other stakeholders.

Methodology can be defined as “the way research is conducted” (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011, p. 34). The authors proposed that methodological assumptions of action research are characterized by being carried out by agents of change, by being open-ended and developmental, and by being cognizant that the aim of the research is to improve learning with social intent.

Social purposes can be defined as the reasons the research is conducted “in relation to informing and improving its social contexts” (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011, p. 36). These intents may include an aim to improve workplace practices, to promote the ongoing evaluation of learning and practice, and to influence “their own and others’ practices, with the potential to influence wider social change” (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011, p. 38).

Theoretical Framework

As the aim of this study was to understand a practical problem, the theoretical framework of pragmatism underpins the particular action research methodology used in this study. It can be defined as:

a philosophical movement that includes those who claim that an ideology or proposition is true if it works satisfactorily, that the meaning of a proposition is to be found in the practical consequences of accepting it, and that unpractical ideas are to be rejected.

(McDermid, n.d., para. 1)

This ethos, in which one seeks to understand truth and meaning, was developed in the latter part of the 19th through to the early 20th century by way of the contributions of Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey.

Similarities between the tenets of action research and pragmatism in education could suggest that the two are complementary in certain aspects. In their work, Garrison and Neiman (2003) summarized three main ideas put forth by Peirce. The first notion suggested that “working out the meaning of educational ideas, proposals, and so forth through their consequences by using creative imagination, reflective thought, and actual experimentation would clear away a great deal of educational rubbish” (para. 4). A second notion stated that beliefs and values will guide and shape an individual’s actions. Therefore, the goal of inquiry is to question the consequences of our practices “in order to determine the validity of their meaning and the soundness of their claims to truth... [while holding] their habits of belief with full consciousness [and] complete self-control” (Garrison & Neiman, 2003, para. 5). Finally, the third notion stated that the community of inquiry plays a large role “in determining the ultimate meaning of reality” (Garrison & Neiman, 2003, para. 6). All three of these notions fall in line with the descriptions and underpinning assumptions of action research put forth by McNiff and Whitehead (2011).

Garrison and Newman (2003) stated, “The ethos of pragmatism is extremely open, tolerant, and accommodating” (para. 2). Consequently, researchers who abide by this philosophy are not satisfied with a single truth. Pragmatists are thus committed to pluralism, if the results have practical consequences. However, this ideal has created a conundrum for pragmatism. As McDermid (n.d.) highlighted, while pragmatists have “taken different views on major issues..., they have also disagreed about what the major issues are (Conclusion, para. 1). Furthermore, if

truth depends on practicality, one may question who is to decide what is practical. In this action research study, I will decide what outcomes are practical and applicable to my professional context.

Setting

As previously discussed in the introductory chapter, this study was conducted in a large urban school division that encompassed 25 schools whose music teachers offered guitar programming to its elementary, middle years, and high school students. Of these, there were seven high schools providing classroom guitar courses as an elective for Grade 9 to Grade 12 students. Although not all high schools offered guitar at each grade level, music specialists taught all guitar courses.

Research Question #1

As had been stated in the first chapter, the first research question proposed for this study was as follows:

- What student enrolment trends were evident by grade level in guitar programs in a large urban school division in Manitoba?

As such, the following section elaborates the method that was used to examine the matter more closely.

Method. As the first research question examined enrolment trends specifically, I used existing institutional data that was available in the form of descriptive statistics. Descriptive research is unlike experimental research in that environments are not controlled, nor are subjects given different treatments (Vogt & Johnson, 2011). Descriptive statistics are simply numbers that are summarized to describe information or data that has been collected about a particular population. In my case, I investigated student guitar enrolments for specific schools, for specific

grade levels, and during a specific time frame. Data for this question was analyzed separately from the other two.

Data sources and collection. An important source of data for this study was student enrolment numbers in the division’s high school guitar programs, on condition that guitar programming had been offered for a minimum of 12 consecutive years. These were obtained directly from the guitar teachers, as well as the division who provided the enrolment numbers for each of the schools. The enrolment data was then entered in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet by school, year, and grade level (see Appendix D).

Data analysis and interpretation. Data analysis included creating summary tables of the enrolment numbers so that patterns and trends could be identified, discussed, and interpreted. Based on McMillan’s (2012) procedures for analyzing data, it was essential to ensure that there were no discrepancies between the numbers reported in the table and those reported in the original documents.

Data interpretation included examining the data generated by existing institutional enrolment data from each school to determine if guitar enrolment trends increased, decreased, or stayed the same from one school to the next. The information gathered helped to uncover whether my context was similar or different from other contexts. These patterns and trends assisted in better understanding guitar enrolment patterns within the division over time, both of which were important in an interpretive data analysis. By means of reconnaissance, the researcher then discussed the findings and drew conclusions by self-reflecting “to enhance [his] understanding of the area from [his] perspective of theories, values, beliefs, knowledge, the larger context of [his] school, and relevant historical contexts” (McMillan, 2012, p. 348).

Research Question #2

As had been stated in the first chapter, the second research question proposed for this study was as follows:

- What factors impacted the guitar enrolment trends?

As such, the following section elaborates the method that will be used to examine the matter closer.

Method. As the second research question examined factors impacting enrolment trends, I used a survey method to gather descriptive numerical data, in addition to some qualitative data. I employed an online survey with both closed and open-ended questions in order to “provide a description of the phenomenon” (McMillan, 2012, p. 176).

Participants. Purposive sampling was used to identify two pools of potential participants for this study. Using this type of technique ensured “that the diverse perspectives of people likely to affect the issue [were] included in the study” (Stringer, 2008, p. 42). Group 1 consisted of all Grade 12 students at each of the seven eligible high schools who were still enrolled in guitar, while Group 2 consisted of Grade 12 students at each of the seven eligible high schools who decided to leave the guitar program in Grade 11 or Grade 12.

There was the possibility of having participants from each of seven high schools in the school division that had offered high school guitar programming for a minimum of 12 consecutive years. Potential participants were identified by studying each school’s guitar enrolment lists over a three-year period which were provided by the school division. By examining the 2018-2019 Guitar 40S enrolment lists, it was possible to identify Grade 12 students who were enrolled in the guitar program at the time of the study. By examining and comparing the 2017-2018 Guitar 30S and 2018-2019 Guitar 40S guitar enrolment lists, it was

possible to identify Grade 12 students that chose to leave the guitar program in Grade 12. And finally, by examining and comparing the 2016-2017 Guitar 20S and 2017-2018 Guitar 30S enrolment lists, it was possible to identify Grade 12 students that chose to leave the guitar program in Grade 11.

Data sources and collection. Surveys are a popular method of collecting data, as they are versatile, efficient, and generalizable (McMillan, 2012, p. 196). For these reasons, a cross-sectional survey was conducted with Group 1 and Group 2 participants. A survey of this type can be defined as a tool that “collects data to make inferences about a population of interest...at one point in time” (Lavrakas, 2008).

Participants were asked to respond to an online survey prepared in SurveyMonkey. Online surveys offer the advantages of “reduced cost and time, easy access, quick responses, and ease of entering responses into a database” (McMillan, 2012, p. 201). However, it should be noted that online surveys might inhibit participants from participating as some do not have access to technology, others do not feel comfortable using the technology, and others may question the confidentiality and privacy of their data (McMillan, 2012).

All Grade 12 students (N=173) who were enrolled in guitar programs at the time of the study, or who had decided to leave the programs in Grade 11 or Grade 12 were asked to participate in the survey. Having compiled an e-mail list with documentation provided by the school division, recruitment materials were prepared by the researcher and sent by a neutral third party (i.e., the divisional arts coordinator) to each potential participant’s school e-mail address via the divisional e-mail system. The student survey recruitment e-mail (see Appendix E) contained a short description of the study, along with a link to the online survey (see Appendix F). Consisting of both 4-point Likert scales and open-ended questions, the survey’s 25-item

questionnaire focused on factors affecting student retention and attrition in high school guitar programs by examining student attitudes, values, and interests. Survey data was summarized automatically through the survey site.

Data analysis and interpretation. The data collected from the closed questions that are part of the survey was entered in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and presented in table form in Microsoft Word to be analyzed.

The quantitative data generated by the survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics. As a Likert-type scale had been implemented for most questions, frequency distributions were used to illustrate how participants responded to each question. Furthermore, mean scores (arithmetic average of all scores) were calculated and mode scores (score that occurs most frequently) were used as another measure of central tendency.

The qualitative data generated by the surveys were unitized and sorted using an interpretive process of data analysis. This enabled the researcher “to interpret and make sense out of the collected materials” (Stringer, 2008, p. 100). Based on Hesse-Biber and Leavy’s (2006) process of analyzing and interpreting qualitative data, the data was first prepared by transcribing what had been stated. This was followed by the data exploration and data reduction phase which involved getting familiar with data collected and then coding it into thematic material that was later interpreted in the data interpretation phase. This process was like the one proposed by Stringer (2008) who suggested “reviewing interview and focus group data, dividing them into ‘units of meaning’ (unitizing the data), then using these to construct an organized system of categories and themes” (p. 100).

For this study, the data were first unitized “to isolate features and elements of experience and perspective, to focus on the specific details emerging from people’s talk about events and

experiences” (Stringer, 2008, 101). This entailed exporting the responses from Survey Monkey into a Microsoft Word document. Units of meaning were created by placing keywords and key phrases in brackets within each set of questions. Second, each piece of information was sorted, categorized, and coded. Using the theoretical framework as a guide, codes or major categories included autonomy (personal), competence (cognitive), and relatedness (social). Sub-categories within each referred to those stated in the literature review. The first, autonomy (personal), contained the following sub-categories: attitudes/beliefs, flow/interest/passion, motivation, multipotentiality, scheduling/timetabling, socioeconomic status, and student repertoire. The second, competence (cognitive), contained the following sub-categories: competence beliefs, competition, level of difficulty, and success/failure. Finally, the third, relatedness (social), contained the following sub-categories: parental influence, peers influence, and teachers-student relationship.

As indicated by Stringer (2008), a “system of categories provides useful information about the types of people whose perspective are presented, the issues concerning them, and the relationship between some of those issues” (p. 105). By applying this to the study, it may lead to research findings that may determine which factors are significant in student retention in guitar programs.

Research Question #3

As had been stated in the first chapter, the third research question proposed for this study was as follows:

- What strategies could be implemented to improve student retention in my guitar program through to graduation by addressing these factors?

As such, the following section elaborates the method that was used to examine the matter closer.

Method. As the third and final research question considered participants' suggestions for improving student retention in guitar programs, I used a purely qualitative approach, with no quantitative component. McMillan (2012) described this type of design as “a phenomenological model in which multiple realities are rooted in the subjects' perceptions” (p. 12). Data for this question was analyzed separately from the other two.

Participants. Focus group interviews necessitate a sample of participants. It was intended that participants for this part of the study be determined by stratified purposeful sampling. This type of sampling procedure is achieved “by first using the quantitative approach to stratifying [*sic*] a population, followed by purposeful sampling of a small number of cases from each stratum that are examined intensely” (McMillan, 2012, p. 106).

Students were asked to participate in a focus group discussion moderated by the researcher, which was to take place at the end of a school day in a school classroom. As the initial invitation that was included at the end of the online survey yielded no participants, an e-mail invitation (see Appendix G) was sent to all Group 1 and Group 2 participants from the two largest high schools (N=91). This was accomplished by a neutral third party (i.e., the divisional arts coordinator) who sent the invitation to each potential participant's school e-mail address via the divisional e-mail system. The first 12 students or less from Group 1 in each of these schools who accepted the invitation was to form Sub-group 1 (Grade 12 students who were enrolled in guitar programs at the time of the study). The first 12 students or less from Group 2 in each of these schools who accepted the invitation was to form Sub-group 2 (Grade 12 students who decided to leave the guitar program in Grade 11 or Grade 12). Students who accepted the

invitation were to be compensated for their time with \$20 and snacks/refreshments. In the end, only one non-retained student agreed to speak with me for an in-depth interview, and no focus group discussions were conducted.

Data sources and collection. Focus groups are typically created to get a variety of perspectives from a small group of people on a specific topic (Patton, 2002, p. 385). Generally lasting between one and two hours, this type of interview is done with groups of approximately 6 to 10 people. Unlike one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews enable participants “to hear additional comments beyond their own original responses as they hear what other people have to say” (Patton, 2002, p. 386).

The purpose of the focus group originally planned for was to expand on the data provided in response to the second research question. As only one respondent participated, an individual interview was conducted instead. Questions (see Appendix H) were based on Spradley’s (1979) framework of questions consisting of grand tour questions, mini-tour questions, and prompt questions (as cited by Stringer, 2008, pp. 58-61). Guided-tour and task-related questions were added when needed. Initial grand tour questions sought to identify the reasons the participant joined the guitar program, in addition to uncovering information relating to past guitar experiences, both positive and negative. Questions pertaining to either what motivated them to stay or leave the guitar program were asked as well. The participant was asked to provide suggestions on what changes can be made to guitar programs so that more students remain in them until the end of high school. Participant responses were recorded with pen and paper by a note taker who assisted me, and with a Zoom data recorder, which were then transcribed in a Microsoft Word document immediately after the session. Transcriptions occurred in privacy

where no one could overhear the interview comments. Meaning checks were conducted to ensure the accuracy of the data recorded.

Data analysis and interpretation. The last set of data generated by the one student interview was used to determine, from a student perspective, what factors affect their retention and attrition in guitar programs, in addition to identifying what changes in practices could be made to address the issue. These responses were analyzed qualitatively; they were unitized and sorted thematically using the same processes of data analysis described for the previous question.

Stringer (2008) stated that data gathering and analysis in action research is more effective when accomplished by focus group discussions. As explained, when information is shared, it often leads to more understanding between participants. This in turn enables them “to construct a framework of ideas for ongoing collaborative action (Stringer, 2008, p. 117).

Criteria for Ensuring Research Quality

Well-conducted research depends on quality research processes and tools. As this study was a qualitatively oriented action research study that used mixed data collection methods, an overview of the criteria of quality will be presented as they pertain to this genre of action research.

Criteria of quality for action research. Validity refers to how accurately the data collected reflects what was to be measured (Mills, 2007). To ascertain this, Herr and Anderson (2005) proposed five characteristics of validity, all of which are based on the goals of generating new knowledge, achieving action-oriented outcomes, educating both the researcher and participant, being relevant to the local setting, and utilizing a sound and appropriate research methodology. These characteristics, which will be examined in more detail, include outcome, process, democratic, catalytic, and dialogic validity.

Outcome validity. Outcome validity refers to “the extent to which actions occur, which leads to a resolution of the problem that led to the study” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 55). This characteristic is linked to action research’s goal of achieving action-oriented outcomes. In this study, the analyzed data that was collected from participants identified issues in our practices that need to be addressed if students are to consider pursuing their school musical education. Outcome validity can thus be demonstrated moving forward if the strategies proposed to address these issues are implemented, monitored, and actually do work to improve student retention in guitar programs throughout high school. Alternatively, the action research process may also lead to new questions that will need to be answered as the research cycle continues.

Process validity. Process validity refers to “what extent programs are framed and solved in a manner that permits ongoing learning of the individual or system” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 55). This characteristic is linked to action research’s goal of utilizing a sound and appropriate research methodology, and the generation of new knowledge. As process validity can impact outcome validity, the researcher must be cautious when examining underlying assumptions, determining what data will be used as evidence, and developing quality relationships with participants. In this study, triangulation was conducted by using multiple sources and methods of data collection to produce cross-validation. Whereas questionnaires were distributed to more participants, the student interview permitted a more in-depth conversation. As this was completed, I conducted meaning checks and made a concerted effort to record the data accurately in the transcripts.

Democratic validity. Democratic validity refers to “the extent to which research is done in collaboration with all parties who have a stake in the problem under investigation” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 56). This characteristic is linked to action research’s goal of being relevant to

the local setting. As it is considered an ethical issue, the researcher must ensure that his or her research benefits all stakeholders. While guitar teachers, administrators, and parents are also stakeholders, student participants were the key stakeholders and focus of the study. They had multiple opportunities to share their thoughts on the issue of student retention and attrition in guitar programs and propose strategies to address it. The perspectives of students have been accurately and comprehensively represented, and will be acted upon in the future. Furthermore, to determine if the findings applied to similar settings, an attempt was made to provide readers with sufficient details pertinent to the study, so they would be able to judge for themselves if the findings were transferrable to their teaching situations.

Catalytic validity. Catalytic validity refers to “the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses, and energizes participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it” (Lather, 1986, p. 272, as cited in Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 56). This characteristic is linked to action research’s goal of educating both researcher and participants. To achieve this, “not only participants, but the researchers/practitioners themselves must be open to reorienting their view of reality as well as their view of their role” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 56). In this study, upon analysis of the data, I reflected on my current practice to determine what changes should be initiated to encourage more students to remain in my guitar programs. In addition, it was hoped that these changes would be contemplated by other music educators in similar contexts, thus eliciting other suggestions for future research.

Dialogic validity. Dialogic validity refers to “the ‘goodness’ of a research [a]s monitored through a form of peer review” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 57). This characteristic is linked to action research’s goal of generating new knowledge. Three processes can be used to facilitate a researcher’s need to remain open to dialogue and debate concerning her or his work. Peer

debriefing is a process, which involves other individuals who may be familiar with the topic to review the findings. External audit is like peer debriefing but involves other individuals who are not familiar with the area of study. Researcher reflection requires the researcher to reveal “possible biases, background, and values” that they inherently bring (McMillan, 2012, p. 304). In this study, I made apparent the role of music in his life. Furthermore, I enlisted professional colleagues, my thesis advisor, and my thesis committee to act as critical friends throughout the research process.

Ethical Considerations

Researchers must take into consideration several ethical issues to ensure that the research design is in keeping with the ethical standards of research practice outlined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (Canadian Institutes et al., 2014). Having successfully completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct Course on Research Ethics (CORE) (see Appendix I), I took several steps to safeguard the ethicality of the research.

An important first step was to ensure that the research meets the University of Manitoba’s Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) approval. I was not to commence the study until permission from this body had been granted. Having successfully completed the ethics application process, protocol approval (see Appendix J) was granted on September 4th, 2018.

After the university’s ethics board approval had been secured, it was then important to obtain consent from the division’s superintendent, school principals, parents, and student participants. These letters of consent made explicit “that individuals who participate in research should do so voluntarily, understanding the purpose of the research, and its risks and potential benefits, as fully as reasonably possible” (Canadian Institutes et al., 2014, p. 27).

A letter of permission (see Appendix K) was sent to the division's superintendent to inform him or her of my proposed study and to request his or her permission to conduct it in the division. The signed form needed to be obtained before proceeding with any part of the study.

A letter of permission (see Appendix L) was sent to the principals of each high school to inform him or her of my proposed study and to request his or her permission to conduct it in their respective schools. The signed form needed to be obtained before proceeding with the study.

Participants in this study were Grade 12 high school students, some of which may have been 18 years of age or older, while others may have been 18 years of age or younger. As this was considered a minimal risk study, a request was made to the ethics board asking that students taking part in the anonymous survey provide their own consent, while student consent (where the student is 18 or older) or parental consent and student assent (where the student is under 18) would be required in order to take part in the focus group. As the request was approved, a letter of informed consent (see Appendix M) was sent to each interested participant through their school e-mail address via the divisional e-mail system. Both parents and students were required to sign the consent form if they agreed to participate in the focus groups. The form was then returned to the school office staff and remitted to the researcher prior to commencing the focus group discussions.

Students were informed that the main purpose of this study was to better understand student retention in high school guitar programs. As such, risks to students participating in this study were minimal.

Students were made aware that participation in this study was voluntary, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without explanation and with no adverse effects. This

could be accomplished by contacting me or my research supervisor, after which any data related to that participant, was to be deleted or shredded immediately.

It was necessary to make explicit the power-over relationship that existed between me as a researcher-teacher, and the student participants in my own school and other schools. This power-over was mitigated by having a third party (i.e., divisional arts consultant) recruit participants.

It was important to ensure that the data generated throughout the process was kept secure. All data was stored and saved on a USB key and on an external hard drive as a backup and kept in a locked drawer in my home. Furthermore, hard copies of focus group transcripts were kept under lock and key in a filing cabinet for safekeeping. Electronic files maintained on my computer were password-protected. All forms of data were to be kept for a maximum of five years after completion of my thesis and no later than December 31st, 2023, after which data were to be disposed of by a professional paper and data shredding service.

School and participant anonymity and confidentiality was made explicit and had to be respected. To do so, in addition to having the note taker and participants sign a pledge of confidentiality (see Appendix N), pseudonyms were used in place of their real names in the reporting of results, and the information was presented in a way to disguise its source. In addition, schools and the name of the school division were protected with false names.

Finally, participants were offered a non-technical summary of the results in a form of their choosing (email, hardcopy, postal service). The full thesis report was made publicly available on the University of Manitoba Libraries MSpace. Participants were made aware that the researcher could use information from the study for other publications and presentations in the future.

Chapter 4 – Findings

As indicated in the previous chapter, three separate data sources were used in the data collection strategies employed in this study. Firstly, divisional enrolment records were used to determine what student enrolment trends were evident by grade level in guitar programs in a large urban school division in Manitoba. Secondly, student surveys were used to uncover what factors impacted the guitar enrolment trends and what strategies could be implemented to improve student retention in my guitar program through to graduation by addressing these factors. And finally, as there were insufficient participants for focus group discussions, an individual interview was conducted to further expand on the research questions. In the current chapter, I present the findings generated after an analysis of each data source. In addition to specifying participation rates and demographics when warranted, quantitative data generated by the enrolment data and surveys will be described in narrative form and presented in summary tables. Furthermore, qualitative data generated by the student surveys and the individual interview will be presented and organized according to emergent themes in a narrative form as well.

Divisional Enrolment Records

Participation rates. As stipulated in the methodology, only high schools that had consistently offered guitar programming for a minimum of 12 consecutive years were to be considered for the study. Although there were seven high schools in the school division offering guitar programming at the time of the study, only six of the seven schools met this criterion. As such, one school was excluded on this basis while the enrolment records of the other six schools were used in this study (N=6).

Obtaining the records. Enrolment data for each of the eligible schools were initially to be provided by the school division. As I was informed that this was no longer feasible due to logistical reasons, permission was granted from the division's superintendent to obtain the data directly from each school's guitar teacher. Although this approach was successful in providing some data, there were a few limitations to contend with. A first limitation was that music teachers only had access to their own enrolment data. With teachers having been at their respective schools for different lengths of time, this created certain gaps in the data. A second limitation was that larger schools would often have several teachers teaching multiple sections of guitar. This created yet another problem as teachers who had left the division no longer had access to their enrolment data. Serendipitously, the school division came through and was able to provide the enrolment numbers originally requested. However, there was one drawback. Due to a change in student management software, the school division could only readily supply the enrolment data beginning in 2010, thus only producing data for six graduating classes (e.g., a student who is in Grade 9 in 2010 will graduate in 2014 producing the first graduating class and so forth). As such, the request for enrolment data from the past 12 years (i.e., from the 2006-2007 school year onward) which would have produced data for ten graduating classes could not be granted.

The following tables display each school's guitar enrolment trends for six graduating classes over a six-year period from 2014 to 2019, while illustrating the enrolment numbers for each guitar class as it progresses from Grade 9 to Grade 12. The retention rate from one year to next was calculated to indicate if it had increased, decreased, or remained the same. Examining these numbers allowed me to observe enrolment trends over time from Grade 9 to Grade 12. The mean was further included to highlight the change in enrolment over several years.

Enrolment record – School #1. The first school's data (see Table 2 on page 72) demonstrates that an average of 11 students enroll in guitar in Grade 9. In Grade 10, that enrolment drops slightly to eight (-3 or a mean retention rate of 76.55%). In Grade 11, the enrolment drops to three students, resulting in an average trend of -5 (or a mean retention rate of 40.44%). By Grade 12, an average of one student remains enrolled in guitar, with the trend continuing to decrease by -2 (or a mean retention rate of 59.05%). Overall, as students progress from Grade 9 to Grade 12 at this school, there is an average downward trend of -11, which translates to an overall mean retention rate of 13.30%. The retention rate is greater (76.55%) after the first year of study and diminishes as students progress through subsequent years.

Enrolment record – School #2. The second school's data (see Table 3 on page 73) demonstrates that an average of 39 students enroll in guitar in Grade 9. In Grade 10, that enrolment drops to 25 (-12 or a mean retention rate of 71.29%). In Grade 11, the enrolment drops further to 14 students, resulting in an average trend of -13 (or a mean retention rate of 53.16%). By Grade 12, an average of 11 students remain enrolled in guitar, with the trend continuing to decrease by -4 (or a mean retention rate of 69.34%). Overall, as students progress from Grade 9 to Grade 12 at this school, there is an average downward trend of -29, which translates to an overall mean retention rate of 26.16%. The retention rate is greater (71.29%) after the first year of study and it diminishes as students progress through each subsequent year.

Table 2

School #1 - Classroom Guitar Enrolment Trends

Class		Grade Level			
		Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Class of 2019	Enrolment Numbers	18	8	7	1
	Trend from Previous Year		-10	-1	-6
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		44.44%	87.50%	14.29%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-10	-11	-17
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		44.44%	38.89%	5.56%
Class of 2018	Enrolment Numbers	10	6	2	2
	Trend from Previous Year		-4	-4	0
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		60.00%	33.33%	100.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-4	-8	-8
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		60.00%	20.00%	20.00%
Class of 2017	Enrolment Numbers	8	9	1	1
	Trend from Previous Year		1	-8	0
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		112.50%	11.11%	100.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		1	-7	-7
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		112.50%	12.50%	12.50%
Class of 2016	Enrolment Numbers	10	8	4	2
	Trend from Previous Year		-2	-4	-2
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		80.00%	50.00%	50.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-2	-6	-8
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		80.00%	40.00%	20.00%
Class of 2015	Enrolment Numbers	10	8	2	1
	Trend from Previous Year		-2	-6	-1
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		80.00%	25.00%	50.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-2	-8	-9
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		80.00%	20.00%	10.00%
Class of 2014	Enrolment Numbers	17	14	5	2
	Trend from Previous Year		-3	-9	-3
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		82.35%	35.71%	40.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-3	-12	-15
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		82.35%	29.41%	11.76%
Mean	Enrolment Numbers	11	8	3	1
	Trend from Previous Year		-3	-5	-2
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		76.55%	40.44%	59.05%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-3	-9	-11
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		76.55%	26.80%	13.30%

Table 3

School #2 - Classroom Guitar Enrolment Trends

Class		Grade Level			
		Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Class of 2019	Enrolment Numbers	43	28	21	19
	Trend from Previous Year		-15	-7	-2
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		65.12%	75.00%	90.48%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-15	-22	-24
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		65.12%	48.84%	44.19%
Class of 2018	Enrolment Numbers	42	22	13	9
	Trend from Previous Year		-20	-9	-4
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		52.38%	59.09%	69.23%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-20	-29	-33
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		52.38%	30.95%	21.43%
Class of 2017	Enrolment Numbers	34	28	19	12
	Trend from Previous Year		-6	-9	-7
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		82.35%	67.86%	63.16%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-6	-15	-22
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		82.35%	55.88%	35.29%
Class of 2016	Enrolment Numbers	25	19	11	7
	Trend from Previous Year		-6	-8	-4
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		76.00%	57.89%	63.64%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-6	-14	-18
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		76.00%	44.00%	28.00%
Class of 2015	Enrolment Numbers	49	28	8	6
	Trend from Previous Year		-21	-20	-2
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		57.14%	28.57%	75.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-21	-41	-43
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		57.14%	16.33%	12.24%
Class of 2014	Enrolment Numbers	38	36	11	6
	Trend from Previous Year		-2	-25	-5
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		94.74%	30.56%	54.55%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-2	-27	-32
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		94.74%	28.95%	15.79%
Mean	Enrolment Numbers	39	25	14	11
	Trend from Previous Year		-12	-13	-4
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		71.29%	53.16%	69.34%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-12	-25	-29
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		71.29%	37.49%	26.16%

Enrolment record – School #3. The third school's data (see Table 4 on page 75) demonstrates that an average of 30 students enroll in guitar in Grade 9. In Grade 10, that enrolment drops slightly to 26 students (-5 or a mean retention rate of 86.93%). In Grade 11, the enrolment drops to 10 students, resulting in an average trend of -14 (or a mean retention rate of 46.95%). By Grade 12, an average of nine students remains enrolled in guitar, with the trend continuing to decrease by -2 (or a mean retention rate of 84.55%). Overall, as students progress from Grade 9 to Grade 12 at this school, there is an average downward trend of -21, which translates to an overall mean retention rate of 29.75%. The retention rate is greater (86.93%) after the first year of study and diminishes as students progress through subsequent years.

Enrolment record – School #4. The fourth school's data (see Table 5 on page 76) demonstrates that an average of 42 students enroll in guitar in Grade 9. In Grade 10, that enrolment drops to 34 students (-8 or a mean retention rate of 82.13%). In Grade 11, the enrolment drops to 18 students, resulting in an average trend of -15 (or a mean retention rate of 55.91%). By Grade 12, an average of 15 students remains enrolled in guitar, with the trend continuing to decrease by -4 (or a mean retention rate of 80.01%). Overall, as students progress from Grade 9 to Grade 12 at this school, there is an average downward trend of -27, which translates to an overall mean retention rate of 35.08%. The retention rate is greater (82.13%) after the first year of study and diminishes as students progress through subsequent years.

Table 4

School #3 - Classroom Guitar Enrolment Trends

Class		Grade Level			
		Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Class of 2019	Enrolment Numbers	21	29	11	11
	Trend from Previous Year		8	-18	0
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		138.10%	37.93%	100.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		8	-10	-10
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		138.10%	52.38%	52.38%
Class of 2018	Enrolment Numbers	37	32	16	14
	Trend from Previous Year		-5	-16	-2
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		86.49%	50.00%	87.50%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-5	-21	-23
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		86.49%	43.24%	37.84%
Class of 2017	Enrolment Numbers	29	23	4	5
	Trend from Previous Year		-6	-19	1
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		79.31%	17.39%	125.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-6	-25	-24
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		79.31%	13.79%	17.24%
Class of 2016	Enrolment Numbers	38	21	14	11
	Trend from Previous Year		-17	-7	-3
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		55.26%	66.67%	78.57%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-17	-24	-27
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		55.26%	36.84%	28.95%
Class of 2015	Enrolment Numbers	23	24	5	3
	Trend from Previous Year		1	-19	-2
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		104.35%	20.83%	60.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		1	-18	-20
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		104.35%	21.74%	13.04%
Class of 2014	Enrolment Numbers	31	18	16	9
	Trend from Previous Year		-13	-2	-7
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		58.06%	88.89%	56.25%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-13	-15	-22
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		58.06%	51.61%	29.03%
Mean	Enrolment Numbers	30	26	10	9
	Trend from Previous Year		-5	-14	-2
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		86.93%	46.95%	84.55%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-5	-19	-21
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		86.93%	36.60%	29.75%

Table 5

School #4 - Classroom Guitar Enrolment Trends

Class		Grade Level			
		Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Class of 2019	Enrolment Numbers	41	37	20	12
	Trend from Previous Year		-4	-17	-8
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		90.24%	54.05%	60.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-4	-21	-29
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		90.24%	48.78%	29.27%
Class of 2018	Enrolment Numbers	42	28	16	11
	Trend from Previous Year		-14	-12	-5
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		66.67%	57.14%	68.75%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-14	-26	-31
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		66.67%	38.10%	26.19%
Class of 2017	Enrolment Numbers	33	31	17	13
	Trend from Previous Year		-2	-14	-4
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		93.94%	54.84%	76.47%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-2	-16	-20
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		93.94%	51.52%	39.39%
Class of 2016	Enrolment Numbers	48	38	26	22
	Trend from Previous Year		-10	-12	-4
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		79.17%	68.42%	84.62%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-10	-22	-26
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		79.17%	54.17%	45.83%
Class of 2015	Enrolment Numbers	44	36	12	15
	Trend from Previous Year		-8	-24	3
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		81.82%	33.33%	125.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-8	-32	-29
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		81.82%	27.27%	34.09%
Class of 2014	Enrolment Numbers	42	34	23	15
	Trend from Previous Year		-8	-11	-8
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		80.95%	67.65%	65.22%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-8	-19	-27
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		80.95%	54.76%	35.71%
Mean	Enrolment Numbers	42	34	18	15
	Trend from Previous Year		-8	-15	-4
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		82.13%	55.91%	80.01%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-8	-23	-27
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		82.13%	45.77%	35.08%

Enrolment record – School #5. The fifth school's data (see Table 6 on page 78) demonstrates that an average of nine students enroll in guitar in Grade 9. In Grade 10, that enrolment decreases slightly to 8 students (-2 or a mean retention rate of 106.06%). In Grade 11, the enrolment drops to four students, resulting in an average trend of -3 (or a mean retention rate of 68.02%). By Grade 12, an average of three students remains enrolled in guitar, with the trend continuing to decrease by -2 (or a mean retention rate of 86.39%). Overall, as students progress from Grade 9 to Grade 12 at this school, there is an average downward trend of -7, which translates to an overall mean retention rate of 45.32%. The retention rate is greater (106.06%) after the first year of study and diminishes as students progress through subsequent years.

Enrolment record – School #6. The last school's data (see Table 7 on page 79) demonstrates that an average of 35 students enroll in guitar in Grade 9. In Grade 10, that enrolment decreases to 27 students (-7 or a mean retention rate of 86.21%). In Grade 11, the enrolment drops to 21 students, resulting in an average trend of -5 (or a mean retention rate of 80.94%). By Grade 12, the enrolment numbers rise to 22 students, with the trend decreasing to -1 (or a mean retention rate of 95.32%). Overall, as students progress from Grade 9 to Grade 12 at this school, there is an average downward trend of -13, which translates to an overall mean retention rate of 64.55%. The retention rate is greater (86.21%) after the first year of study and diminishes as students progress through subsequent years.

Table 6

School #5 - Classroom Guitar Enrolment Trends

Class		Grade Level			
		Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Class of 2019	Enrolment Numbers	7	4	3	2
	Trend from Previous Year		-3	-1	-1
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		57.14%	75.00%	66.67%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-3	-4	-5
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		57.14%	42.86%	28.57%
Class of 2018	Enrolment Numbers	4	13	9	6
	Trend from Previous Year		9	-4	-3
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		325.00%	69.23%	66.67%
	Trend Since Grade 9		9	5	2
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		325.00%	225.00%	150.00%
Class of 2017	Enrolment Numbers	7	4	4	1
	Trend from Previous Year		-3	0	-3
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		57.14%	100.00%	25.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-3	-3	-6
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		57.14%	57.14%	14.29%
Class of 2016	Enrolment Numbers	16	12	2	3
	Trend from Previous Year		-4	-10	1
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		75.00%	16.67%	150.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-4	-14	-13
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		75.00%	12.50%	18.75%
Class of 2015	Enrolment Numbers	12	9	2	3
	Trend from Previous Year		-3	-7	1
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		75.00%	22.22%	150.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-3	-10	-9
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		75.00%	16.67%	25.00%
Class of 2014	Enrolment Numbers	17	8	10	6
	Trend from Previous Year		-9	2	-4
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		47.06%	125.00%	60.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-9	-7	-11
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		47.06%	58.82%	35.29%
Mean	Enrolment Numbers	9	8	4	3
	Trend from Previous Year		-2	-3	-2
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		106.06%	68.02%	86.39%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-2	-6	-7
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		106.06%	68.83%	45.32%

Table 7

School #6 - Classroom Guitar Enrolment Trends

Class		Grade Level			
		Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Class of 2019	Enrolment Numbers	32	32	23	23
	Trend from Previous Year		0	-9	0
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		100.00%	71.88%	100.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		0	-9	-9
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		100.00%	71.88%	71.88%
Class of 2018	Enrolment Numbers	23	24	19	18
	Trend from Previous Year		1	-5	-1
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		104.35%	79.17%	94.74%
	Trend Since Grade 9		1	-4	-5
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		104.35%	82.61%	78.26%
Class of 2017	Enrolment Numbers	34	25	25	26
	Trend from Previous Year		-9	0	1
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		73.53%	100.00%	104.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-9	-9	-8
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		73.53%	73.53%	76.47%
Class of 2016	Enrolment Numbers	54	24	20	20
	Trend from Previous Year		-30	-4	0
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		44.44%	83.33%	100.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-30	-34	-34
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		44.44%	37.04%	37.04%
Class of 2015	Enrolment Numbers	33	30	20	21
	Trend from Previous Year		-3	-10	1
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		90.91%	66.67%	105.00%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-3	-13	-12
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		90.91%	60.61%	63.64%
Class of 2014	Enrolment Numbers	25	26	22	15
	Trend from Previous Year		1	-4	-7
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		104.00%	84.62%	68.18%
	Trend Since Grade 9		1	-3	-10
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		104.00%	88.00%	60.00%
Mean	Enrolment Numbers	35	27	21	22
	Trend from Previous Year		-7	-5	-1
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		86.21%	80.94%	95.32%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-7	-12	-13
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		86.21%	68.94%	64.55%

Student Surveys

Participation rates and demographics. Based on both current and past class lists that had been provided by the school division, e-mail invitations to participate in the online survey were sent to a total of 192 Grade 12 students from all six high schools in the school division. Of these, 78 were potential participants in Group 1 (Retained), while 114 were potential participants in Group 2 (Non-retained). Of the latter group, 19 e-mail addresses were rejected as they were not recognized, thus reducing the number of potential participants in that group to 95 and reducing the total number of potential participants in both groups to 173. In all, 25 students from both Group 1 and Group 2 took part in the survey (N=25) resulting in an overall participation rate of 14.5%. In Group 1, there were 18 respondents of 78 potential participants who completed or partially completed the survey, resulting in a 21.3% participation rate (n=18), while in Group 2, there were seven respondents of 95 potential participants who completed or partially completed the survey, resulting in a 7.4% participation rate (n=7).

Guitar enrolment status. All 18 survey participants from Group 1 were in Grade 12 and were enrolled in classroom guitar at the time of the study. Although the seven participants from Group 2 were also in Grade 12, all had dropped out of classroom guitar prior to their Grade 12 year. One student (1 of 7 or 14.3%) dropped out of guitar prior to commencing Grade 12, most (5 of 7 or 71.4%) dropped out of guitar prior to commencing Grade 11, and one (1 of 7 or 14.3%) dropped out of guitar prior to commencing Grade 10.

Gender distribution. Most survey participants identified as female (15), while the remainder identified as male (9). Specifically, 11 (64.7%) identified as female, 6 (35.3%) identified as male, and one (5.56%) participant chose not to answer the question for Group 1, while 4 (57.1%) identified as female and 3 (42.9%) identified as male for Group 2.

Number of years in classroom guitar. Respondents' total number of years in classroom guitar varied within both groups. Most participants from Group 1 (13 of 18 or 72.2%) had been playing guitar for 5 years or more, a small group (4 of 18 or 22.2%) had been playing guitar for 3 to 4 years, while one participant (1 of 18 or 5.6%) had only played for 1 to 2 years. For non-retained students, only one participant (1 of 7 or 14.3%) had been playing guitar for 5 years or more, a few (3 of 7 or 42.9%) had been playing guitar for 3 to 4 years, while a few others (3 of 7 or 42.9%) had only played for 1 to 2 years.

Practice habits. Participant practice habits also differed within both groups. For Group 1 students, these ranged from every day (5 of 18 or 27.8%), 5 to 6 times a week (6 of 18 or 33.3%), 3 to 4 times a week (6 of 18 or 33.3%), to 1 to 2 times a week (1 of 18 or 5.6%). During their last year of guitar, practice habits for Group 2 students ranged from 5 to 6 times a week (1 of 7 or 14.3%), 3 to 4 times a week (4 of 7 or 57.1%), 1 to 2 times a week (1 of 7 or 14.3%), to rarely practicing at all (1 of 7 or 14.3%).

Practice duration. To better understand their practice habits, respondents were asked to specify the average duration of each practice sessions. Half of retained students reported spending more than 60 minutes (9 of 18 or 50.0%), while a third spent 31 to 60 minutes (6 of 18 or 33.3%), and the remaining students spent 10 to 30 minutes (3 of 18 or 16.7%). Many participants from the non-retained group spent 31 to 60 minutes per practice session (3 of 7 or 42.9%), while most spent 10 to 30 minutes per practice session (4 of 7 or 57.1%).

Student survey findings – quantitative data. As stated earlier, an online survey was used to ask Group 1 and Group 2 students to provide feedback on their experiences in classroom guitar programs. The questions posed were theoretically guided by the basic psychologic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness as proposed by Deci and Ryan (2000). The survey

items were further aligned with the factors affecting student retention and attrition as uncovered in the literature review.

The following tables display students' responses to the survey items. The distribution of student responses, frequencies, percentages, and mean scores for each item are given. Numerical values were assigned to each response to calculate mean scores (Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Agree = 3, Strongly Agree = 4). A higher mean score represents a higher level of agreement with the stated question.

Autonomy. The first group of factors pertained to the psychological need of autonomy. These included attitudes/beliefs, flow/interest/passion, motivation, multipotentiality, scheduling/timetabling, socio-economic status, and student repertoire.

Attitudes/beliefs. Tables 8 and 9 display retained and non-retained students' responses to survey items pertaining to their attitudes and beliefs toward learning to play guitar.

Table 8

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Attitudes/Beliefs (n=17)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
Learning to play guitar is important to me.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (58.8%)	7 (41.1%)	3.4 (Agree)
Learning to play guitar is useful to me	0 (0%)	2 (11.8%)	10 (58.8%)	5 (29.4%)	3.2 (Agree)
Learning to play guitar changes my mood if I am feeling down.	0 (0%)	2 (11.8%)	3 (17.7%)	12 (70.6%)	3.6 (Strongly Agree)

It can be seen from the data in Table 8 that students who take guitar throughout their

high school years agreed most strongly with the idea that playing the guitar changes their mood if feeling down (3.6). Almost 90% of the students responding to the survey strongly agreed (70.6%) or agree (17.7%) with playing guitar in order to improve their mood, however a small number did not (2 or 11.8%). All students agreed (58.8%) or strongly agreed (41.1%) that learning to play guitar was important to them, but the mean score resulting for this item was slightly lower (3.4) than for positive mood changes (3.6). Findings also revealed that ample agreement occurred among students around the utilitarian value of a guitar education (15 of 17 students or 88.2%) with a mean score of 3.2 resulting.

Table 9

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Non-Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Attitudes/Beliefs (n=6)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
Learning to play guitar is important to me.	1 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	5 (83.3%)	0 (0%)	2.7 (Agree)
Learning to play guitar is useful to me	1 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	2 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	2.8 (Agree)
Learning to play guitar changes my mood if I am feeling down.	1 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	3 (50.0%)	1 (16.7%)	2.7 (Agree)

In contrast to the findings presented in Table 8 for guitar students who were retained in programs throughout high schools, students who dropped out agreed less strongly overall to these same survey items, and a little differently. The highest mean score (2.8) occurred for the personal usefulness of learning to play the guitar with about two thirds (66.6%) of the students agreeing or strongly agreeing with that item. Items related to importance and mood resulted in slightly lower mean scores of 2.7. Learning to play guitar was important to the majority (83.3%)

of non-retained students completing the survey, and about two thirds (66.7%) also reported that guitar playing changed their mood when feeling down.

Flow/interest/passion. Tables 10 and 11 display retained and non-retained students' responses to survey items pertaining to flow/interest/passion as factors in participation in classroom guitar.

Table 10

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Flow/Interest/Passion (n=17)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I participate in classroom guitar because I am interested in music.	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)	6 (35.3%)	10 (58.8%)	3.5 (Strongly Agree)
I participate in classroom guitar because it is enjoyable.	0 (0%)	2 (11.8%)	8 (47.1%)	8 (47.1%)	3.4 (Agree)
I participate in classroom guitar because I am passionate about learning to play guitar.	0 (0%)	4 (23.5%)	9 (52.9%)	4 (23.5%)	3.0 (Agree)

The data in Table 10 indicates that students who continue to participate in guitar programs strongly agreed that they did so because of an interest in music (3.5). Nearly 95% strongly agreed (10 or 58.8%) or agreed (6 or 35.3%) with this statement, while a small number did not (1 or 5.9%). Although not all agreed (2 or 11.8%), the large majority of students (94.2%) also indicated that they participated in classroom guitar because it is enjoyable (3.4). The lowest mean score (3.0) was attributed to student passion. Nearly three quarters of participants (76.4%) either agreed (9 or 52.9%) or strongly agreed (4 or 23.5%) with the idea that they participate in classroom guitar because of their passion for learning to play the instrument, while a few (4 or 23.5%) did not.

Table 11

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Non-Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Flow/Interest/Passion (n=6)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I participate in classroom guitar because I am interested in music.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (83.3%)	1 (16.7%)	3.2 (Agree)
I participate in classroom guitar because it is enjoyable.	0 (0%)	2 (33.3%)	4 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	2.7 (Agree)
I participate in classroom guitar because I am passionate about learning to play guitar.	1 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	4 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	2.5 (Agree)

Participation in classroom guitar due to an interest in music generated a higher level of agreement for students who left guitar programs (3.2), as it did for retained students. Most students agreed (5 or 83.3%) while only one student (1 or 16.7%) strongly agreed. Two-thirds of respondents (4 or 66.7%) agreed that classroom guitar was enjoyable, while a third (2 or 33.3%) disagreed resulting in a mean score of 2.7. Similarly, 66.7% of respondents agreed that they were passionate about learning to play guitar. One student (1 or 16.7%) disagreed with the statement and another (1 or 16.7%) strongly disagreed.

Motivation. Tables 12 and 13 display retained and non-retained students' responses to survey items pertaining to motivation as a factor in participation in classroom guitar.

Table 12

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Motivation (n=17)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I participate in classroom guitar because of trips and fun things we do outside of class.	2 (11.8%)	3 (17.7%)	6 (35.3%)	6 (35.3%)	2.9 (Agree)
I participate in classroom guitar because I want to become a better guitar player.	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)	7 (41.2%)	9 (52.9%)	3.5 (Strongly Agree)
I participate in classroom guitar because my grade boosts my overall course average on my report card.	1 (5.9%)	1 (5.9%)	7 (41.2%)	8 (47.1%)	3.3 (Agree)

The mean score of 3.5 suggested that Group 1 students are intrinsically motivated to participate in the school guitar programs, indicated by strong agreement that becoming a better guitar player is the reason that they participated. Nearly 95% of students either strongly agreed (9 or 52.9%) or agreed (7 or 41.2%), while only one respondent (5.9%) disagreed, although the mean score was slightly lower (3.3). Students also indicated that they participated in classroom guitar to boost their overall course average. Taking into consideration that two students either strongly disagreed or disagreed (1 or 5.9% respectively), most students either strongly agreed (8 or 47.1%) or agreed (7 or 41.2%) with the statement which embodies an external motivator. Evident by the mean score (2.9), most students also agreed that they participated in classroom guitar because of trips and fun things that were done outside of class. Contrary to the other statements relating to motivation, nearly 30% of students disagreed (3 or 17.7%) or strongly disagreed (2 or 11.8%) that this factor was an external motivator for them.

Table 13

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Non-Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Motivation (n=5)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I participate in classroom guitar because of trips and fun things we do outside of class.	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	2.6 (Agree)
I participate in classroom guitar because I want to become a better guitar player.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	3.6 (Strongly Agree)
I participate in classroom guitar because my grade boosts my overall course average on my report card.	3 (60%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	2.0 (Disagree)

It is interesting to note that 100% of respondents from Group 2 either strongly agreed (3 or 60%) or agreed (2 or 40%) that they participated in classroom guitar to become better players. This resulted in a mean score (3.6) that is 0.1 higher than that of Group 1 participants. This finding across both sub-groups supports the notion that students take guitar to become better players and are intrinsically motivated to do so. Yet, if non-retained guitar students want to become better players, quitting seems counter-productive to that goal. This finding is perplexing and calls for follow-up in future research. In contrast to those of retained students, mean scores for trips and fun things outside of class (2.6) was higher for non-retained students than for participating in classroom guitar to boost their overall course average (2.0). The reverse occurred for retained students. For trips and other fun events, 60% of students agreed (2 or 40%) or strongly agreed (1 or 20%), while 40% disagreed (1 or 20%) or strongly disagreed (1 or 20%). For boosting grade averages, only 40% agreed (1 or 20%) or strongly agreed (1 or 20%), while

60% strongly disagreed (3 or 60%) that they participated in guitar for that reason. This finding suggests that non-retained students are less motivated by external factors, perhaps because they did not participate long enough to be influenced by them.

Multipotentiality. Tables 14 and 15 display retained and non-retained students' responses to survey items pertaining to multipotentiality as a factor in participation in classroom guitar.

Table 14

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Multipotentiality (n=17)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I have many interests that are as compelling to me as guitar.	0 (0%)	4 (23.5%)	8 (47.1%)	5 (29.4%)	3.1 (Agree)
Although, I enjoy classroom guitar, there are other courses that I would like to take.	0 (0%)	7 (41.2%)	9 (52.9%)	1 (5.9%)	2.7 (Agree)
I have difficulty choosing between classroom guitar and other courses that interest me.	1 (5.9%)	14 (82.4%)	1 (5.9%)	0 (0%)	1.9 (Disagree)

Most students who remain in guitar programs throughout high school agreed that they had many interests outside of guitar (3.1). Most students agreed (8 or 47.1%), a few strongly agreed (5 or 29.4%), while fewer disagreed (4 or 23.5%). Nearly 60% of respondents agreed that they enjoy guitar, but there are other courses that they would like to take (2.7). Despite this response, almost all respondents disagreed (14 or 82.4%) or strongly disagreed (1 or 5.9%) that they had any difficulty choosing between classroom guitar and other courses of interest.

Table 15

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Non-Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Multipotentiality (n=5)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I have many interests that are as compelling to me as guitar.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	3.2 (Agree)
Although, I enjoy classroom guitar, there are other courses that I would like to take.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (60%)	3 (60%)	3.4 (Agree)
I have difficulty choosing between classroom guitar and other courses that interest me.	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	2.8 (Agree)

Contrary to responses from Group 1 participants, the level of agreement for all items pertaining to multipotentiality was high. Not surprising, all respondents agreed that there were other non-guitar courses that they would like to take (3.4) and that they had many interests as compelling as guitar (3.2). Two respondents (2 or 40%) strongly agreed that they had difficulty choosing between guitar and other courses, while one agreed (20%), another disagreed (20%), and yet another strongly disagreed (1 or 20% respectively). This distribution of responses represents a weaker level of agreement (2.8) regarding non-retained students' difficulty when selecting guitar over other courses.

Scheduling/timetabling. Tables 16 and 17 display retained and non-retained students' responses to survey items pertaining to scheduling and timetabling as factors in participation in classroom guitar.

Table 16

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Scheduling/Timetabling (n=17)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
The course timetable makes it difficult to choose guitar as an option.	2 (11.8%)	7 (41.2%)	5 (29.4%)	3 (17.7%)	2.5 (Disagree / Agree)
When choosing my courses, there are more often conflicts with guitar and other courses I would like to take (elective courses).	1 (5.9%)	8 (47.1%)	6 (35.3%)	2 (11.8%)	2.5 (Disagree / Agree)
When choosing my courses, there are more often conflicts with guitar and other courses I must take (required courses).	1 (5.9%)	9 (52.9%)	4 (23.5%)	3 (17.7%)	2.5 (Disagree / Agree)

Statements pertaining to scheduling and timetabling generated mixed responses indicated by the distribution of responses and mean score (2.5). Just over 50% of retained students disagreed (7 or 41.2%) or strongly disagreed (2 or 11.8%) that the timetable made it difficult to choose guitar as an option. Keeping in mind that between 50% and 60% of respondents were not in agreement with these survey items, it is interesting to note that a slightly larger percentage of respondents specified that conflicts arose with elective courses (47.1%), than was the case for required courses (41.2%). These findings indicate that retained students' experiences with timetabling and scheduling challenges are different, some experiencing difficulties while others do not.

Table 17

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Non-Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Scheduling/Timetabling (n=5)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
The course timetable makes it difficult to choose guitar as an option.	0 (0%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	3.0 (Agree)
When choosing my courses, there are more often conflicts with guitar and other courses I would like to take (elective courses).	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	3.2 (Agree)
When choosing my courses, there are more often conflicts with guitar and other courses I must take (required courses).	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	2.4 (Disagree)

Unlike Group 1 respondents, all non-retained students concurred that conflicts arose when choosing between guitar and other elective course that interests them (3.2). Most respondents (4 or 80%) agreed with the statement while another (1 or 20%) strongly agreed. Although two respondents disagreed (2 or 40%), three students agreed (1 or 20%) or strongly agreed (2 or 40%) that the course timetable made it difficult to choose guitar as an option (3.0). As was the case with retained students' responses, conflicts seemed to arise more so with elective courses, than required courses. Whereas all respondents (5 or 100%) agreed that conflicts arose between guitar and other elective courses that they would like to take, only two (40%) agreed that this was the case with required courses.

Socioeconomic status. Tables 18 and 19 display retained and non-retained students' responses to survey items pertaining to socioeconomic status as a factor related to participation in classroom guitar courses.

Table 18

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Socioeconomic Status (n=17)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I joined classroom guitar because it did not cost too much compared to other activities.	8 (47.1%)	5 (29.4%)	3 (17.7%)	1 (5.9%)	1.8 (Disagree)
My parents/guardians can afford to pay for a guitar so that I can participate in classroom guitar.	1 (5.9%)	1 (5.9%)	10 (58.8%)	5 (29.4%)	3.1 (Agree)
I could not participate in classroom guitar if I did not have a school instrument to use.	6 (35.3%)	8 (47.1%)	3 (17.7%)	0 (0%)	1.8 (Disagree)

Although not the case for all students (2 or 11.8%), the mean score (3.1) reflects that most students reported that their parents/guardians had the financial means to purchase an instrument for them to participate in classroom guitar. A large percentage of students (14 or 82.4%) disagreed (8 or 47.1%) or strongly disagreed (6 or 35.3%) with the notion that they needed a guitar provided by the school in order to take a guitar course, however, a small group of students do rely on this support (3 or 17.7%). In addition, most respondents strongly disagreed (8 or 47.1%) or disagreed (5 or 29.4%) that they joined guitar because the cost is low compared to other activities. Despite the indication that most respondents report to have the financial means to participate in classroom guitar, it should be noted that the cost of an instrument is a factor for a small number of students who participate in the high school guitar program.

Table 19

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Non-Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Socioeconomic Status (n=5)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I joined classroom guitar because it did not cost too much compared to other activities.	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	2.0 (Disagree)
My parents/guardians can afford to pay for a guitar so that I can participate in classroom guitar.	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	2.6 (Agree)
I could not participate in classroom guitar if I did not have a school instrument to use.	0 (0%)	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	2.6 (Agree)

Comparatively to the data in Table 18, similar findings were also obtained for non-retained students, albeit not as definitive. Three respondents (60%) indicated that their parents/guardians could afford to purchase an instrument for them to participate in classroom guitar, while one disagreed (20%) and another strongly disagreed (1 or 20%). The ratio was similar for other survey items. Of the five respondents, 3 or 60% disagreed with two statements related to joining guitar because of the lowered cost or because the school offered an instrument to use. However, as was noted for Group 1 participants, cost is a factor for some students (2 or 40%).

Student repertoire. Tables 20 and 21 display retained and non-retained students' responses to survey items pertaining to student repertoire as a factor impacting participation in classroom guitar.

Table 20

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Student Repertoire (n=17)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
The guitar music that we play is interesting and challenging.	0 (0%)	3 (17.7%)	9 (52.9%)	5 (29.4%)	3.1 (Agree)
I prefer playing repertoire for a large ensemble rather than pieces for small groups or solos.	1 (5.9%)	7 (41.2%)	5 (29.4%)	4 (23.5%)	2.7 (Agree)
Students should have more say in the music they get to play.	1 (5.9%)	3 (17.7%)	11 (64.7%)	2 (11.8%)	2.8 (Agree)

A higher mean score (3.1) resulted for the survey item pertaining to playing guitar repertoire that is interesting and challenging. Over 80% of retained students either agreed (9 or 52.9%) or strongly agreed (5 or 29.4%) that this was the case with their classroom guitar experience, indicating their teachers select appropriate music for them. Only a few (3 or 17.7%) did not find the music challenging or interesting. Most students agreed that they should have more say in the music that they play (2.8). Student responses were mixed around their preference for playing repertoire for large ensembles over small group or solo works. Five respondents agreed (29.4%) and four strongly agreed (23.5%) that they preferred playing large ensemble music, near half disagreed (7 or 41.2%) or strongly disagreed (1 or 5.9%).

Table 21

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Non-Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Student Repertoire (n=5)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
The guitar music that we play is interesting and challenging.	0 (0%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	2.8 (Agree)
I prefer playing repertoire for a large ensemble rather than pieces for small groups or solos.	0 (0%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	2.8 (Agree)
Students should have more say in the music they get to play.	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	3.2 (Agree)

Group 2 students agreed most strongly overall that they should have the opportunity to choose the music that they play in class (3.2). Although only one participant disagreed (1 or 20%), the large majority either agreed (2 or 40%) or strongly agreed (2 or 40%) that input is desirable. Identical mean scores resulted for the other two statements (2.8). Most non-retained students (3 or 60%) perceived the music they played to be challenging and interesting, while the remainder did not (2 or 40%). The same percentage preferred large ensemble pieces (3 or 60%) over small group or solo repertoire (2 or 40%).

Competence. The second group of factors pertained to the psychological need of competence. These included competence beliefs, competition, level of difficulty, and success/failure.

Competence beliefs. Tables 22 and 23 display retained and non-retained students' responses to survey items related to competence beliefs as a factor in participation in classroom guitar.

Table 22

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Competence Beliefs (n=17)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I am a good guitar player.	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)	11 (64.7%)	5 (29.4%)	3.1 (Agree)
Compared to others in my class, I am a good guitar player.	0 (0%)	6 (35.3%)	6 (35.3%)	5 (29.4%)	2.7 (Agree)
I am not as good at playing guitar as I am at other things.	2 (11.8%)	4 (23.5%)	9 (52.9%)	2 (11.8%)	2.8 (Agree)

The mean score of 3.1 reflects retained students' perception that they are good guitar players. Although one respondent (1 or 5.9%) did not view themselves in this manner, most agreed (11 or 64.7%) or strongly agreed (5 or 29.4%) with this statement. Many students (11 or 64.7%) also believed that they are better at other endeavors than they are at playing guitar (2.8). The same number of respondents (11 or 64.7%) reported to be good guitar players when compared to others in the class. A smaller group, however, (6 or 35.3%), did not. These results indicate that self-efficacy is playing a role in the retention of guitar students in high school guitar programs.

Table 23

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Non-Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Competence Beliefs (n=3)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I am a good guitar player.	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	2.3 (Disagree)
Compared to others in my class, I am a good guitar player.	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.3 (Strongly Disagree)
I am not as good at playing guitar as I am at other things.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	4.0 (Strongly Agree)

This small group of non-retained respondents indicated that they were better at other things than they are at playing guitar (4.0). Although two non-retained students (66.7%) viewed themselves as being good guitar players, all three respondents (100%) did not consider themselves to be better than their classmates.

Competition. Tables 24 and 25 display retained and non-retained students' responses to survey items pertaining to competition as a factor in participation in classroom guitar.

Table 24

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Competition (n=17)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I participate in classroom guitar because I want to become a better guitar player than my friends.	3 (17.7%)	8 (47.1%)	3 (17.7%)	3 (17.7%)	2.4 (Disagree)
I participate in classroom guitar because I like competing against other schools in festivals.	3 (17.7%)	7 (41.2%)	3 (17.7%)	4 (23.5%)	2.5 (Disagree / Agree)
I participate in classroom guitar because I enjoy receiving feedback from adjudicators about my performance.	1 (5.9%)	6 (35.3%)	6 (35.3%)	4 (23.5%)	2.8 (Agree)

Many students in Group 1 enjoy receiving feedback about their performances at festivals, either agreeing (6 or 35.3%) or strongly agreeing (4 or 23.5%) with the statement. Yet, more than half (10 or 58.9%) indicated that they did not participate in classroom guitar because of these competitions. Peer competition also does not appear to be a factor in retention for most students. Although an even number of respondents agreed (3 or 17.7%) or strongly agreed (3 or 17.7%) that competition amongst friends was a reason for their participation, a greater number disagreed (8 or 47.1%) or strongly disagreed (3 or 17.7%) that this was a factor.

Table 25

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Non-Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Competition (n=3)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I participate in classroom guitar because I want to become a better guitar player than my friends.	0 (0%)	2 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	2.7 (Agree)
I participate in classroom guitar because I like competing against other schools in festivals.	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (66.7%)	3.3 (Agree)
I participate in classroom guitar because I enjoy receiving feedback from adjudicators about my performance.	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	2.3 (Disagree)

Unlike retained students, two of the three respondents agreed that they participated in classroom guitar because they enjoyed competing against other schools in festivals (3.3). Although one student (33.3%) strongly agreed with the other two statements, two (66.7%) reported that they did not participate in classroom to become better guitar players than their friends, nor did they do so because they enjoy receiving feedback from adjudicators at performances.

Level of difficulty. Tables 26 and 27 display retained and non-retained students' responses to survey items pertaining to level of difficulty as a factor in participation in classroom guitar.

Table 26

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Level of Difficulty (n=17)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
The repertoire we play in classroom guitar is difficult for me.	2 (11.8%)	10 (58.8%)	5 (29.4%)	0 (0%)	2.1 (Disagree)
Compared to other academic subjects, classroom guitar is more difficult for me.	8 (47.1%)	9 (52.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.5 (Strongly Disagree / Disagree)
Playing challenging parts is important to me.	0 (0%)	4 (23.5%)	6 (35.3%)	7 (41.2%)	3.2 (Agree)

It is interesting to note that all students from Group 1 either disagreed (9 or 52.9%) or strongly disagreed (8 or 47.1%) with the statement that classroom guitar is more difficult for them than other academic subjects. The mean score generated by students who remained in guitar programs (3.2) indicates that playing challenging music is important to them. Of these, 13 or 76.5% agreed with the notion, while 4 or 23.5% disagreed. This finding aligns with findings for another item which suggests that the repertoire used in class is not difficult. In essence, students retained in guitar programs do not find the programs difficult, nor the repertoire used in classes difficult. Furthermore, some students would welcome more challenging music to play.

Table 27

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Non-Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Level of Difficulty (n=3)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
The repertoire we play in classroom guitar is difficult for me.	0 (0%)	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	2.3 (Disagree)
Compared to other academic subjects, classroom guitar is more difficult for me.	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	2.0 (Disagree)
Playing challenging parts is important to me.	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	2.7 (Agree)

As for Group 1 respondents, two students (66.6%) who left guitar programs agreed that playing challenging parts was important (2.7). Two-thirds (2 or 66.7%) of students reported that the repertoire was not difficult for them, while the remaining one (33.3%) disagreed. These findings suggest that the music used in guitar programs could be more difficult. In keeping with this idea, two of the three students in the group also indicated that classroom guitar was not as difficult as other academic subjects, resulting in a mean score of 2.0.

Success/failure. Tables 28 and 29 display retained and non-retained students' responses to survey items pertaining to success and failure as factors in participation in classroom guitar.

Table 28

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Success/Failure (n=17)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
If I am feeling challenged during class lessons, it makes me want to quit guitar.	7 (41.2%)	10 (58.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.6 (Disagree)
If I am feeling challenged in class lessons, it makes me want to do better next time.	0 (0%)	2 (11.8%)	9 (52.9%)	6 (35.3%)	3.2 (Agree)
I practice and rehearse so that I can become a better performer.	0 (0%)	2 (11.8%)	11 (64.7%)	4 (23.5%)	3.1 (Agree)

In Group 1, all retained students disagreed that challenges presented to them during guitar class made them want to quit. Rather, 15 students (88.2%) felt motivated to do better when difficulties arose (3.2), while the remainder did not. Two (11.8%) disagreed that practice and rehearsing would make them a better performer, however most respondents (15 or 88.2%) agreed that these processes would lead to better performing skills.

Table 29

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Non-Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Success/Failure (n=3)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
If I am feeling challenged during class lessons, it makes me want to quit guitar.	0 (0%)	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	2.3 (Disagree)
If I am feeling challenged in class lessons, it makes me want to do better next time.	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (66.7%)	3.3 (Agree)
I practice and rehearse so that I can become a better performer.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)	3.3 (Agree)

Two Group 2 students (66.7%) indicated that challenges are welcome in guitar classes, and these lead to a desire to do better (3.3). A mean score of 3.3 occurred for the survey item linking student practice to better performing skills. All respondents agreed with this statement (3 or 100%). One student (33.3%) associated feeling challenged with a desire to quit the program, but the other two (66.7%) did not agree.

Relatedness. The last group of factors pertained to the psychological need of relatedness. These included parental influence, peer influence, and teacher/student relationship.

Parental influence. Tables 30 and 31 display retained and non-retained students' responses to survey items pertaining to parental influence as a factor in participation in classroom guitar.

Table 30

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Parental Influence (n=17)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I am in classroom guitar because my parents wanted me to enroll.	9 (52.9%)	6 (35.3%)	2 (11.8%)	0 (0%)	1.6 (Disagree)
My parents think learning to play an instrument is important for me.	0 (0%)	8 (47.1%)	9 (52.9%)	0 (0%)	2.5 (Disagree / Agree)
My parents encouraged and supported me throughout my guitar study.	0 (0%)	5 (29.4%)	8 (47.1%)	4 (23.5%)	2.9 (Agree)

Most Group 1 students agreed that their parents offered encouragement and support throughout their guitar studies (2.9). Of these, a few (5 or 29.4%) disagreed that this was the case. Almost half of retained students (8 or 47.1%) disagreed with the idea that learning to play

an instrument is important. On the other hand, more than half (9 or 52.9%) agreed that their parents think learning to play an instrument like guitar is important. The large majority of students strongly disagreed (9 or 52.9%) or disagreed (6 or 35.3%) that they were in classroom guitar because of parental influence. Only two (11.8%) enrolled because their parents wanted them to do so.

Table 31

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Non-Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Parental Influence (n=3)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I am in classroom guitar because my parents wanted me to enroll.	2 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	1.7 (Disagree)
My parents think learning to play an instrument is important for me.	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	2.7 (Agree)
My parents encouraged and supported me throughout my guitar study.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	3.5 (Agree / Strongly Agree)

Findings for Group 2 students also indicated feelings of parental support and encouragement for their guitar studies (3.5). Two students (66.7%) indicated that their parents valued learning to play guitar, while one (33.3%) did not. As with Group 1 students, two strongly disagreed (66.7%) that they enrolled in guitar to please their parents, but one (33.3%) enrolled for this reason.

Peer influence. Tables 32 and 33 display retained and non-retained students' responses to survey items pertaining to peer influence as a factor in participation in classroom guitar.

Table 32

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Peer Influence (n=17)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I joined guitar because my friends joined.	6 (35.3%)	6 (35.3%)	4 (23.5%)	1 (5.9%)	2.0 (Disagree)
I stay in guitar because my friends are involved.	6 (35.3%)	2 (11.8%)	8 (47.1%)	1 (5.9%)	2.2 (Disagree)
Guitar class is a place where you can make new friends.	2 (11.8%)	1 (5.9%)	7 (41.2%)	7 (41.2%)	3.1 (Agree)

The majority of students who remained in guitar programs from Grade 9 to Grade 12 agreed (7 or 41.2%) or strongly agreed (7 or 41.2%) that guitar class is a place where students can make new friends; however, not all concurred (3 or 17.7%). Most students (12 or 70.6%) disagreed with the idea of enrolling in guitar because their friends joined, yet a little over half (9 or 53.0%) stated that they remained in guitar programs because of them. A mean score of 2.3 for this item linking retention and the involvement of friends reflects a split perspective with about half being influenced by friends and the other half not so.

Table 33

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Non-Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Peer Influence (n=3)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I joined guitar because my friends joined.	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	2.0 (Disagree)
I stay in guitar because my friends are involved.	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	2.3 (Disagree)
Guitar class is a place where you can make new friends.	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	3.0 (Agree)

The findings for responses by non-retained students closely mirror those for retained guitar students. A mean score (3.0) reflects respondents' perceptions that guitar class is a good place to make friends. Akin to Group 1 students, two (66.6%) rejected the notion that they joined guitar because of their friends, while one (33.3%) did. Two (66.6%) also disagreed with the idea that they remained in the programs to be with their friends, however one (33.3%) did do so.

Teacher/student relationship. Tables 34 and 35 display retained and non-retained students' responses to survey items pertaining to teacher/student relationship as a factor in participation in classroom guitar.

Table 34

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Teacher/Student Relationship (n=17)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I have a good learning relationship with my guitar teacher.	1 (5.9%)	0 (0%)	7 (41.2%)	9 (52.9%)	3.4 (Agree)
I feel encouraged by my guitar teacher.	1 (5.9%)	0 (0%)	7 (41.2%)	9 (52.9%)	3.4 (Agree)
My guitar teacher is supportive and gives me helpful feedback.	1 (5.9%)	0 (0%)	6 (35.3%)	10 (58.8%)	3.5 (Agree / Strongly Agree)

Aside from one participant (5.9%), all Group 1 respondents agreed with the three survey items which provide evidence of positive teacher/student relationships. The highest mean score (3.5) was found for students' reports that their teachers were supportive and gave helpful feedback. Almost all students (16 or 94.1%) agreed that they have good learning relationships with their teachers (3.4) and feel encouraged by them (3.4).

Table 35

Distribution of Responses and Mean Scores from Non-Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Teacher/Student Relationship (n=3)

Question	Level of Agreement				Mean Score
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	
I have a good learning relationship with my guitar teacher.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	3.0 (Agree)
I feel encouraged by my guitar teacher.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	3.0 (Agree)
My guitar teacher is supportive and gives me helpful feedback.	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	3.0 (Agree)

Mean scores for this set of survey items were identical throughout, indicating a general sense of agreement (3.0) for items related to student-teacher relationships. Like Group 1, Group 2 respondents report positively to these items, but level of agreement is not as strong as what resulted for Group 1. This finding suggests the teacher-student rapport is important and concurs with the literature. While all students (3 or 100%) agreed that they had good learning relationships with their guitar teachers and felt encouraged by them, one (1 or 33.3%) disagreed that their teacher was supportive and provided helpful feedback.

Parent/peer/teacher/student influence. One final quantitative survey item was posed to students to determine who had the most influence when deciding whether to remain in guitar or not. Tables 36 and 37 display retained and non-retained students' responses to this item.

Table 36

Distribution of Responses and Scores from Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Parent/Peer/Teacher/Student Influence (n=16)

Question	Level of Influence				Score
	Most (1)	(2)	(3)	Least (4)	
Parents	1 (7.14%)	5 (35.7%)	2 (14.3%)	6 (42.9%)	2.07
Teachers	0 (0%)	3 (18.8%)	9 (56.3%)	4 (25.0%)	1.94
Peers	1 (6.25%)	6 (37.5%)	3 (18.8%)	6 (37.5%)	2.13
Student	12 (80%)	2 (13.3%)	1 (6.7%)	0 (0%)	3.73

For students in Group 1, the strong majority of respondents (12 or 80%) indicated that they have the most influence in choosing whether to remain in guitar programs or not, resulting in a score of 3.73. Peers influence student decision-making less so with a score of 2.13, followed by parents (2.07), and teachers (1.94). This finding suggests that the students in this study possess a strong sense of agency in relation to their music education at school.

Table 37

Distribution of Responses and Scores from Non-Retained Students for Statements Pertaining to Parent/Peer/Teacher/Student Influence (n=3)

Question	Level of Influence				Score
	Most (1)	(2)	(3)	Least (4)	
Parents	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	3.00
Teachers	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (66.7%)	1.67
Peers	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	2.67
Student	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.33

Although not as evident as Group 1 respondents, students in Group 2 also stated that they have the most influence in deciding to pursue their music studies, resulting in a score of 3.33. This was closely followed by parents (3.00) (although it should be noted that one participant did not rate the level of influence for unknown reasons), and not peers (2.67) as had been the case with retained students. Yet again, teachers had the least amount of influence with a score of 1.67.

Student survey findings – qualitative data. To complete the survey, students were asked three open-ended questions. The first question sought to determine what students enjoyed most about classroom guitar, while the second invited comments about what students enjoyed least. The final question encouraged students to share recommendations or suggestions that might encourage students to remain in classroom guitar until the end of their final high school year. Summaries of student responses to these questions are discussed further.

What did you enjoy most about classroom guitar? Group 1 represented students who were still in classroom guitar programs at the time of the study. Although four participants decided to opt out, there were 14 of 18 students (77.8%) who chose to answer this question.

Group 1 student responses to what they enjoyed most about classroom guitar (see Appendix O) generated several themes. Of these, student repertoire was a recurrent idea as they expressed appreciation for the selection of music that they played or listened to in class. This theme was closely followed by student comments related to the process of learning new material and making music. As one student specified, learning a challenging song that she or he enjoys, while working hard to master her or his part in order to play it well is most fulfilling. Two students also indicated learning new skills as being meaningful to them. One respondent iterated that classroom guitar introduced her or him to a variety of styles and techniques “that I wouldn’t be exposed to outside of guitar. We learn a lot about theory, something that [I] wouldn’t have learned on my own but has proved to be very beneficial”. Students also indicated that the opportunity to do something that they enjoy and are good at, such as playing guitar, was significant to them. For others, the teacher-student relationship was a key component in their classroom guitar experience. One moving testimony by a student can be offered.

My teacher is the most supportive person I know. [My teacher] has helped me become confident in guitar because when I came from elementary school, I was terrible and wanted to give up but [my teacher] pushed me to continue to get better. Also, [my teacher is] such a nice person and is always there to help and never too critical towards...students.

Although not as frequent, there were a few other comments that were shared by individual students. Among these, one student indicated classroom guitar as a “welcoming and accepting

environment” with a “laid back feel”. Another described it as a great place to have fun with friends. While one more indicated enjoying playing as an ensemble, one shared their enjoyment with being able to work independently. And finally, a student mentioned that they enjoyed receiving good marks.

Group 2 represented students who had left classroom guitar programs prior to their Grade 12 year. Three participants (42.9%) decided to answer the question, and four students who chose to opt out.

Group 2 student responses regarding elements they enjoyed most about classroom guitar (see Appendix P) generated a few themes, albeit not as diverse as those from Group 1 participants. Aside from one participant highlighting the student repertoire as being a source of enjoyment, all cited the classroom environment as being meaningful and “fun”. One respondent explained, “I liked how it was a chill class and I was never really dreading going to it like some of my other classes”.

What did you enjoy least about classroom guitar? As was the case with the previous question, four participants decided to opt out, but 14 students from Group 1 chose to answer this question (or 77.8%).

There were several themes that emerged from student responses (see Appendix Q). Somewhat surprisingly, students revealed issues with peers as the main reason for not enjoying classroom guitar. Of primary concern, respondents mentioned students that are “slacking off”, “lazy”, taking guitar “as a ‘spare’” or “who are just there for credit”. One described the guitar repertoire “boring” and stylistically unappealing to them. Another questioned the teacher’s role in the music selection, explaining that “[t]he songs chosen are not new and are sometimes repeated because it’s easier for the teacher and bring no challenge or freshness to the class”. The

lack of challenge was also apparent in another's response, claiming that while they were deemed "important and necessary", some of the activities were "far beneath [the student's] skill level". Another student also disliked some activities, such as the history lessons. Two students wrote that there was nothing that they disliked, other than "the end of class".

Taking into consideration that only three of seven (42.9%) participants from Group 2 answered the question, themes pertaining to what students enjoyed the least about classroom guitar were limited. Two respondents hinted at feeling incompetent or inadequate. One student thought the pace went too "fast", another explained "I didn't like how behind I always felt because a lot of people in the class had a lot more experience in guitar". Yet, the same student added that "it didn't stop me from enjoying the class overall". Aside from perceived competency issues, one respondent also cited "getting blisters on your fingers" as what they enjoyed the least about their classroom guitar experience.

What recommendations or suggestions do you have that would encourage students to remain in classroom guitar until the end of their final high school year? As Group 1 respondents contemplated this question, a variety of recommendations and suggestions were given to encourage more high school students to remain in guitar (see Appendix S). Unexpectedly, although most comments were aimed at guitar teachers, some were directed at other students contemplating their decision to remain or leave classroom guitar. Of the 18 potential participants, 13 (72.2%) provided their thoughts on the matter.

Respondents offered several recommendations and suggestions for teachers. Although many students had cited student repertoire as the aspect of classroom guitar that they enjoyed the most in a previous question, a few students stressed that the choice in music could be improved. While two students recommended "fun" and "good" music, some suggested that adding variety

in terms of music, style, changing songs from year to year, and having students choose the songs that they can learn could also be beneficial. Although not as frequent, various other suggestions and recommendations were put forth. One participant indicated that increasing the number of trips and field trips could help retain students. Another believed that offering classroom guitar as a “semesterized” course, rather than an annual course, would lessen conflicts with other “more relevant electives like sciences”. One student suggested giving students opportunities to play as a rock band with someone playing “drums, electric guitar, electric bass”. One student had a series of suggestions, perceiving her or his teacher as being responsible for providing a “memorable and good experience” for students. Among them, “teaching students how to read sheet music”, “making class fun”, and “watching documentaries and videos about the guitar and famous guitarists” would inspire more students to remain in the programs.

As stated earlier, some respondents offered suggestions and recommendations for students. Two students suggested that other students should consider participating in classroom guitar as it was an easy credit, thus raising grade point averages. A few also noted that in addition to developing performance skills, guitar provides lifelong skills. Another respondent maintained that asking for help, practice, and trying your best would help students to persevere. One student warned students not to let others “influence your decision to stay or quit”, while a few others confided that classroom guitar “boosts confidence”, “is fun”, and “you get to learn lots of different things”.

As was the case with the previous question, only three respondents of seven (42.9%) from Group 2 shared their views on the matter (see Appendix T). Of these, one suggested offering the course annually, rather than “semesterized”, which is in direct opposition of what was expressed by a Group 1 participant. Another response was rather ambiguous, stating that

teachers should make “sure everyone is involved”. And finally, when speaking to students, one respondent encouraged their peers to practice more often in order to enjoy it more. By doing so, they will also develop a lifelong skill.

Individual Interview

Participation rates and demographics. An open invitation to students from the two largest high schools to participate in the focus groups was included at the end of the online survey. As this tactic did not generate any interest, an e-mail invitation was sent directly to 91 students from these secondary schools using the lists that had been prepared initially. Specifically, e-mails were sent out to a total of 49 students from one of the schools and 42 students from the other. At the former, there were 23 potential participants from Group 1 (Retained) and 26 from Group 2 (Non-retained). At the latter, there were 15 potential participants from Group 1, and 27 from Group 2. Although it was expected that there would be up to 12 participants from both groups from each of the schools, only one student from Group 2 at one of the schools accepted to participate in the discussion, resulting in a very low participation rate of 1 of 91 (1.10%). Focus group discussions were now not possible, so an interview was conducted with the one willing participant. Furthermore, it should be noted that although precautions were taken to ensure protocols were followed to maintain confidentiality, the reception desk staff had decided to ask the music teacher to personally collect the consent forms and was therefore aware of who participated in the study.

Individual Interview – Qualitative data. As indicated earlier, focus group discussion questions aimed to delve deeper into students’ classroom experiences. The answers to these questions that were provided by the respondent are elaborated in the context of an individual interview.

The first question asked when and why the respondent began classroom guitar. The student explained that guitar began in Grade 5, as it was compulsory to take a guitar class. Despite not having a choice, the student added that it was “the love of music [that] drove me into it. I love music and guitar. It just seemed like such a great instrument to be able to know how to play”. In addition, guitar appeared to be omnipresent. As indicated by the participant, “you go to a [camp]fire...or a party, a guitar is always there. So, I just thought why not learn?”

Having asked whether other options were available at the time, the second question posed why classroom guitar was preferred. My student interviewee answered that having changed to a different school in Grade 6, band was being offered as an elective that students could choose rather than guitar. Yet, the interviewee chose guitar, explaining that the sound produced by the guitar was unique, with a “warm and...passionate” quality. Furthermore, the student stated that learning guitar “would probably benefit me in some way in the future”.

I asked this student to reflect on the first-year experience in classroom guitar and to share memorable experiences from that time. The emphatic response was that the first year was “extremely exciting and interesting. I mean you learn like every basic thing you need to”. Among the activities that were recalled were studying music theory, learning chords, playing pop songs, and “songs that we knew on the radio”. The respondent also added that they would also learn songs for large ensembles. These were arranged in such a way that there were guitar parts of varying difficulties, which enabled students to challenge themselves based on their level of experience. Oftentimes, students were even given a say in the choice of repertoire, voting as in “a democracy”. On more than one occasion, the student made comments pertaining to the guitar teacher during that first year. According to the respondent, their teacher “definitely took their time [to] help you understand the instrument”. In addition, the music teacher “had a way to make

sure the lesson was individual to every student”. Students who encountered challenges were offered additional instruction outside of class time to ensure that “eventually, we could all play at the same level”.

While continuing to reflect on the first year of classroom guitar, the participant was asked to share experiences that were least enjoyable from that time. Although initially reporting that it was difficult to recall any such activities, the student did recollect that working on individual activities seemed a little less structured at that time. As explained, “[i]t was kind of boring to be by yourself and everyone’s practicing and you’re like confused and you don’t know what to do”. Despite this, the other activities were “extremely fun” and “interesting”.

Having established that the participant had dropped classroom guitar after completing Grade 10, the respondent was asked what factors influenced the decision to leave the program. The individual was quick to explain that this decision to drop did not have anything to do with the class itself, but rather not having the time to take the class. The problem was twofold. As the student explained, “I have very ambitious plans, so I had to refocus my attention somewhere else. And by the time I was done choosing the courses that I needed, there was no time for guitar”. Furthermore, scheduling made it difficult at times to pursue guitar, without having to drop classes that were important to her or him.

Thinking back to that last year in guitar, my interviewee was asked to describe some of the positive experiences that could be recalled. Of these, playing more difficult songs was “really interesting” and “motivating”. These challenges required additional time outside of class to practice because “if you didn’t, you weren’t able to reach the level that we were playing in the classroom”. Not being able to do so was “quite embarrassing”. It was noted that the demand for extra practice time did cause conflicts with other activities, such as sports. As such, “it was

difficult to find the time to practice”. The respondent also mentioned other activities that they enjoyed. These included “meeting a variety of people in the classroom”, listening to different kinds of music, and learning about various “guitar...legends”. Another recollection was having the opportunity to play different types of guitars other than the classical guitar, such as the bass and acoustic guitar. Having an opportunity to create was also an important part of the participant’s experience. One composition activity had students create a song which would then be performed for the class and constructively critiqued. Summarizing the positive experiences in that final year, “it was just nice to be able to play what I like, play what I’ve been taught, play what I learned, and just make up my own, very own thing”.

The respondent was asked to recall experiences that were least enjoyed during the last year of classroom guitar. Of these, the student mentioned lacking the passion that some classmates had for the instrument. The effort needed to get a “better understanding of music itself” was lacking. Although continuing to enjoy music, a decision to “focus on my studies” was made.

I asked my interviewee whether there were any regrets after dropping out of guitar and they conceded that there were some but was comfortable with the decision to do so. Among activities that were missed, performing in concerts did come to mind for the student, regretting not being able to play “that cool solo” or being the one to play “that lick”. In addition, being with friends or playing as an ensemble were also sorely missed. Although dropping guitar “was a very hard decision”, it is still an instrument that the respondent continues to play. As explained, “when I’m feeling like a little bit down or something, I can pick up a guitar, cause [sic] I have one at home”. Furthermore, “I can revisit whatever I’ve learned”, indicating feeling comfortable enough to consult internet sites or approach the guitar teacher when questions arise.

As the conversation neared the end, my student interviewee was asked to suggest recommendations for improving guitar programs to encourage more students to remain in them until graduation. The first recommendation was to offer the guitar course during the semester rather than annually and ensuring that it was offered during both semesters. By doing so, this would reduce or possibly eliminate certain scheduling problems. One student further clarified, “if you had to take a class during the first semester and there was no space, you could always take it in the second semester”. A second recommendation was to develop individualized plans for each student. As every student has a different knowledge base and skill level, tailoring lessons to meet the needs of individual students could be beneficial. A final recommendation was to have teachers encourage peer collaboration in problem solving, rather than having students rely on the teacher to do the problem solving for them. As “it can be scary for some people” to approach the teacher, working with friends is more manageable as “they’re your friends” and “you’ll probably be more comfortable with them”.

I asked if there were any other comments that could be made regarding guitar programs, and to this the student emphasized that “the love of music has to be there”. Without it, “it’s very difficult for [a teacher] to...spark [students’] spirits”.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

Despite the educational, socio-emotional, and health benefits that a musical education can provide students, some high school music educators are beleaguered to retain students in their programs. As this is evident in my teaching context, I have attempted to uncover the reasons students choose to remain or leave guitar programs during their high school years in this study. By means of student surveys and an individual interview, students were provided a voice in sharing their experiences in guitar programs, as well as an avenue for suggesting changes in the way guitar programming is offered in high school.

In Chapter 5, institutional enrolment data and student responses to survey and interview questions were analysed and discussed in further detail. The literature was also used to confirm or question the findings. I also aimed to discover findings not revealed in the literature review. The whole was organized and presented as it pertained to each research question.

Research Question #1

In the opening chapter, I indicated that there was a decrease in my guitar program enrolment numbers as students progressed through high school. I tried to determine if these trends were unique to my practice, or if similar trends were evident in other high schools in the division offering guitar programs as well. As such, I set out to obtain enrolment data from each of these schools with the goal of comparing them to one another. This enabled me to analyse the data pertinent to the first research question and determine what student enrolment trends were evident by grade level in guitar programs in a large urban school division in Manitoba.

The following table (see Table 38) exemplifies the mean enrolment numbers, trends, and retention rates at each of the division's high schools offering guitar.

Table 38

Divisional High Schools' Classroom Guitar Enrolment Trends

Class		Grade Level			
		Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
School #1	Enrolment Numbers	11	8	3	1
	Trend from Previous Year		-3	-5	-2
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		76.55%	40.44%	59.05%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-3	-9	-11
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		76.55%	26.80%	13.30%
School #2	Enrolment Numbers	39	25	14	11
	Trend from Previous Year		-12	-13	-4
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		71.29%	53.16%	69.34%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-12	-25	-29
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		71.29%	37.49%	26.16%
School #3	Enrolment Numbers	30	26	10	9
	Trend from Previous Year		-5	-14	-2
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		86.93%	46.95%	84.55%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-5	-19	-21
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		86.93%	36.60%	29.75%
School #4	Enrolment Numbers	42	34	18	15
	Trend from Previous Year		-8	-15	-4
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		82.13%	55.91%	80.01%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-8	-23	-27
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		82.13%	45.77%	35.08%
School #5	Enrolment Numbers	9	8	4	3
	Trend from Previous Year		-2	-3	-2
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		106.06%	68.02%	86.39%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-2	-6	-7
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		106.06%	68.83%	45.32%
School #6	Enrolment Numbers	35	27	21	22
	Trend from Previous Year		-7	-5	-1
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		86.21%	80.94%	95.32%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-7	-12	-13
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		86.21%	68.94%	64.55%
Mean	Enrolment Numbers	28	21	12	10
	Trend from Previous Year		-6	-9	-3
	Retention Rate from Previous Year		84.86%	57.57%	79.11%
	Trend Since Grade 9		-6	-15	-18
	Retention Rate Since Grade 9		84.86%	47.41%	35.69%

In School #1, it can be observed that there is a decline in enrolment as students progress from Grade 9 to Grade 12. Although there is a slight decrease from Grade 9 to Grade 10, the largest decrease in student numbers takes place as students leave Grade 10 and entered Grade 11, with 59.56% of students leaving guitar. Another downward trend appears during the transition from Grade 11 to Grade 12, with a 59.05% retention rate.

I found similarities between this context and those of other schools in the division. First, aside from School #6, all schools retained the most students from Grade 9 to Grade 10. Second, all schools experienced their biggest drop in enrolment as students progressed from Grade 10 to Grade 11. Lastly, nearly all schools exhibited a continual decline as students progressed from Grade 9 through to Grade 12, with an average retention rate of 35.69%.

Research question #1 concluding statement. Based on an examination of overall enrolment data, I found that enrolment numbers in guitar programs diminish as students progress from Grade 9 through to Grade 12 in this school division. While retention rates are greatest from Grade 9 to Grade 10 at most schools, attrition is most evident as students transition from Grade 10 into Grade 11.

Research Question #2

My second research question sought to examine what factors impact high school guitar enrolment trends. Student surveys and an individual interview were used to gather information which would help illuminate the reasons students continue or drop guitar programs during their final high school years.

As had been elucidated earlier, the investigative themes explored through these two data sources reflected a multitude of factors that had been uncovered during the literature review in the second chapter. Considerations affecting student attrition and retention were further

organized according to Deci and Ryan's sub-theory of basic psychological needs which supposed three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. As such, factors relating to autonomy included attitudes/beliefs, flow/interest/passion, motivation, multipotentiality, scheduling/timetabling, socio-economic status, and student repertoire. Factors relating to competence included competition, level of difficulty, and success/failure. And lastly, factors relating to relatedness included parental influence, peer influence, and teacher-student relationship.

The following section illustrates the analysis of student responses as they pertain to each of the basic psychological needs. This process enabled the researcher to better understand what factors were most important to students in determining whether they remain or leave their high school guitar programs.

Autonomy. As had been explained in Chapter 2, autonomy relates to an individual's "feelings of exercising will and making choices" (Evans, 2009, p. 47). Closely linked with self-regulation, autonomy provides students with a sense that they are responsible for their learning and that their learning is self-determined. As such, students who feel autonomous will be more likely to be intrinsically motivated to pursue a given activity.

Attitudes/beliefs. In addition to influencing feelings of competence and relatedness, attitudes and beliefs can also impact a student's sense of free will and choice. When a person deems an activity to be important, the exhibited behavior will be much different than if she or he believes an activity to be futile, and vice versa. These attitudes and beliefs are formed through the individual's life experiences and their interactions with those who surround them. As such, mores that have been acquired socially have the potential to transform into the student's own personal values which then become self-regulated (Ryan, Connell, & Deci, 1985). As Deci and

Ryan (2000) explained, “[w]hen the internalization process functions optimally, people will identify with the importance of social regulations, assimilate them into their integrated sense of self, and thus fully accept them as their own” (p. 236). Once integrated, the student will have a fuller sense of volition and choice.

There were three survey items pertaining to student attitudes and beliefs. These included (a) learning to play guitar is important to me, (b) learning to play guitar is useful to me, and (c) learning to play guitar changes my mood if I am feeling down. Aside from the last statement which prompted most retained students to strongly agree, the majority of retained and non-retained students agreed with all other statements. Whether they continued or ceased their guitar studies, students believed that learning to play the guitar was important, useful, and a great way to uplift spirits. This type of thinking was further exemplified by my interviewee. As was indicated by this student who was no longer in guitar, it was believed that learning to play the guitar would be beneficial in the future. As such, it was still an instrument that the student continued to play, especially when feeling down.

Several scholars emphasize the role that parents, peers, and teachers play in shaping attitudes and beliefs in students (Corenblum & Marshall, 1998; Evans, 2009; Hallam, 1998; Ng & Hartwig, 2011). It has also been suggested that students tend to develop positive attitudes and beliefs when participating in activities that they find valuable and useful. Cape (2013) readily acknowledged that students value opportunities to make choices and play music that they love. Yet, despite these claims, the extent to which students’ attitudes and beliefs influence their intent on continuing with music studies is unclear. As Corenblum and Marshall (1998) note, the attitudes of significant others may appear to be a more important predictor than the attitudes of

students themselves. As such, it is not surprising that student responses pertaining to attitudes and beliefs are similar for both retained and non-retained students.

Flow/interest/passion. It can be argued that students who express interest in learning guitar are more likely to want to explore it further. Yet, the pleasure that may be gained from participating in such an activity is only part of the equation. As Csíkszentmihályi (2008) stated, pleasure by itself does “not produce psychological growth” (p. 46). In order to experience pure enjoyment in the activity, students need to feel challenged. The concept of flow which was described in the second chapter expresses that an individual can attain achievement and fulfillment when one’s skill set corresponds with the difficulty level of the challenge at hand. As students gain more skills, they are better prepared to face greater challenges. This leads to further growth and discovery. As we cannot enjoy doing the same thing for too long, we “grow either bored or frustrated, and then the desire to enjoy ourselves again pushes us to stretch our skills, or to discover new opportunities for using them (Csíkszentmihályi, 2008, p. 75).

There were three survey items pertaining to flow, interest, and passion. These included (a) I participate in classroom guitar because I am interested in music, (b) I participate in classroom guitar because it is enjoyable, and (c) I participate in classroom guitar because I am passionate about learning to play guitar. Aside from the first statement to which retained students strongly agreed, both retained and non-retained students agreed with all other statements. Whether they continued or ceased their guitar studies, most students agreed that they participated in classroom guitar because of an interest in music and because it was enjoyable. However, retained students were much more likely to express passion with regards to learning to play guitar than non-retained students. As was mentioned by my student interviewee, a lack of

passion was one of the reasons that this student gave for why they chose to leave the guitar program, despite enjoying music.

Csikszentmihályi's flow theory suggests that a balance must be established between the skills that an individual possesses and the degree of difficulty of the task. This equilibrium permits individuals to find a sense of flow and enables them to thrive and flourish in the activity. Conversely, failure to find that balance may discourage the pursuit of the activity. For example, as had been shared during the student interview, practicing and playing more difficult songs was interesting and motivating, thus contributing to an initial positive experience for them. However, the effort needed to attain and sustain the required proficiency was lacking. As such, the student was unable to meet the increasing challenges which contributed in part to them leaving the guitar program.

Motivation. Deci and Ryan (2000) suggest by means of their proposed self-determination continuum that the degree to which an individual expresses self-determined behavior is dependent on the forms of regulation that are exhibited. These included external regulation (consequences are administered by external factors), introjection (consequences are administered by the individual), identification (individual recognizes and accepts the underlying value of the behavior), and integration (individual identifies the importance of the behavior and integrates it into other aspects of the self). As an individual further internalizes the behavior from amotivation to intrinsic motivation, the more self-determined and autonomous they become.

There were three survey items pertaining to motivation. These included (a) I participate in classroom guitar because of trips and fun things we do outside of class, (b) I participate in classroom guitar because I want to become a better guitar player, and (c) I participate in classroom guitar because my grade boosts my overall average on my report card. The first

question reflected external regulation, whereas trips and activities outside of class act as extrinsic motivators for individuals. The second question related to either identification or integration. Although it could also be tied to external regulation, the third question related to introjection, as the grade point average becomes a motivating factor for the individual. Both retained and non-retained students strongly agreed that they participated in guitar to become better guitar players. The participant interviewed confirmed that learning more difficult material and playing at the level that was expected was motivating. In addition, retained students were more likely to participate as it boosted their overall course average, while non-retained students were more likely to participate because of the extra-curricular activities that were associated with the course.

Dray (2014) had suggested that external motivators (e.g., trips, grade point averages, awards, etc.) seemed to play nearly as great a role as internal motivators in high school students' decisions to remain or leave music programs. It is interesting to note that most retained and non-retained students wanted to become better guitar players. Yet, despite having internalized this to different degrees, not all students pursued with their guitar studies. Although requiring additional research, it is possible that students continue with guitar because they are competent, thus boosting their grade point average, or if they are not, because of the activities that are offered outside of class.

Multipotentiality. Through academic and extra-curricular activities, students are exposed from a young age to a variety of fields which may intrigue them to explore them further. In his book *Developing Talent in Young People*, Bloom (1985) suggested that individuals go through three phases of development when learning a new talent domain. The first is known as the playful interaction stage during which time students are encouraged by both teachers and parents to explore the new domain. The second is known as the acquisition of knowledge and skills

stage. As teachers set higher standards and parents commit more time and money toward the chosen field, students often start to become intrinsically motivated. The third stage is known as the mastery stage during which students are intrinsically driven to achieve professional excellence. While teachers and parents continue to support them academically and financially, students willingly put in more time and effort to succeed at that level. At this point, while they may still have many interests, students make difficult choices about the focus and direction of their studies.

There were three survey items pertaining to multipotentiality. These included (a) I have many interests that are as compelling to me as guitar, (b) Although I enjoy classroom guitar, there are other courses that I would like to take, and (c) I have difficulty choosing between classroom guitar and other courses that interest me. Both retained and non-retained students agreed that they had many interests other than guitar, and both tended to agree that there were other courses that they would consider taking. Interestingly, retained students appeared to have little difficulty choosing between guitar and other course of interest, while the opposite held true for the non-retained students. This may possibly be indicative of retained students having found their passion in guitar, while non-retained students' passion lying elsewhere.

As students reach the latter stages of talent development, the competition for time and resources is an important factor to consider in student retention in high school. Presented with multiple options, students must make important choices as to where their energies will be spent. As was affirmed by the student interviewee who had been considering future career plans, a conscious choice was made to leave guitar to “refocus my attention somewhere else”. Although learning to play guitar is but one potential, there are many other possibilities that students may choose to explore.

Scheduling/timetabling. In Hartwig's (2003) study, it was suggested that scheduling and timetabling issues disadvantaged students wishing to pursue their music studies. Similar comments have been shared by both music teachers and students alike. Oftentimes, the premise rests on the idea that once compulsory courses are locked into the schedule, there are few available time slots available for electives. The problem is further compounded as more electives from which students can choose from are being offered within the school.

There were three survey items pertaining to scheduling and timetabling. These included (a) the course timetable makes it difficult to choose guitar as an option, (b) when choosing my courses, there are more often conflicts with guitar and other courses I would like to take (elective courses), and (c) when choosing my courses, there are more often conflicts with guitar and other courses I must take (required courses). Retained students could neither agree, nor disagree with these statements, while non-retained students agreed with all but the third. This finding may suggest that certain students leave guitar programs due to scheduling issues, but more specifically because of conflicts with other elective courses that students would like to take.

Based on the data obtained, it can be ascertained that conflicts pertaining to scheduling and timetabling were impacting student's abilities to participate in guitar programs. This idea can be confirmed by non-retained students' responses, as well as some retained students, and was further established by the student interviewee who claimed that once mandatory courses were chosen, the schedule occasionally made it difficult to pursue guitar. It should also be noted that the issue is most likely intertwined with others as well. The concept of multipotentiality recurs as students are required to make decisions about what elective they will pursue. In addition, students who are truly passionate about learning to play guitar may be forced to find creative

ways to ensure that their schedule accommodates their need, regardless of its effect on other courses.

Socioeconomic status. The term socioeconomic status can be defined as “the relative position of individuals, families, or groups in stratified social systems where some societal values (e.g., occupational prestige, education, economic resources, power, information) are not uniformly distributed” (Bornstein & Bradley, 2003, p. 2). The inequality and inequity that exists between those who have money and those who have less has been the subject of many studies. This focus is evident in studies seeking to determine the impact of low socioeconomic status on the retention of students in music programs (Albert, 2006, Corenblum & Marshall, 1998; Klinedinst, 1991; Ng & Hartwig, 2011).

There were three survey items pertaining to socioeconomic status. These included (a) I joined classroom guitar because it did not cost too much compared to other activities, (b) my parents/guardians can afford to pay for a guitar so that I can participate in classroom guitar, and (c) I could not participate in classroom guitar if I did not have a school instrument to use. Both retained and non-retained students tended to agree that their parents were able to purchase a guitar to participate in the program, and that the lower cost was not a prime motivator to join. However, a smaller number of non-retained students indicated that they could not participate in the program if the instruments were not provided.

The findings relating to socioeconomic status require careful consideration. Although most retained and non-retained students appear to be financially capable of supporting their musical studies, one must keep in mind that there are students from both groups who admitted that participation in guitar programs adds a financial burden. Although it is unclear if this was the sole reason for leaving the guitar programs, if music educators are to retain as many students

as possible, they should ensure that contingencies are in place to help those who are in need and who require them most.

Student repertoire. Providing students with responsibility in their learning and giving them a sense of independence can help students become more autonomous. As Ryan and Deci (2000) assert, “autonomy concerns the experience of integration and freedom, and it is an essential aspect of healthy human functioning” (p. 231). As such, teachers who consult with students when choosing repertoire can help in the retention of students in music programs.

There were three survey items pertaining to student repertoire. These included (a) the guitar music that we play is interesting and challenging, (b) I prefer playing repertoire for a large ensemble rather than pieces for small groups or solos, and (c) students should have more say in the music they get to play. Both retained and non-retained students tended to agree with the statements. More retained students believed that the music they played was interesting and challenging, while more non-retained students believed that they should have more say in the music they get to play.

Despite acknowledging that the music students played was interesting and challenging, it is interesting to note that both groups would rather play large ensemble repertoire than small ensemble or solo repertoire. As large ensemble playing is usually teacher-centered, one may question whether students shy away from more autonomous activities, such as small ensemble or solo playing. An explanation could be that students lack direction in how to proceed with such activities. As the student interviewee mentioned, individual practice time seemed less organized and left students confused at times. Despite this, having students participate in autonomous pursuits may end up being more meaningful to them. As Cape (2013) explained, such instances “provided students with the opportunity to perform music they chose and arranged for

themselves, and it showcased their progress over the school year in a much more visible way” (p. 13).

Competence. Individuals have a natural tendency to learn and become competent in the activities that they undertake. As Deci and Ryan (2000) clarified, if “people did not experience satisfaction from learning for its own sake...they would be less likely to engage the domain-specific skills and capacities they inherited, to develop new potentialities for adaptive employment, or both” (p. 252). While setting goals and learning strategies to achieve them are important, “individuals must also believe in their ability to execute the course of behavior required to attain their goals” (Evans, 2009, p. 28).

Competence beliefs. Like student attitudes and beliefs examined earlier in the autonomy section, student beliefs about their level of competence may influence their decision to remain or leave guitar programs. As Sichivistsa (2004) discovered, “students’ self-concepts of musical ability influenced students’ integration in class, in turn predicting the degree to which they valued music and intended to participate in musical activities in the future” (p. 35). In other words, if students perceive themselves to be competent, they will be more likely to continue with the activity.

There were three survey items pertaining to competence beliefs. These included (a) I am a good guitar player, (b) compared to others in my class, I am a good guitar player, and (c) I am not as good at playing guitar as I am at other things. Retained students agreed with the first two statements, and surprisingly with the third as well. In contrast, non-retained students disagreed or disagreed strongly with the first two statements, while strongly agreeing with the third. These findings are indicative that students who remain in guitar perceive themselves to be competent, while those who choose to leave perceive themselves to be less so.

Although competence beliefs can be a factor to consider in student retention, it is important to make a distinction between perceived competence beliefs and actual competence. While students may believe themselves to be less competent, teachers may assess their musical competence differently. As some students may tend to compare themselves to others around them, they often neglect the progress that they personally make in their own learning. They may also disregard their strengths, while focusing solely on weaknesses. If students are truly lacking in competence, it is the guitar teacher's professional duty to find ways to address this. If students believe that they are lacking in competence when they are clearly not, it is also the guitar teacher's professional duty to challenge those perspectives with assessment results.

Competition. During one case study, Scheib (2006) described one band student's experience as being primarily focused on competition. In this music class, competition took on many forms, such as competition "for chair assignments, competition for scale performance 'check-offs', and competition for practice reports" (Scheib, 2006, p. 34). Reiterating seat placement auditions and other competition between peers, Dray (2014) also added competition between other schools and bands as activities common to many band students' experiences. Given its prevalence in band program, it was therefore an interesting factor to examine in the retention of students in guitar programs.

There were three survey items pertaining to competition. These included (a) I participate in classroom guitar because I want to become a better guitar player than my friends, (b) I participate in classroom guitar because I like competing against other schools in festivals, and (c) I participate in classroom guitar because I enjoy receiving feedback from adjudicators about my performance. Responses to these statements were quite different for the two groups. Whereas most retained students disagreed that they wanted to be better players than their friends, non-

retained students agreed that they did want to be better. Most retained students also agreed that they enjoyed being adjudicated, while non-retained students did not. And finally, non-retained students enjoyed participating in festivals, while retained students were non-committal.

Responses to the statements pertaining to competition were surprising as guitar programs appear to be dissimilar to band programs in certain regards. For instance, based on informal discussions with other guitar teachers, seat placement auditions seem not to be used by teachers in guitar programs in Manitoba. Although there are parts of varying levels of difficulty in many large ensemble guitar arrangements, these are usually distributed with students' abilities in mind. As Cape (2013) observed at one school, the teacher "assigned guitar parts based on each player's strengths and modified some parts to make them accessible to weaker players" (p. 11). In this teacher's class, students also had a choice in the part they were going to play, with many choosing to push themselves out of their comfort zone. Another instance pertains to competitions and festivals. Unlike the opportunities available to band programs, these forms of competition appear to be rather uncommon for guitar ensembles. Yet, the Winnipeg Music Festival in Manitoba does provide specific guitar classes within the larger competition. Although it cannot readily be determined as a significant factor in student retention in classroom guitar, it was interesting to note that most students enjoy the experience, nonetheless.

Level of difficulty. Returning to Csíkszentmihályi's flow theory, it was expressed that equilibrium must be attained between the student's abilities and the level of difficulty of the task at hand to find a sense of flow. When this is not met, boredom typically sets in when a task is too simple for a student with a high skill set, while anxiety tends to appear when a task is too demanding for a student with a low skill set. It can be hypothesized that a bored or anxious student may consider other course options, but there are other factors to consider as well. Hallam

(1998) emphasised the importance of a student's determination in putting the time and effort required to become proficient. When this effort is not present, it may lead some students to consider course options that are easier.

There were three survey items pertaining to level of difficulty. These included (a) the repertoire we play in classroom is difficult for me, (b) compared to other academic subjects, classroom guitar is more difficult for me, and (c) playing challenging parts is important to me. Many non-retained disagreed with the first two statements, while most retained students disagreed on the first and were non-committal on the second. Both groups of students concurred that being challenged in their playing was important to them.

The findings suggest that both retained and non-retained students did not find the guitar repertoire to be overly challenging. Yet, on the other hand, they enjoy being challenged. These results might be interpreted to mean that students are seeking a state of flow with the repertoire that they are playing. As such, music teachers should be cognizant of this as they and their students choose their class repertoire.

Success/failure. Closely related to the level of difficulty, Dray (2014) asserts that a student's perception of success and failure in the completion of various classroom activities may influence their decision to remain or leave guitar programs. As such, a series of statements were prepared to gauge how students tend to react when faced with difficulties.

There were three survey items pertaining to success and failure. These included (a) if I am feeling challenged during class lessons, it makes me want to quit guitar, (b) if I am feeling challenged in class lessons, it makes me want to do better next time, and (c) I practice and rehearse so that I can become a better performer. Retained and non-retained students responded identically to all three statements. Both groups of students disagreed that challenges discouraged

them to the point of wanting to leave the program. They were more apt to want to persevere and attempt to do better. This was confirmed further by their response to the third statement about practicing and rehearsing for the purpose of becoming a better guitar player.

The findings pertaining to success and failure are consistent with Dray's (2014) study. Students do not purposely seek to be unsuccessful. Yet, failed experiences can bring about learning. As Dray (2014) explained, being "unsuccessful in itself is a motivator for students as it drives them to try harder and work more efficiently next time" (p. 80).

Relatedness. Some researchers have suggested that social organisms tend to seek out coherence, harmony, and a sense of belonging within a group. Doing so provides some security in their quest to become autonomous and competent individuals. As Deci and Ryan (2000) further described it, in addition to "resource sharing and mutual protection that relatedness affords, the need for belongingness or relatedness provides a motivational basis for internalization, ensuring a more effective transmission of group knowledge to the individual and a more cohesive social organization" (p. 253).

Parental influence. As had been discussed during the literature review in Chapter 2, parents exert influence on their children through their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Corenblum and Marshall (1998) and Sjoberg (2011) concluded that parental attitudes and beliefs about music were important factors in student retention in music programs. Yet, as Spera (2005) and Dray (2014) suggested, the extent of their influence diminishes as students mature and become more autonomous.

There were three survey items pertaining to parental influence. These included (a) I am in classroom guitar because my parents wanted me to enroll, (b) my parents think learning to play an instrument is important for me, and (c) my parents encouraged and supported me throughout

my guitar study. Both retained and non-retained students disagreed with the statement that they were in guitar because of their parents. Non-retained students agreed that their parents thought that learning a musical instrument was an important endeavor, while responses from retained students were mixed. Almost all students agreed that their parents were encouraging and supportive during their guitar study. As results were similar from one group to the other, the findings of this study suggest that parental influence does not appear to greatly affect a high school student's decision to remain or leave their guitar program.

The findings pertaining to parental influence appear to align with those of Spera (2005) and Dray (2014), rather than those of Corenblum and Marshall (1998) and Sjoberg (2011). Although parents continue to have some degree of influence on their children's academic achievement and educational attainment, a decline is evident during middle years and continues throughout high school as students become more independent.

Peer influence. Another social factor that was considered for this study was the impact of classmates on students' decisions to remain or leave guitar programs. As Klinedinst (1991) and Sjoberg (2011) reported, peer influence certainly has an impact. But similarly to parental influence, this may be limited as students mature.

There were three questions pertaining to peer influence. These included (a) I joined guitar because my friends joined, (b) I stay in guitar because my friends are involved, and (c) guitar class is a place where you can make new friends. Students from both the retained and non-retained groups answered unanimously to the given statements. Both groups disagreed that they initially joined guitar and remained in the program because of their friends. Surprisingly, both agreed that the guitar classroom was an appropriate place to meet new people.

Similar to Dray's (2014) findings, peer influence appears to have had little impact on student retention for students in this study. Yet, an additional question pertaining to who (i.e., parents, teachers, peers, student) had the most influence on retention, revealed that peers had the second highest level of influence for retained students, after the student herself or himself. Although not necessarily a factor in retention, the social aspect is also an important component of the guitar experience. Having left the program, the interview participant shared that no longer being in a class with friends was deeply missed. Furthermore, it should not go unnoticed that guitar classes enable students to meet new people. As Cape (2014) observed, the "guitar program attracted students from a variety of peer groups" (p. 12).

Teacher/student relationship. While parental and peer influence cannot be easily addressed by music teachers, the professional relationship that educators create with their students is of prime importance and should not be overlooked. Although having competent teacher-musicians is important to older students, it is advocated that building positive student-teacher relationships by being caring, supportive, and helpful will be more beneficial in retaining students in music programs (Costa-Giomi, Flowers, & Sasaki, 2005; Davidson, Moore, Sloboda, & Howe, 1998; Davidson, Sloboda, & Howe, 1995; Dray, 2014; Lowe, 2012).

There were three survey items pertaining to teacher/student relationship. These included (a) I have a good learning relationship with my guitar teacher, (b) I feel encouraged by my guitar teacher, and (c) my guitar teacher is supportive and gives me helpful feedback. Somewhat surprisingly, both retained and non-retained students mostly agreed with all three statements; however, the third was an exception, with retained students agreeing or strongly agreeing. Although it was expected that some non-retained students would have been dissatisfied with the relationship with their teacher, this does not appear to be the case for the student who was

interviewed. Our conversation confirmed this idea as the student provided many examples of positive interactions with the teacher, even after having left the course. Given these findings, it would be difficult to conclude that teacher/student relationship as a strong predictor in retention.

Music educators should continue to establish positive relationships with students. As Hattie (2012) explained, a student-centered teacher demonstrates warmth, trust, empathy, and positive relationships, which are exemplified by warmth, encouragement, high expectations, and understanding. When such relationships are nurtured, students are more apt to be engaged and find meaning in their learning. As Cape (2014) concluded, “[e]ngaging regularly in musical experiences that address these fundamental human concerns may form habits of mind and behavior that will continue into the future, regardless of whether or not [students] continue to participate in music making” (p. 21).

Positive and negative experiences in classroom guitar. Prior to completing the survey and as part of the interview process, retained and non-retained students were asked to expand further on their likes and dislikes about their participation in classroom guitar. Their responses are discussed further here.

Positive experiences. The survey responses from retained students pertaining to what aspects of classroom guitar they enjoyed the most touched upon all three psychological needs. Although these cannot be interpreted as reasons students choose to remain or leave guitar programs per se, they can provide guitar teachers with an understanding of what type of activities pique students’ interest and may possibly entice them to want to continue with their music studies.

In terms of autonomy, student responses could be linked to student repertoire and motivation. Students mentioned that the choice in music that they either listened to or played was

a pleasurable experience for them. In addition, a few students shared that they enjoyed receiving good grades in guitar, alluding to a form of extrinsic motivation. In terms of competence, respondents revealed that studying theory, learning new and challenging material, acquiring new skills and techniques, and exploring new styles of music were beneficial components of the classroom experience. And in terms of relatedness, the teacher/student relationship, the warm and welcoming feel of the guitar class, as well as having fun with friends were important factors for students.

The responses from non-retained students who participated in the survey and interview also touched upon all three psychological needs. In terms of autonomy, a few students cited having a choice in student repertoire as being a pleasurable part of their experience. In terms of competence, comments were like those of retained students who tended to agree that learning new things and being challenged was important to them. In addition, non-retained students appreciated the classroom environment and the positive relationship that was fostered with the teacher.

Negative experiences. The survey responses from retained students pertaining to what aspects of classroom guitar they enjoyed the least touched upon all three psychological needs. Interestingly, factors that had been identified as positive experiences for some became negative experiences for others. For example, the lack of choice in student repertoire and unappealing styles of music played were disagreeable for some. Others did not enjoy learning about music history, while others perceived the class to be beneath her or his abilities. Unexpectedly, many retained students readily acknowledged that conflicts with peers who did not take the course seriously was displeasing to them.

The responses from non-retained students who participated in the survey and interview were similar. Although there was no mention of relatedness issues, the interview respondent pointed out a lack of motivation made it difficult to continue enjoying guitar studies. In addition, a few respondents stated that competence was an issue for them, often feeling like they had trouble keeping up with the others.

Research question #2 concluding statement. By means of student surveys and a single interview, retained and non-retained students shared their thoughts on factors that may contribute to student retention in school guitar programs. Keeping in mind the relatively small sample size used in this study, responses from students who participated in this study revealed that multipotentiality, scheduling/timetabling, and competence beliefs appeared to be the most important factors to consider in the retention of students in guitar programs. Conversely, factors that seemed less likely to contribute to retention were attitudes/beliefs, socioeconomic status, student repertoire, success/failure, parental influence, and teacher/student relationship. Due to the inconsistencies between survey responses, open-ended responses, interview responses, and/or the literature, there were also several factors that required further study which included motivation, interest/passion/flow, competition, level of difficulty, and peer influence.

Research Question #3

Having presented the factors influencing retention in guitar programs, the third research question was posed to examine the suggestions and recommendations students made that hold potential to retain more young people in guitar. Through student surveys and one interview, student participants had opportunities to offer advice to teachers and students alike.

The following section presents an analysis of students' responses as they pertain to each of the basic psychological needs. This process enabled the researcher to better understand what

factors were important to students, while also providing information to share with guitar teachers seeking to modify their teaching approaches to address retention issues in their guitar programs.

Not surprisingly, many of the responses generated by students reflected the factors that surfaced in the literature, such as scheduling/timetabling and competence beliefs. Although comments relating to multipotentiality did not appear, students from both retained and non-retained groups suggested improving scheduling and timetabling issues, such as “semesterizing” courses and offering them during both semesters. This type of shift in scheduling would benefit students wishing to pursue their music studies by alleviating conflicts with other courses. Furthermore, students offered recommendations such as practice, asking for help, peer tutoring, and collaboration as a way of helping students build competence levels. One student suggested developing individualized plans for each student would help to meet their needs. Aside from these ideas, a few students raised other considerations which included enhancing the teacher/student relationships, presenting more choice in repertoire, and offering extrinsic motivators such as trips.

Research question #3 concluding statement. Students who participated in the surveys and interview had the opportunity to share suggestions and recommendations to improve teaching practices with the goal of encouraging more young people to remain in guitar programs. Although it was expected that most comments would reflect the primary factors identified in the literature (i.e., multipotentiality, scheduling/timetabling, competence beliefs), their actual responses covered a broader range of factors. While some comments fell in line with the psychological needs of autonomy (attitudes/beliefs, motivation, scheduling/timetabling, repertoire selection), others related to competence (competence beliefs) and relatedness as well (peer influence, student/teacher relationships). Yet, it should be noted that some suggestions

(e.g., developing individualized lesson plans, incorporating guitar documentaries and videos into lessons, providing rock band opportunities, making class fun) could not be readily categorized within these three basic psychological needs.

Chapter Summary

In chapter four, I present findings resulting from an analysis of the data sets which include institutional data, student surveys, and one interview. In this chapter, I discuss my interpretation of these findings and link them to the theory and research presented in chapter two. I also formulate answers to the research questions posed at the onset of my study.

The first research question aimed to increase my understanding of enrolment trends in high school guitar programs in one urban school division. As had been evident in my context, the enrolment data provided by the school division confirmed that high school guitar enrolment numbers diminish from one grade to the next at nearly all high schools in the division. The most dramatic declines were observed as students completed Grade 10 and entered Grade 11, with a slightly lower drop occurring as they entered Grade 12.

Student surveys and one interview were then used to ascertain the factors that motivated students to remain in or leave guitar programs, which is the focus of research question two. Respondents suggest that multipotentiality, scheduling/timetabling, and competence beliefs are significant factors to consider, while attitudes/beliefs, socioeconomic status, student repertoire, success/failure, parental influence, and teacher/student relationship are less so. Due to inconsistencies between survey responses, open-ended responses, interview responses, and/or the literature, some factors such as motivation, interest/passion/flow, competition, level of difficulty, and peer influence require more study.

As I seek to make positive changes in my practice, students were also asked to share suggestions and recommendations that might encourage more young people to remain in guitar programs. While some student comments reflected scheduling/timetabling and competence beliefs issues, there was a wide range of factors found to impact retention. Action strategies that guitar teachers may use to address these factors will be discussed further in the final chapter.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

Twenty-first century learners have much to gain from a musical education. The *Grades 9 to 12 Music – Manitoba Curriculum Framework* (Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2015) which guides music education in this province supports this line of thinking, stating that music education: (a) has intrinsic value, (b) develops creative, critical and ethical thinking, (c) expands literacy choices for meaning making, (d) contributes to identity construction, (e) develops intercultural competencies, (f) is essential for well being, (g) supports sustainable development, (h) is transformative learning, and (i) fosters human flourishing.

Aside from the inherent values of learning to play an instrument, there are numerous other benefits that students can acquire. Among these, there are educational benefits such as: aiding in brain development (Bailey et al., 2014; Bengtsson et al., 2005; Elbert et al., 2005; Levitin, 2006; Musacchia et al., 2007; Patston et al., 2007; Schlaug, Jänke, Huang, Staiger, & Steinmetz, 1995; Schmithorst & Wilke, 2002), achievement outcomes in mathematics (Catteral et al., 1999; Gardiner et al., 1996; Helmrich, 2010; Whitehead, 2001), language acquisition (Douglas & Willats, 1994; Gardiner et al., 1996; Gromko, 2005), and academic achievement (Gouzouasis, Guhn, & Kishor, 2007; Southgate & Roscigno, 2002). Other authors have also suggested socio-emotional benefits, such as increasing social and cultural capital (Broh, 2002), implementing social and cultural inclusion (Frankenberg et al., 2016; Shehan-Campbell, Connell, & Beegle, 2007; Sousa, Neto, & Mullet, 2005), and instilling cooperation and empathy (Kirschner & Tomasello, 2010; Rabinowitch et al., 2012). And others added health benefits, both on the physiological level (Kreutz, Bongard, Rohrman, Hodapp, & Grebe, 2003; Kuhn, 2002; McCraty, Atkinson, Rein, & Watkins, 1996; McKinney, Antoni, Kumar, Tims, & McCabe, 1997) and the psychological level (Bell & Akombo, 2017; McFerran, 2010; Perschy, 2004).

Given the benefits identified in the literature, I set out to find ways to retain students in my guitar program, while enhancing their experiences in the program, as well as my own. As was described in the previous chapter, high school guitar enrolment numbers at my school, as well as most other schools in the division gradually decline from one year to the next. With an overall average retention rate of 35.69%, it follows that a little fewer than 65% of students no longer have direct access to these benefits through school guitar programs. While they may still benefit by enrolling in other music programs both inside and outside of school, it is important to determine why these students choose to leave and determine what changes can be implemented in our guitar programs to address it.

My findings generally aligned with the theoretical framework used, and also deepened my understanding of my topic. The analysis of student responses from both surveys and one interview revealed that multipotentiality, scheduling/timetabling, and competence beliefs were important factors to consider in the retention of students. Findings also suggested that attitudes/beliefs, socioeconomic status, student repertoire, success/failure, parental influence, and teacher/student relationship were somewhat less important, while factors such as motivation, interest/passion/flow, competition, level of difficulty, and peer influence require further study. Taking into consideration the variety of factors to consider and the diversity of our students, is it any wonder that music teachers struggle to retain young people in their music programs?

Given the limitations of this study, I cannot conclude with certainty that addressing issues pertaining to multipotentiality, scheduling/timetabling, and competence beliefs will solve all retention problems, and neither will the issue be resolved by addressing other factors examined. The issue is much more complex and multi-layered. However, this complexity does not mean that the problem of retention cannot be addressed. As music educators, being cognizant of these

factors, realizing the impact that each may have on students, and imagining new ways forward, can encourage more students to remain in our programs.

Action Strategies for Guitar Teachers

This action research study is as much about enhancing the guitar learning experience for students, as it is to improving my teaching practice and experiences in the classroom. While this study represents the initial full cycle of the action research study, the next steps which involve implementing strategies to maintain or increase student retention in guitar programs can enable the move to the next cycle of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

The findings offered in this thesis provide guitar teachers with a better understanding of the factors that affect student retention in guitar programs. Yet, the results may prove to be more difficult to put into practice. Music educators must therefore take two points into consideration. The first is that music educators have limited control over certain factors. The second is that each student's reality is different and the factor or factors that will influence her or his decision to remain in guitar will be different.

To address the first, music educators should focus on factors which they have some degree of control, while worrying less about the others. Music educators have influence over student repertoire, competition, level of difficulty, and teacher/student relationships. On the other hand, music educators have little to no control over multipotentiality, socioeconomic status, parental influence, and peer influence. There are also other factors which fall between the two, depending on the music teacher's ability to influence them. These would include attitudes/beliefs, scheduling/timetabling, competence beliefs, and success/failure.

To address the second, it is important for all teachers to implement strategies for establishing positive relationships with their students as this factor emerged as critical. Doing so

will enable them to better understand their students' unique situations. Having done so, they will be in a better position to address the specific factor or factors that may be preventing their students from sustaining their music studies.

Keeping these two points in mind, in addition to the literature pertaining to the benefits of music education and student retention, the analysis and interpretation of the data that was collected, and student suggestions, I recommend several action strategies that may be implemented by guitar teachers to help maintain or increase student retention in guitar programs.

1. Educate the entire school community about the benefits of music education for the 21st century learner.
2. Inform all stakeholders about the advantages of classroom guitar.
3. Minimize scheduling/timetabling conflicts for students.
4. "Semesterize" guitar courses while ensuring that they are offered during both semesters.
5. Remove financial barriers which may inhibit student participation in guitar programs.
6. Create a positive, supportive, nurturing, and inclusive learning space.
7. Build strong relationships with students.
8. Provide a stimulating and appropriately challenging environment for students.
9. Aim to increase competency levels for all students, while explicitly keeping them abreast of their progress.
10. Individualize instruction when possible.
11. Encourage peer collaboration and mentorship to help students achieve greater success.

12. Value and incorporate student suggestions pertaining to repertoire and class activities when appropriate.

13. Inspire students to consider pursuing music as a viable option beyond high school.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

This action research study offers certain advantages which strengthen the research. First, it attempts to address an actual issue in my own practice. As such, it is practical, relevant, and meaningful to me as a teacher-researcher. Second, it incorporates multiple data sources (i.e., institutional enrolment data, student surveys with both closed and open-ended questions, and a student interview). By means of triangulation, these have provided me with a more detailed description of the phenomenon. Lastly, the use of this approach has permitted me to gain greater understanding of this phenomenon. As such, it has extended my knowledge, thus enabling me to make more informed decisions in my practice moving forward.

There are several limitations which must be considered with this action research study. First, the study focused on a large number of factors affecting student retention and attrition. While this may have provided some breadth to the study, it may have inadvertently inhibited the in-depth analysis of any one of these factors. Second, student surveys and one interview were conducted with Grade 12 students only. As the sample size for both were small, the responses were not necessarily representative of all guitar students in the school division. In addition, there were more respondents from the retained group than the non-retained group, making comparisons difficult. Furthermore, as the surveys were completed anonymously, it was not possible to ascertain if there was representation from all schools offering guitar in the division. Third, the data were collected from one urban school division in Manitoba, so results may only be transferable to similar school contexts. A final limitation relates to enrolment data. Having

obtained enrolment data from two sources (i.e., guitar teachers and the division), certain discrepancies arose between the two sets of data. Given the incompleteness of the teacher data as explained in Chapter 4, a decision was made to use the divisional data to track enrolment trends. As an addendum, it should also be noted that the enrolment trends do not necessarily differentiate between actual retention and students who have newly registered at the school or who may have left the school at any given time.

Moving forward, any researcher who takes interest in repeating similar studies in the future should consider implementing the following modifications. First, the researcher should make a conscious choice to focus on a few factors rather than many, thus enabling an in-depth examination of these. Additional questions could be added to the survey and interview tools to achieve this. Second, the researcher should aim to increase participation rates to improve the study's validity. While researchers acknowledge that it is difficult to get adolescents to participate in research studies (Spigarelli, 2008), it may be possible to improve participation rates by offering better incentives to participants, getting approvals for opt-out only, or other strategies. And finally, the researcher should analyze the survey data prior to establishing the interview questions. This will enable the researcher to develop questions which focus and delve deeper on the specific factors that students deem important.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study brought forth new understanding with regards to retention in high school guitar programs. In so doing, it has also generated several new questions which once explored may contribute further to the literature on this topic.

First, the overall mean enrolment trend indicated that retention rates since Grade 9 were 35.69% in the school division's guitar programs. However, it can be observed that some schools

had retention rates as high as 64.55%, while others had retention rates as low as 13.30%. As such, future studies should investigate schools with higher retention rates to determine what practices are being implemented to attain these.

Second, enrolment trends at five of the six schools offering high school guitar presented the most significant decline after students completed Grade 10. Future studies should focus on Grade 10 students after they make their course selection choices for Grade 11 to determine the reasons why they decided to enrol or not in Grade 11 guitar.

Third, the focus of this study was on high school guitar. As students have other music courses to choose from (e.g., band, choir, technical music production, etc.), future studies should examine the enrolment trends in these courses to determine if they are similar or not to what has been observed in guitar. Doing so may also provide some insight as to whether the phenomenon is unique to guitar or applicable to other music courses as well.

Fourth, some school music programs including guitar are more successful in retaining students than others. As such, future studies should examine the practices of music teachers in these programs to determine what action strategies are employed in these courses to increase retention rates.

Fifth, as high school students have many electives to choose from, future studies should examine the enrolment trends in these courses to determine if they are similar or not to what has been observed in guitar. Doing so may also provide some insight as to whether the phenomenon is unique to guitar or applicable to elective courses in general.

Sixth, it has been established that there are multiple factors affecting retention. As the scope of the study may have been too broad, future studies should consider limiting the number of factors to be examined to a select few while exploring each more deeply.

Lastly, this topic has been examined using a basic psychological needs lens. Researchers may want to consider alternate theoretical frameworks (e.g., socio-cultural, ethic of care, relationality, circle of courage, engagement, flow, etc.) to undergird future studies.

Final Thoughts

This action research study has been illuminating and gratifying for me, despite some of the challenges that come with conducting research in schools. It has permitted me to reflect, analyze, and actively improve aspects of my teaching practice while learning continuously throughout the process. Moving forward, I encourage all music educators to adopt some form of reflective practice, whether professionally or academically. By critically examining our teaching practices and being open to making changes, we will continue to improve the way that we teach for the benefit of all our students.

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Appendix A

Researcher's school Grade 7 to Grade 12 guitar enrolment from 2005 to 2019

Year	Number of Guitar Students	School Population	Percentage of School Population Enrolled in Guitar Programs
2005-2006	115	592	19%
2006-2007	104	572	18%
2007-2008	104	552	19%
2008-2009	104	553	19%
2009-2010	71	536	13%
2010-2011	74	570	13%
2011-2012	82	571	14%
2012-2013	79	570	14%
2013-2014	90	620	15%
2014-2015	95	629	15%
2015-2016	109	545	20%
2016-2017	102	614	17%
2017-2018	96	601	16%
2018-2019	91	593	15%

Average	16%
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Source: Course enrolment data.

Appendix B

Researcher's school guitar enrolment by grade level from 2005 to 2019

Year	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
2005-2006	37	50	15	8	4	1	115
2006-2007	42	34	13	10	4	1	104
2007-2008	45	30	10	11	6	2	104
2008-2009	30	40	20	7	3	4	104
2009-2010	22	23	11	12	2	1	71
2010-2011	26	17	17	7	6	1	74
2011-2012	21	26	11	15	7	2	82
2012-2013	32	21	10	7	5	4	79
2013-2014	41	28	8	8	3	2	90
2014-2015	41	30	10	9	4	1	95
2015-2016	44	30	10	9	4	1	98
2016-2017	40	34	15	10	2	1	102
2017-2018	27	34	21	5	7	2	96
2018-2019	16	29	31	10	4	1	91

Average	33	30	14	9	4	2	93
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Source: Course enrolment data.

Appendix C

Factors affecting student attrition and retention in music programs by year and by author

Author(s)	Year	Autonomy (Personal)									Competence (Cognitive)					Relatedness (Social)		
		Attitude	Flow / Interest / Passion	Form of expression	Motivation	Multipotentiality	Scheduling / Timetabling	Socioeconomic status	Student selection of repertoire	Value	Competence Beliefs	Competition	Evaluations	Level of Difficulty	Success/Failure	Parents	Peers	Teachers
Klinedinst	1991						*									*	*	*
Wigfield et al.	1997									*		*						
Corenblum & Marshall	1998									*			*			*		
Davidson, Moore, Sloboda, & Howe	1998																	*
Hallam	1998	*														*		
Dai & Schader	2002					*					*					*	*	
Renwick & McPherson	2002									*								
Hartwig	2003						*											
Sichivista	2004															*		
Davidson, Sloboda, & Howe	2005				*											*		*
Albert	2006																	
Ng & Hartwig	2006		*							*		*				*	*	
Evans	2009										*							
McPherson	2009									*								
Sjoberg	2011		*			*							*			*	*	
Evans, McPherson, Davidson	2012										*							
Lowe	2012										*							*
Cope	2013			*					*	*							*	
Csikszentmihalyi	2014		*															
Dray	2014				*							*		*				*

Appendix D

School enrolment data

Year	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
2005-2006							
2006-2007							
2007-2008							
2008-2009							
2009-2010							
2010-2011							
2011-2012							
2012-2013							
2013-2014							
2014-2015							
2015-2016							
2016-2017							
2017-2018							
2018-2019							
Average							

Appendix E

Online survey recruitment e-mail

Hello,

My name is *(name)* and I am the Arts Coordinator in the *(name of the division)*. I am writing on behalf of Mr. Patrick Lemoine who is a Master of Education student at the University of Manitoba. Mr. Lemoine is currently working on a study to learn more about what motivates students to continue with or leave guitar programs. By listening to students, he hopes to recommend changes to guitar programs in the division to meet the needs of students so that they will take guitar until the end of Grade 12.

To help him with his study, Mr. Lemoine is seeking students to complete an anonymous 15-20 minute online survey about their experiences in guitar programs. Please note that you are not obligated to participate, and this decision will not negatively impact your grades or your relationships with your teachers. You may also withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty.

If you choose to complete the survey, you may do so by accessing the link below. Please take the time to read the Informed Consent form at the start of the survey as it will give you additional information about the study. The survey will close on *(date)* at *(time)*.

(survey link)

Thanking you for your time,

(name)

Appendix F

Online survey

Da Capo al Fine: Retaining High School Students in Guitar Programs

Student Retention in Guitar Programs Online Survey



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

230 Education Building
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-9014
Fax (204) 474-7550

INFORMED CONSENT

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

What is the purpose of my study? The purpose of my study is to listen to students to learn more about what motivates them to continue with or leave guitar programs. My goal is to recommend changes to guitar programs in the division to meet the needs of students so that they will take guitar until the end of Grade 12.

What does it mean for me to participate in this study? Students who agree to participate in the study will be asked to take 15-20 minutes to complete an online survey by October 31st, 2018. Students from Glenlawn Collegiate and Dakota Collegiate, the two largest high schools in the school division, will also be invited to indicate their interest in participating in a 30-60 minute focus group discussion in November.

How will the teacher-researcher's position of power be addressed? I am a current music specialist at one of the schools in the school division and have taught guitar at the same school for the past 13 years. I recognize that all teachers are in a position of power and authority in relation to all students, which may make some students feel pressured to participate in this study. So that you do not feel pressure, the divisional arts consultant will recruit participants for me. I also assure you that participation in this study will not negatively impact your grades or your relationships with me or other teachers. And, I emphasize that you may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty.

What are the risks and benefits to students? Students will benefit from having their voices heard by a teacher-researcher about their experiences in guitar programs. Your comments may offer recommendations for how guitar programs can be improved for the benefit of guitar students in the future. There is minimal risk to participate in this study, no more risk than when you attend school on any other day.

How will I know that my responses and comments will be anonymous and confidential? I have obtained permission from the school division to use class enrolment lists containing information such as your name and e-mail address to contact you to inform you of this study. These were only used to create an e-mail list and will not be used in any part of the study. The online survey will be anonymous and therefore your identity can be protected. In addition, data in all forms generated from the study will be deleted or shredded once the thesis is completed, no later than December 31st, 2019.

Withdrawing from the Study. There is no obligation for you to participate in this study. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you can choose to withdraw from the study at any time by simply not completing the survey. Once the survey is completed, your data can't be withdrawn because I will not know who completed the survey. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your music grades or relationship with me or any other teacher.

Participant Debriefing and Dissemination of Results. The projected completion date of this study is Fall 2019. If you request one, I will send you summary of the results via email or Canada post after the thesis is complete. The full thesis report will be publicly available on the University of Manitoba Libraries MSpace. I may use information from the study for other publications and conference presentations in the future.

OK

Please be advised that if the abuse of children or persons in care might be discovered during the study, current laws require that allegations of certain offenses against children or persons in care be reported to legal authorities.

OK

By continuing with the survey, you are indicating that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at the research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference

Sincerely,
Patrick Lemoine

OK

Thank you for participating in this study. Please answer thoughtfully and honestly as your responses will provide helpful feedback on high school guitar programs in the school division.

This survey may take 15-20 minutes to complete. Please make yourself comfortable and be sure you have enough time to finish the survey in this session. You can't save your responses and finish them later.

There are no right or wrong answers, and no trick questions. Give your best answer without dwelling on individual survey items for too long.

OK

Demographic Information

1. Current gender identity

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- I do not identify as male, female, or transgender

2. Current grade level

- Grade 12
- Grade 11
- Grade 10
- Grade 9

3. Taking your time in elementary, middle years, and high school into consideration, how many years in total have you participated in a classroom guitar program?

- 5 years or more
- 3 to 4 years
- 1 to 2 years

4. Are you still taking classroom guitar in Grade 12?

- Yes
- No

5. If you answered 'No' to question 4, at what grade level did you stop taking classroom guitar?

- Grade 12
- Grade 11
- Grade 10
- Grade 9 or before

Practicing Guitar

6. Thinking about your current or last year of classroom guitar, how often do you or did you practice guitar?

- Every day
- 5 to 6 times a week
- 3 to 4 times a week
- 1 to 2 times a week
- I rarely practiced at all

7. Thinking about your current or last year of classroom guitar, how many minutes do you or did you practice each time?

- More than 60 minutes
- 31 to 60 minutes
- 10 to 30 minutes
- Less than 10 minutes

Thinking about your current or your last classroom guitar experience, please select the response for the following questions that best describes how you feel about the statement.

OK

Autonomy (Personal)

8. Attitudes/Beliefs

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8.1 - Learning to play guitar is important to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.2 - Learning to play guitar is useful to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.3 - Playing guitar changes my mood if I am feeling down.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Flow/Interest/Passion

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9.1 - I participate in classroom guitar because I am interested in music.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9.2 - I participate in classroom guitar because it is enjoyable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9.3 - I participate in classroom guitar because I am passionate about learning to play guitar.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Motivation

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10.1 - I participate in classroom guitar because of the trips and fun things we do outside of class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10.2 - I participate in classroom guitar because I want to become a better guitar player.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10.3 - I participate in classroom guitar because my grade boosts my overall course average on my report card.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Multi-potentiality

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11.1 - I have many interests that are as compelling to me as guitar.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.2 - Although I enjoy classroom guitar, there are other courses that I would like to take.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.3 - I have difficulty choosing between classroom guitar and other courses that interest me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Scheduling/Timetabling

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12.1 - The course timetable makes it difficult to choose guitar as an option.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12.2 - When choosing my courses, there are often conflicts with guitar and other courses I would like to take (elective courses).	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12.3 - When choosing my courses, there are often conflicts with guitar and other courses I must take (required courses).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. Socioeconomic Status

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13.1 - I joined classroom guitar because it did not cost too much compared to other activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13.2 - My parents/guardians can afford to pay for a guitar so that I can participate in classroom guitar.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13.3 - I could not participate in classroom guitar if I did not have a school instrument to use.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. Student Repertoire

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14.1 - The guitar music that we play is interesting and challenging.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14.2 - I prefer playing repertoire for a large ensemble rather than pieces for small groups or solos.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14.3 - Students should have more say in the music they get to play.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Competence (Cognitive)

15. Competence Beliefs

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
15.1 - I am a good guitar player.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15.2 - Compared to others in my class, I am a good guitar player.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15.3 - I am not as good at playing guitar as I am at other things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. Competition

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
16.1 - I participate in classroom guitar because I want to become a better guitar player than my friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16.2 - I participate in classroom guitar because I like competing against other schools in festivals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16.3 - I participate in classroom guitar because I enjoy receiving feedback from adjudicators about my performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Level of Difficulty

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
17.1 - The repertoire we play in classroom guitar is difficult for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17.2 - Compared to other academic subjects, classroom guitar is more difficult for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17.3 - Playing challenging parts is important to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. Success/Failure

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
18.1 - If I am feeling challenged during class lessons, it makes me want to quit guitar.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18.2 - If I am feeling challenged in class lessons, it makes me want to do better next time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18.3 - I practice and rehearse so that I can become a better performer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Relatedness (Social)

19. Parental Influence

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
19.1 - I am in classroom guitar because my parents wanted me to enroll.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19.2 - My parents think learning to play an instrument is important for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19.3 - My parents encouraged and supported me throughout my guitar study.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



20. Peer Influence

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
20.1 - I joined guitar because my friends joined.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20.2 - I stay in guitar because my friends are involved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20.3 - Guitar class is a place where you can make new friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. Teacher-Student Relationships

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
21.1 - I have a good learning relationship with my guitar teacher.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21.2 - I feel encouraged by my guitar teacher.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21.3 - My guitar teacher is supportive and gives me helpful feedback.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Improving Classroom Guitar

22. In order of priority from 1 to 4, who has the most influence on the decision to remain in classroom guitar?

- ☰
- ☰
- ☰
- ☰

23. What do you enjoy most about classroom guitar?

24. What do you enjoy least about classroom guitar?

25. What recommendations or suggestions do you have that would encourage students to remain in classroom guitar until the end of their final high school year?

If you are not a student from Dakota Collegiate or Glenlawn Collegiate, please move on to the next question by pressing "OK".

If you are a student from Dakota Collegiate or Glenlawn Collegiate and would like to participate in a 30-60 minute focus group discussion at your school in November, please click on the link below to send me an e-mail requesting further information and a consent form, which will have to be signed by yourself and a parent/legal guardian and returned to me.

If you do not wish to participate in a 30-60 minute focus group discussion at your school in November, please move on to the next question by pressing "OK".

[Yes, I would like to participate in a focus group discussion.](#)

OK

Appendix G

Focus group recruitment e-mail

Dear (*current/former*) Grade 12 guitar student,

As a follow-up to the survey regarding your experiences in guitar programs, I would like to invite you on behalf Mr. Patrick Lemoine to participate in a 30-60 minute focus group discussion to learn more about why students choose to remain or leave guitar programs. This will take place on (*date*) at (*time*) in the guitar classroom at your school. To compensate you for your time, snacks and beverages will be provided. In addition, participants will receive \$20 cash at the end of the discussion.

Discussion groups will be limited to a maximum of 12 students. If you are interested in participating, please click on the link below to send me an e-mail requesting further information and a consent form, which will have to be printed, signed by yourself and a parent/legal guardian, and returned to your school's office staff by (*date*). The first 12 students to do so will makeup the focus group.

mailto: lemoin16@myumanitoba.ca (Please indicate your school name and whether you are a current or former guitar student in the subject line.)

Thank you for your time,
(*name*)

Appendix H

Interview Protocols

Group 1 – Retained Students

1. Think back to middle years when you first enrolled in guitar and tell me why you enrolled.
2. Tell me about your first-year classroom guitar experience.
 - a. Tell me about your positive experiences in that first year of guitar.
 - i. What did you enjoy the most?
 - b. Tell me about the negative experiences in that year of guitar.
 - i. What did you enjoy the least?
3. Throughout high school, you have had the opportunity to continue or leave your guitar program.
 - a. What influenced your decision to stay in the guitar program? Why did you decide to continue?
4. Tell me about your current experience in the guitar program.
 - i. What do you enjoy the most?
 - ii. What do you enjoy the least?
5. As you know, your guitar class in junior high was larger than it is now. Why do you think students choose to leave the guitar program?
6. What recommendations do you have for improving the guitar program to encourage students to stay in the program until graduation?
7. Do you have any other comments you would like to make that would help me better understand why some students stay in the guitar program and why other students leave?

Group 2 – Non-Retained Students

1. Think back to middle years when you first enrolled in guitar and tell me why you enrolled.
2. Tell me about your first-year classroom guitar experience.
 - a. Tell me about your positive experiences in that first year of guitar.
 - i. What did you enjoy the most?
 - b. Tell me about the negative experiences in that year of guitar.
 - i. What did you enjoy the least?
3. Throughout high school, you have had the opportunity to continue or leave your guitar program.
 - a. What influenced your decision to leave in the guitar program? Why did you decide to do so?
4. Tell me about your experience in your last year of guitar.
 - i. What did you enjoy the most?
 - ii. What did you enjoy the least?
5. Looking back on your decision, would you choose differently given the opportunity and why?
6. What recommendations do you have for improving the guitar program to encourage students to stay in the program until graduation?
7. Do you have any other comments you would like to make that would help me better understand why some students stay in the guitar program and why other students leave?

Appendix I

Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct Course on Research Ethics (CORE) certificate of completion



Appendix J

University of Manitoba's Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board protocol approval

 <p>UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA Research Ethics and Compliance</p> <p>EST. 1877</p>	<p>Human Ethics 208-194 Dafoe Road Winnipeg, MB Canada R3T 2N2 Phone +204-474-7122 Email: humanethics@umanitoba.ca</p>
	<p>PROTOCOL APPROVAL</p>
<p>TO: Patrick Lemoine Principal Investigator</p>	<p>(Advisor: Francine Morin)</p>
<p>FROM: Zana Lutfiyya, Chair Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB)</p>	
<p>Re: Protocol #E2018:066 (HS22024) Da Capo al Fine- Retaining High School Students in Guitar Programs</p>	
<p>Effective: September 4, 2018</p>	<p>Expiry: September 4, 2019</p>
<p>Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) has reviewed and approved the above research. ENREB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current <i>Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans</i>.</p>	
<p>This approval is subject to the following conditions:</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described in the application. 2. Any modification to the research must be submitted to ENREB for approval before implementation. 3. Any deviations to the research or adverse events must be submitted to ENREB as soon as possible. 4. This approval is valid for one year only and a Renewal Request must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date. 5. A Study Closure form must be submitted to ENREB when the research is complete or terminated. 6. The University of Manitoba may request to review research documentation from this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Manitoba <i>Ethics of Research Involving Humans</i>. 	
<p>Funded Protocols:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Please mail/e-mail a copy of this Approval, identifying the related UM Project Number, to the Research Grants Officer in ORS. 	
<p>Research Ethics and Compliance is a part of the Office of the Vice-President (Research and International) umanitoba.ca/research</p>	

Appendix K

Letter of permission – Superintendent



230 Education Building
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-9014
Fax (204) 474-7550

Research Project Title: Da Capo al Fine: Retaining High School Students in Guitar Programs

Principal Investigator and Contact Information: Patrick Lemoine, lemoin16@myumanitoba.ca .

Research Supervisor and Contact information: Dr. Francine Morin,
Francine.Morin@umanitoba.ca , (204) 474-9015 (Tara Baxter, Administrative Assistant).

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (name of superintendent),

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

As we recently discussed, the topic of my Master of Education thesis research is student retention in high school guitar programs. I have received approval from the Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba and I am now hoping to move forward with my work. Although you are not asked to be an active participant in the study, I am asking you to complete this form to confirm your awareness of and approval for the study to be conducted within the division. I am also requesting the following:

1. Permission to work with the division's Manager of Administrative Services & Support (or another party that you might suggest) to access existing enrolment data for Grade 9-12 guitar programs over the last 12 years for each of the division's seven high schools;
2. Permission to approach the division's Performing Arts Consultant (or another neutral third party that you might suggest) to assist me with the recruitment of student participants using both the current and the past 2 years' Grade 12 guitar enrolment lists with student names and e-mail addresses from each school;
3. Permission to allow students to provide their own consent to complete the anonymous online survey, while parental consent will be required for focus group discussions;

4. Permission to work with high school principals and school secretaries of (names of the *two largest schools in the division*) to collect signed letters of informed consent from students who agree to participate in the focus group discussions; and
5. Permission to make arrangements with the school principals of (names of the *two largest schools in the division*) for a private classroom or conference room space to conduct two one- hour after-school focus group discussions with two different groups of students (Group 1 – retained in guitar to Grade 12; Group 2 – not retained in guitar to Grade 12).

Purpose of the Research. The purpose of my study is to listen to students in order to learn more about what motivates them to continue with or leave guitar programs. My goal is to recommend changes to guitar programs in the division to meet the needs of students so that they will take guitar until the end of Grade 12.

Research Procedures for Students. Guitar students who agree to participate in this study will be directly involved in the following ways.

1. Student Online Survey: All current Grade 12 students who are or were enrolled in guitar programs during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years will be invited to complete an online survey focusing on factors affecting student retention and attrition in high school guitar programs in October. The survey will take 15-20 minutes to complete and would be completed outside of school time.
1. Student Focus Group: The survey will include a recruitment statement inviting students from the two largest high school in the school division to participate in a focus group discussion. The first 12 students that volunteer from each group (i.e., current or past guitar students) at each of the two largest schools in the division will be invited to participate in focus group discussions moderated by the researcher. These will focus on their current and/or previous guitar experiences, and ways to improve them for students. The focus group discussion will take up to one hour. It will be audio-recorded using a Zoom data recorder and an assistant will be present to take notes of what is being discussed. It will be conducted in a private classroom space after school during the month of November at a time that is convenient for students. Volunteers beyond the 12 needed for the focus groups will be thanked, explaining that enough participants have been obtained.

As this can be considered a minimal risk study, I am requesting that students taking part in the anonymous survey provide their own consent. However, student consent (where the student is 18 or older) or parental consent and student assent (where the student is under 18) will be required to take part in the focus group discussions.

Teacher-Researcher's Power Over Relationship. I am a current music specialist at one of the schools in the school division and have taught guitar at the same school for the past 13 years. I recognize that all teachers are in a position of power and authority in relation to all students, which may make some students feel pressured to participate in this study. To minimize this, I am requesting that a neutral third party, the divisional arts consultant, recruit participants for me. I will also ensure that participants are aware that participation in this study will not negatively

impact their music grades or their relationships with me as a teacher or other teachers. And, I will also emphasize that they may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty.

Benefits and Risks for the Participants. Students will benefit from having their voices heard by a teacher-researcher about their experiences in guitar programs. Their comments may offer recommendations for how guitar programs can be improved for the benefit of guitar students in the future. There is minimal risk to participate in this study, no more risk than when they attend school on any other day.

Anonymity and Confidentiality. Class enrolment lists containing information such as student names and school e-mail addresses will be used to contact students to inform them of this study. These will only be used to create an e-mail list and will not be used in any part of the study. The online survey will be anonymous and therefore the identity of each participant can be protected. My research assistant and I will know the name of students who accept the invitation to participate in the focus group discussions. The following strategies will be used to ensure that their participation is confidential.

1. Digital audio-recordings of student focus group discussions will be transcribed by me in my private home office so that conversations won't be overheard.
2. All digital recordings and written transcriptions will be stored on my password-protected computer and backed up on a memory stick and an external hard drive that will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my private home office.
3. All data containing the name of the school and actual participant names will be replaced by pseudonyms. The list of real and false names will be kept in a file separate from the data. Pseudonyms will be used in all public reporting of the results.
4. My research advisor and I are the only ones who will have access to the data.
5. Data in all forms generated from the study will be deleted or shredded once the thesis is completed, no later than December 31st, 2019.
6. All participants including the research assistant will be required to sign a pledge of confidentiality.

Withdrawing from the Study. There is no obligation to participate in this study. Participation is entirely voluntary, and students can choose to withdraw from the study at any time by letting myself or my research supervisor know or by simply not completing the survey. If they should choose to withdraw, they must do so before November 30th, 2018. It should be noted that withdrawing from the study is not possible after completing the survey as the data is anonymous and I will not know who completed it. However, any focus group data that they may have provided will be removed immediately. Their decision to participate or not will not affect their music grades or relationship with me or other teachers.

Participant Debriefing and Dissemination of Results. The projected completion date of this study is Fall 2019. Participants will be offered a non-technical summary of the results via email or Canada post after the thesis is complete. The full thesis report will be publicly available on the University of Manitoba Libraries MSpace. The researcher may use information from the study for other publications and presentations in the future.

Please be advised that if the abuse of children or persons in care might be discovered during the study, current laws require that allegations of certain offenses against children or persons in care be reported to legal authorities.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at the research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca . A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference

Sincerely,

Patrick Lemoine

Da Capo al Fine: Retaining High School Students in Guitar

PERMISSION FORM FOR SUPERINTENDENT

Please complete this form and return it to me at lemoin16@myumanitoba.ca at your earliest convenience. You should retain the previous pages for your information.

I have read the above information and have had the study fully explained to me. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

By completing this consent form and returning it to the researcher, I am indicating my permission to conduct the study in the (*name of school division*). I am also giving you permission to:

1. Work with the division's Manager of Administrative Services & Support (or another party that you might suggest) to access existing enrolment data for Grade 9-12 guitar programs over the last 12 years for each of the division's seven high schools;
2. Approach the division's Performing Arts Consultant (or another neutral third party that you might suggest) to assist me with the recruitment of student participants using both the current and the past 2 years' Grade 12 guitar enrolment lists with student names and e-mail addresses from each school;
3. Allow students to provide their own consent to complete the anonymous survey, while parental consent will be required for focus group discussions;
4. Permission to work with high school principals and school secretaries of (names of the *two largest schools in the division*) to collect signed letters of informed consent from students who agree to participate in the focus group discussions; and
5. Make arrangements with the school principals of (names of the *two largest schools in the division*) for a private classroom or conference room space to conduct two one hour after-school focus group discussions with two different groups of students (Group 1 – retained in guitar to Grade 12; Group 2 – not retained in guitar to Grade 12).

Please send me a summary report of the research in one of the following ways.

- by email at the following address: _____
- by Canada post mailed to work address at: _____

Superintendent Name: _____

Superintendent Signature: _____

Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix L

Letter of permission - Principal (from one of the two largest high schools)



230 Education Building
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-9014
Fax (204) 474-7550

Research Project Title: Da Capo al Fine: Retaining High School Students in Guitar Programs

Principal Investigator and Contact Information: Patrick Lemoine, lemoin16@myumanitoba.ca .

Research Supervisor and Contact information: Dr. Francine Morin,
Francine.Morin@umanitoba.ca , (204) 474-9015 (Tara Baxter, Administrative Assistant).

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (name of principal),

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The topic of my Master of Education thesis is student retention in high school guitar programs. I have received approvals from the Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, as well as from the (*name of the school division*) Superintendent and I am now hoping to move forward with my work. Although you are not asked to be an active participant in the study, I am asking for you to complete this form to confirm your awareness of and approval for the study to be conducted within your school. I am also requesting the following:

1. Permission to have your students complete an anonymous online survey.
2. Permission to have your students participate in a focus group discussion.
3. Permission to allow your students to provide their own consent to complete the anonymous online survey, while parental consent will be required for focus group discussions;
4. Permission to work with you and your school secretaries to collect signed letters of informed consent from students who agree to participate in the focus group discussions; and

5. Permission to make arrangements with you for a private classroom or conference room space to conduct two one hour after-school focus group discussions with two different groups of students (Group 1 – retained in guitar to Grade 12; Group 2 – not retained in guitar to Grade 12).

Purpose of the Research. The purpose of my study is to listen to students in order to learn more about what motivates them to continue with or leave guitar programs. My goal is to recommend changes to guitar programs in the division to meet the needs of students so that they will take guitar until the end of Grade 12.

Research Procedures for Students. Guitar students who agree to participate in this study will be directly involved in the following ways:

1. Student Online Survey: All current Grade 12 students who are or were enrolled in guitar programs during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years will be invited to complete an online survey focusing on factors affecting student retention and attrition in high school guitar programs in October. The survey will take 15-20 minutes to complete and would be completed outside of school time.
2. Student Focus Group: The survey will include a recruitment statement inviting students from the two largest high school in the school division to participate in a focus group discussion. The first 12 students that volunteer from each group (i.e., current or past guitar students) at each of the two largest schools in the division will be invited to participate in focus group discussions moderated by the researcher. These will focus on their current and/or previous guitar experiences, and ways to improve them for students. The focus group discussion will take up to one hour. It will be audio-recorded using a Zoom data recorder and an assistant will be present to take notes of what is being discussed. It will be conducted in a private classroom space after school during the month of November at a time that is convenient for students. Volunteers beyond the 12 needed for the focus groups will be thanked, explaining that enough participants have been obtained.

As this can be considered a minimal risk study, I am requesting that students taking part in the anonymous survey provide their own consent. However, student consent (where the student is 18 or older) or parental consent and student assent (where the student is under 18) will be required to take part in the focus group discussions.

Teacher-Researcher's Power Over Relationship. I am a current music specialist at one of the schools in the school division and have taught guitar at the same school for the past 13 years. I recognize that all teachers are in a position of power and authority in relation to all students, which may make some students feel pressured to participate in this study. To minimize this, I have requested that a neutral third party, the divisional arts consultant, recruit participants for me. I will also ensure that participants are aware that participation in this study will not negatively impact their grades or their relationships with me as a teacher or other teachers. And, I will also emphasize that they may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty.

Benefits and Risks for the Participants. Students will benefit from having their voices heard by a teacher-researcher about their experiences in guitar programs. Their comments may offer recommendations for how guitar programs can be improved for the benefit of guitar students in the future. There is minimal risk to participate in this study, no more risk than when they attend school on any other day.

Anonymity and Confidentiality. Class enrolment lists containing information such as student names and school e-mail addresses will be used to contact students to inform them of this study. These will only be used to create an e-mail list and will not be used in any part of the study. The online survey will be anonymous and therefore the identity of each participant can be protected. My research assistant and I will know the name of students who accept the invitation to participate in the focus group discussions. The following strategies will be used to ensure that their participation is confidential.

1. Digital audio-recordings of student focus group discussions will be transcribed by me in my private home office so that conversations won't be overheard.
2. All digital recordings and written transcriptions will be stored on my password-protected computer and backed up on a memory stick and an external hard drive that will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my private home office.
3. All data containing the name of the school and actual participant names will be replaced by pseudonyms. The list of real and false names will be kept in a file separate from the data. Pseudonyms will be used in all public reporting of the results.
4. My research advisor and I are the only ones who will have access to the data.
5. Data in all forms generated from the study will be deleted or shredded once the thesis is completed, no later than December 31st, 2019.
6. All participants including the research assistant will be required to sign a pledge of confidentiality.

Withdrawing from the Study. There is no obligation to participate in this study. Participation is entirely voluntary, and students can choose to withdraw from the study at any time by letting myself or my research supervisor know or simply not completing the survey. If they should choose to withdraw, they must do so before November 30th, 2018. It should be noted that withdrawing from the study is not possible after completing the survey as the data is anonymous and I will not know who completed it. However, any focus group data that they may have provided will be removed immediately. Their decision to participate or not will not affect their music grades or relationships with me or other teachers in any way.

Participant Debriefing and Dissemination of Results. The projected completion date of this study is Fall 2019. Participants will be offered a non-technical summary of the results via email or Canada post after the thesis is complete. The full thesis report will be publicly available on the University of Manitoba Libraries MSpace. The researcher may use information from the study for other publications and presentations in the future.

Please be advised that if the abuse of children or persons in care might be discovered during the study, current laws require that allegations of certain offenses against children or persons in care be reported to legal authorities.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding the research project. In no way does this waive your legal rights, nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. As your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information at any time during the study.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122, or by email at humanethics@umanitoba.ca.

Sincerely,

Patrick Lemoine

Da Capo al Fine: Retaining High School Students in Guitar Programs**PERMISSION FORM FOR PRINCIPAL**

Please complete this form and return it to me at lemoin16@myumanitoba.ca by September 5th, 2018. You should retain the previous pages for your information.

I have read the above information and have had the study fully explained to me. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

By completing this consent form and returning it to the researcher, I am indicating my permission to conduct the study at _____. I am also giving you permission to:
(Name of school)

1. Have my students complete an anonymous online survey.
2. Have my students participate in a focus group discussion.
3. Allow my students to provide their own consent to complete the anonymous online survey, while parental consent will be required for focus group discussions;
4. Work with me and my school secretaries to collect signed letters of informed consent from students who agree to participate in the focus group discussions; and
5. Make arrangements with myself for a private classroom or conference room space to conduct two one hour after-school focus group discussions with two different groups of students (Group 1 – retained in guitar to Grade 12; Group 2 – not retained in guitar to Grade 12).

Please send me a summary report of the research in one of the following ways.

by email at the following address: _____

by Canada post mailed to work address at: _____

Principal Name: _____

Principal Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Date _____

Letter of permission - Principal (not from one of the two largest high schools)



230 Education Building
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-9014
Fax (204) 474-7550

Research Project Title: Da Capo al Fine: Retaining High School Students in Guitar Programs

Principal Investigator and Contact Information: Patrick Lemoine, lemoin16@myumanitoba.ca .

Research Supervisor and Contact information: Dr. Francine Morin,
Francine.Morin@umanitoba.ca , (204) 474-9015 (Tara Baxter, Administrative Assistant).

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (name of principal),

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The topic of my Master of Education thesis is student retention in high school guitar programs. I have received approval from both the Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, as well as from the (*name of the school division*) Superintendent and I am now hoping to move forward with my work. Although you are not asked to be an active participant in the study, I am asking for you to complete this form to confirm your awareness of and approval for the study to be conducted within your school. I am also requesting the following:

1. Permission to have your students complete an anonymous online survey; and
2. Permission to allow your students to provide their own consent to complete the anonymous online survey.

Purpose of the Research. The purpose of my study is to listen to students in order to learn more about what motivates them to continue with or leave guitar programs. My goal is to recommend changes to guitar programs in the division to meet the needs of students so that they will take guitar until the end of Grade 12.

Research Procedures for Students. Guitar students who agree to participate in this study will be directly involved in completing a survey. All current Grade 12 students who are or were enrolled

in guitar programs during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years will be invited to complete an online survey focusing on factors affecting student retention and attrition in high school guitar programs in October. The survey will take 15-20 minutes to complete and would be completed outside of school time.

As this can be considered a minimal risk study, I am requesting that students taking part in the anonymous survey provide their own consent.

Teacher-Researcher's Power Over Relationship. I am a current music specialist at one of the schools in the school division and have taught guitar at the same school for the past 13 years. I recognize that all teachers are in a position of power and authority in relation to all students, which may make some students feel pressured to participate in this study. To minimize this, I have requested that a neutral third party, the divisional arts consultant, recruit participants for me. I will also ensure that participants are aware that participation in this study will not negatively impact their grades or their relationships with me as a teacher. And, I will also emphasize that they may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty.

Benefits and Risks for the Participants. Students will benefit from having their voices heard by a teacher-researcher about their experiences in guitar programs. Their comments may offer recommendations for how guitar programs can be improved for the benefit of guitar students in the future. There is minimal risk to participate in this study, no more risk than when they attend school on any other day.

Anonymity and Confidentiality. Class enrolment lists containing information such as student names and school e-mail addresses will be used to contact students to inform them of this study. These will only be used to create an e-mail list and will not be used in any part of the study. The online survey will be anonymous and therefore the identity of each participant can be protected. The following strategies will be used to ensure that their participation is confidential.

1. Data in all forms generated from the study will be deleted or shredded once the thesis is completed, no later than December 31st, 2019.

Withdrawing from the Study. There is no obligation to participate in this study. Participation is entirely voluntary, and students can choose to withdraw from the study at any time by simply not completing the survey. Withdrawing from the study is not possible after completing the survey as the data is anonymous and I will not know who completed it. A student's decision to participate or not will not affect their music grades or relationships with me or other teachers.

Participant Debriefing and Dissemination of Results. The projected completion date of this study is Fall 2019. Participants will be offered a non-technical summary of the results via email or Canada Post after the thesis is complete. The full thesis report will be publicly available on the University of Manitoba Libraries MSpace. The researcher may use information from the study for other publications and presentations in the future.

Please be advised that if the abuse of children or persons in care might be discovered during the study, current laws require that allegations of certain offenses against children or persons in care be reported to legal authorities.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding the research project. In no way does this waive your legal rights, nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. As your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information at any time during the study.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122, or by email at humanethics@umanitoba.ca.

Sincerely,

Patrick Lemoine

Da Capo al Fine: Retaining High School Students in Guitar Programs**PERMISSION FORM FOR PRINCIPAL**

Please complete this form and return it to me at lemoin16@myumanitoba.ca by September 5th, 2018. You should retain the previous pages for your information.

I have read the above information and have had the nature of the study explained to me. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

By completing this consent form and returning it to the researcher, I am indicating my permission to conduct the study at _____. I am also giving you permission to:
(Name of school)

1. Have my students complete an anonymous online survey;
2. Allow my students to provide their own consent to complete the anonymous online survey.

Please send me a summary report of the research in one of the following ways.

- by email at the following address: _____
- by Canada post mailed to work address at: _____
- _____

Principal Name: _____

Principal Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix M

Letter of informed consent – Focus Group



230 Education Building
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-9014
Fax (204) 474-7550

Research Project Title: Da Capo al Fine: Retaining High School Students in Guitar Programs

Principal Investigator and Contact Information: Patrick Lemoine, lemoin16@myumanitoba.ca .

Research Supervisor and Contact information: Dr. Francine Morin,
Francine.Morin@umanitoba.ca , (204) 474-9015 (Tara Baxter, Administrative Assistant).

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

What is the purpose of my study? The purpose of my study is to listen to students in order to learn more about what motivates them to continue with or leave guitar programs. My goal is to recommend changes to guitar programs in the division to meet the needs of students so that they will take guitar until the end of Grade 12.

What does it mean for me to participate in this study? Having completed the online survey, students who agree to participate in the next part of the study will be directly involved in the following:

1. Student Focus Group: The first 12 students that volunteer from each group (i.e., current or past guitar students) at each of the two largest schools in the division will be invited to participate in focus group discussions moderated by the researcher. These will focus on their current and/or previous guitar experiences, and ways to improve them for students. The focus group discussion will take up to one hour. It will be audio-recorded using a Zoom data recorder and an assistant will be present to take notes of what is being said. It will be conducted in a private classroom space after school during the month of November at a time that is convenient for students. Volunteers beyond the 12 needed for the focus groups will be thanked, explaining that enough participants have been obtained.

How will the teacher-researcher's position of power be addressed? I am a current music specialist at one of the schools in the school division and have taught guitar at the same school for the past 13 years. I recognize that all teachers are in a position of power and authority in relation to all students, which may make some students feel pressured to participate in this study. So you do not feel pressure, the divisional arts consultant will recruit participants for me. I also assure you that your decision to participate or not in this study will not negatively impact your grades or your relationships with me or other teachers. And, I emphasize that you may withdraw from the study at any time and I will understand and respect your decision.

What are the risks and benefits to students? Students will benefit from having their voices heard by a teacher-researcher about their experiences in guitar programs. Your comments may offer recommendations for how guitar programs can be improved for the benefit of guitar students in the future. There is minimal risk to participate in this study, no more risk than when you attend school on any other day.

How will I know that my responses and comments will be anonymous and confidential? My research assistant and I will know the name of students who accept the invitation to participate in the focus group discussions. The following strategies will be used to ensure your participation is confidential.

1. Digital audio-recordings of student focus group discussions will be transcribed by me in my private home office so that conversations won't be overheard.
2. All digital recordings and written transcriptions will be stored on my password-protected computer and backed up on a memory stick and an external hard drive that will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my private home office.
3. All data containing the name of your school and your real names will be replaced by pseudonyms. The list of real and false names will be kept in a file separate from the data. Pseudonyms will be used in all public reporting of the results.
4. My research advisor and I are the only ones who will have access to the data.
5. Data in all forms generated from the study will be deleted or shredded once the thesis is completed, no later than December 31st, 2019.
6. All participants including the research assistant will be required to sign a pledge of confidentiality.

Withdrawing from the Study. There is no obligation for you to participate in this study. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you can choose to withdraw from the study at any time by letting me or my research supervisor know. If you choose to withdraw, you must do so before November 30th, 2018. Any focus group data that you provided will be removed. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your music grades or relationships with me or other teachers in any way.

Participant Debriefing and Dissemination of Results. The projected completion date of this study is Fall 2019. If you request one, I will send you summary of the results via email or Canada post after the thesis is complete. The full thesis report will be publicly available on the University of

Manitoba Libraries MSpace. I may use information from the study for other publications and conference presentations in the future.

Please be advised that if the abuse of children or persons in care might be discovered during the study, current laws require that allegations of certain offenses against children or persons in care be reported to legal authorities.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at the research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca . A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference

Sincerely,

Patrick Lemoine

Da Capo al Fine: Retaining High School Students in Guitar Programs**INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT**

Please complete this form and return it to your school secretary by (date), 2018. You should retain the previous pages for your information.

I have read the above information and have had the study fully explained to me. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Please be advised that if the abuse of children or persons in care might be discovered during the study, current laws require that allegations of certain offenses against children or persons in care be reported to legal authorities.

By completing this consent form and returning it to the school secretary, I am indicating my agreement to participate in this study.

Student Name: _____

You can contact me at the following email address if I am selected to participate in the focus group discussion: _____.

- Please send me a summary report of the research in one of the following ways. Keep in mind that your school email account may no longer be valid when the study is finished.
- by email at the following address: _____.
- by Canada post mailed to my home address at: _____
_____.

The following section must only be completed for students *agreeing* to participate:

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____
(If participant is under the age of 18)

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix N

Confidentiality agreement – Note taker

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Title of Research Project: Da Capo al Fine: Retaining Students in Guitar Programs Until Their Final High School Year

Principal Investigator: Patrick Lemoine, M. Ed. Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

To help protect the identity of school division, schools, programs, and participants, real names will not be used. This agreement asks my research assistant to do their part in helping to protect the identity of all participants and to maintain confidentiality.

As a note-taker for the focus group discussions in this research study, I understand that I may have knowledge of confidential information about the school division, schools, programs, and participants. By signing this agreement, I am indicating my understanding of my responsibilities to maintain confidentiality and agree to the following:

- I understand that names and any other identifying information about the study site is completely confidential.
- I agree not to divulge or otherwise make known to unauthorized persons or to the public any information that could identify the school division, schools, programs, and participants who took part in the study.
- I agree to not divulge the names and comments of others who took part in the focus groups.
- I agree to notify the principal investigator immediately should I become aware of an actual breach of confidentiality or a situation which could potentially result in a breach, whether this be on my part or on the part of another person.

Signature of Note Taker

Date

Printed name

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

Printed name

Confidentiality agreement - Student

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Title of Research Project: Da Capo al Fine: Retaining Students in Guitar Programs Until Their Final High School Year

Principal Investigator: Patrick Lemoine, M. Ed. Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

To help protect the identity of school division, schools, programs, and participants, real names will not be used. This agreement asks participants to do their part in helping to protect the identity of all participants and to maintain confidentiality.

As a participant in the focus group discussions in this research study, I understand that I may have knowledge of confidential information about the school division, schools, programs, and participants. By signing this agreement, I am indicating my understanding of my responsibilities to maintain confidentiality and agree to the following:

- I understand that names and any other identifying information about the study site is completely confidential.
- I agree not to divulge or otherwise make known to unauthorized persons or to the public any information that could identify the school division, schools, programs, and participants who took part in the study.
- I agree to not divulge the names and comments of others who took part in the focus groups.
- I agree to notify the principal investigator immediately should I become aware of an actual breach of confidentiality or a situation which could potentially result in a breach, whether this be on my part or on the part of another person.

Signature of Participant

Date

Printed name

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

Printed name

Appendix O

Student survey question #23 - Retained student responses

Q23 What do you enjoy most about classroom guitar?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 4

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	i enjoy it and it teaches me useful skills i am proud to have	11/19/2018 2:48 PM
2	playin guitar	11/16/2018 3:24 PM
3	Freeness, good marks, music	11/14/2018 7:36 PM
4	My teacher is the most supportive person I know, he has helped me become confident in guitar because when I came from my elementary school i was terrible and wanted to give up but he pushed me to continue to get better. Also, he's just a nice person and is always there to help and never too critical towards his students.	11/12/2018 8:59 AM
5	Being able to see the pieces we play come together.	11/12/2018 8:56 AM
6	Getting to do something I enjoy and that i'm good at for a credit	11/8/2018 10:56 AM
7	The piece we play Having fun with my friends Having a good relationship with my teacher	11/5/2018 10:24 PM
8	When we get a song that I really love and is also challenging and we all work hard to get our parts down and end up playing it really well.	11/2/2018 3:11 PM
9	The music that is played when you walk by or in the room	11/2/2018 1:27 PM
10	learning new sngs	11/2/2018 1:05 PM
11	I enjoy the ability to work independently in the class.	10/30/2018 11:10 AM
12	we play a variety of styles and work on a range of techniques that i wouldn't be exposed to outside of guitar. We learn a lot about theory, something that i wouldn't have learned on my own but has proved to be very beneficial.	10/30/2018 10:25 AM
13	playing as an ensemble once the songs are learned	10/30/2018 9:37 AM
14	The welcoming and accepting environment. The laid back feeling makes the course special.	10/30/2018 8:44 AM

Appendix P

Student survey question #23 – Non-retained student responses

Q23 What do you enjoy most about classroom guitar?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 4

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I liked how it was a chill class and I Was never really dreading going to it like some of my other classes.	11/5/2018 4:18 PM
2	Fun atmosphere	10/31/2018 12:42 PM
3	The learning environment and the music we play.	10/30/2018 8:49 AM

Appendix Q

Student survey question #24 – Retained student responses

Q24 What do you enjoy least about classroom guitar?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 4

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	playing boring music	11/19/2018 2:48 PM
2	the end of class	11/16/2018 3:24 PM
3	Other students slacking off	11/14/2018 7:36 PM
4	I don't enjoy the students who are just there for a credit because it kind of brings the mood down in the room with them being negative	11/12/2018 8:59 AM
5	When students are lazy and take guitar as a "spare" and slow down the progress of our classes.	11/12/2018 8:56 AM
6	Learning classical	11/8/2018 10:56 AM
7	Nothing	11/5/2018 10:24 PM
8	When we have to learn theory or music as a group when it is far beneath my skill level. Although, I know it's important and necessary.	11/2/2018 3:11 PM
9	nothing	11/2/2018 1:27 PM
10	that I want to smash a guitar	11/2/2018 1:05 PM
11	The forced assignments that require you to play for other peers that do not care about guitar.	10/30/2018 11:10 AM
12	The history lessons	10/30/2018 10:34 AM
13	With my class I dislike the attitude of the guitar teacher. The songs chosen are not new and are sometimes repeated because it's easier for the teacher and bring no challenge or freshness to the class.	10/30/2018 9:37 AM
14	Every now and then, certain students may be problematic, but that is quite rare.	10/30/2018 8:44 AM

Appendix R

Student survey question #24 – Non-retained student responses

Q24 What do you enjoy least about classroom guitar?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 4

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I didn't like how behind I always felt because a lot of people in the class had a lot more experience in guitar, but even said it didn't stop me from enjoying the class overall	11/5/2018 4:18 PM
2	Goes to fast	10/31/2018 12:42 PM
3	Getting blisters on your fingers	10/30/2018 8:49 AM

Appendix S

Student survey question #25 – Retained student responses

Q25 What recommendations or suggestions do you have that would encourage students to remain in classroom guitar until the end of their final high school year?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 5

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	its easy and will raise your average	11/19/2018 2:48 PM
2	More good music and trips and fields trips to express guitar	11/14/2018 7:36 PM
3	just ask for help, practice, and try your best	11/12/2018 8:59 AM
4	None.	11/12/2018 8:56 AM
5	It's a lifelong skill that everyone can enjoy	11/8/2018 10:56 AM
6	Maybe more fun songs and more jamming time like a band (someone play drums, electric guitar, electric bass) something like that. It was so fun when we did that last time	11/5/2018 10:24 PM
7	Make it semesterized. When guitar is all year long it's fun but the older you get, more relevant electives like sciences take priority.	11/2/2018 3:11 PM
8	because it is fun and you get to learn lots of different things	11/2/2018 1:27 PM
9	idk	11/2/2018 1:05 PM
10	Do not pay attention to who is in the class and do not let it influence your decision to stay or quit.	10/30/2018 11:10 AM
11	Each student picks a song for the class to learn.	10/30/2018 10:34 AM
12	A guitar teacher who enjoys his work and is dedicated to giving his or her students a memorable and good experience. Learning different styles of guitar playing Teaching students how to read sheet music Changing up the songs chosen to learn and making each class fun, whether it be playing or learning more about the guitar. Having classes were we watch documentaries and videos about the guitar and famous guitarist that could hopefully inspire each of us and create a fun and refreshing environment.	10/30/2018 9:37 AM
13	It's an easy and enjoyable way to get a credit, it also gives you performance skills and can be a confidence booster.	10/30/2018 8:44 AM

Appendix T

Student survey question #25 – Non-retained student responses

Q25 What recommendations or suggestions do you have that would encourage students to remain in classroom guitar until the end of their final high school year?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 4

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Practice and you'll enjoy it more, it's a skill you will always have	11/5/2018 4:18 PM
2	Making sure everyone is involved	10/31/2018 12:42 PM
3	Go back to day 1 day 2. So they have it 3 times a week. That way they have time for other things.	10/30/2018 8:49 AM