Informal Brass Band Instruction in Ghana: A Study of Effective and Efficient Rehearsals Using Research Findings

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Abstract

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There have been series of concerns regarding Western wind instrumental instruction in Ghana mainly due to the lack of comprehensive wind band pedagogy curriculum in Ghanaian universities and Colleges of Education (CoE). The consequence of this lack is noticeable among both formal and informal wind instrumental ensembles across the country. Employing a mixed-method design, this research examined strategies that could lead to effective and efficient band rehearsals. Data was gathered concerning the proportion of instructional time spent on teaching techniques/skills and concepts, on active music making, and rehearsal management. From a review of the available literature on best rehearsal practices, new ways were designed to improve instrumental rehearsal in an informal setting. Findings revealed that the amount of time spent on the fundamentals and active

music making increased over the course of the study thereby resulting in high technical capabilities and growth of both students and instructor. It was therefore recommended that Ghanaian band instructors work to increase their knowledge of instruments, including good playing technique, the ability to model effectively on a variety of instruments, and should develop a teaching style that is most appropriate to their learners.

1. Introduction

Over the past three decades, music education researchers all over the world have begun examining music learning that takes place in informal contexts. Folkestad (2006) for instance, advocated that an exploration of informal learning practices is important because to understand the "multidimensional character of music teaching, music learning should be considered in a much broader context than is typical of much contemporary research literature" (p. 135). Thus, music learning that occurs outside of school should be considered as important for music researchers to that which takes place in institutions. Indeed, researching music learning that occurs outside of formal academia is becoming more commonplace among music education researchers and this includes studies like Davis (2013), De Vries (2012), MacIntyre, Potter and Burns (2012), Jenkins (2011), Rachel (2011), and Waldron and Veblen (2009).

In common with communal music-making, most ethnic kinds of music are learned outside of school context (Waldron et al, 2009). Except for the more structured traditional institutions (like the traditional cults set up by the various ethnic groups for initiation purposes), traditional instruction in most African indigenous communities is not on an institutional basis. Before the inception of formal education, education in Africa was based on the principle of slow absorption of musical knowledge and active participation as part of everyday lived experiences rather than formal teaching (Smith, 1964). To a large extent, the social organization in Africa is helpful since it creates the enabling environment for the child to absorb all activities of the community which were generally connected to music. Intuitive learnings such as these work perfectively in the African traditional context concerning singing, playing of traditional instruments and dancing. However, to what extent can the learning environment, described above, be suitable for the instruction of Western wind instruments?

Research has shown that the current instructional approaches being used in Ghana are not achieving the most desired results. It is evident in the available literature that informal brass band instruction in Ghana has many inherent limitations (See Dordzro, 2019, 2017, 2015; Rumbolz, 2000). These limitations range from unavailability of instruments and poor playing techniques; to issues of identity and respectability. From my 15 years of experience as a wind band instructor, I can attest that purposeful instrumental rehearsal includes more than just the learning of notes and rhythms in the instrumental repertoire. I continually work to develop in my students the skills and competencies necessary to become independent musicians. But as generally known, the classroom environment plays a key role in shaping the teaching strategies of teachers. Some of the weaknesses of informal brass band instruction in Ghana was revealed by Rumblolz (2000), when he studied brass bands in Swedru and Kwanyako townships in the Central region of Ghana and found out that despite the various levels of abilities exhibited on the instruments by the players, many signs of weak embouchures were manifested. He wrote:

> One critical element that affects brass tone production is the development of the embouchure…Developing a "proper" embouchure is nearly an obsession in the Western brass pedagogy. Several books on the subject prescribe just how the mouthpiece should be set upon the lips (e.g., 1/3 on the upper and 2/3 on the lower) or how the teeth should be aligned. Such refinements in brass band training are rare in Ghana…It is not uncommon to see trumpeters using their fingers to reinforce a weak embouchure by wrapping the left index finger around the mouthpiece or playing with a handkerchief pressed alongside the mouthpiece to keep the seal intact (pp.113-114)

This finding was also corroborated by Dordzro (2017) when he studied basic school marching bands in the Accra metropolis, Ghana.

Embouchure formation seems not to be the priority of Ghanaian amateur brass band groups. Amateur bands in Ghana are noted for their very loud timbre that makes it almost impossible to maintain a balanced embouchure. This very loud dynamics of brass bands has always been on the complaint list of church clerics and elders. Issues about tuning, warm-up, poor playing technique, lack of band method books, availability of instruments and lack of qualified teachers are among the numerous factors affecting wind band instruction in Ghana (Dordzro, 2017).

More so, brass bands in Ghana generally learn by the rote method (Dordzro, 2017; Rumbolz, 2000). If a learner can produce a sound, they generally work it completely by observation and/or by ear with no questions asked why it is done this way or that way. Many church and town brass bands embrace more traditional methods of music pedagogy-"learning many tunes aurally and using no written music in performance" (Rumbolz, 2000, p. 87). Father Bauer, an elderly Dutch priest who spent over 50 years at the McCarthy Hill parish near Accra, has this to say about his first attempt to organize a brass band shortly after World War II:

> I did not go for African music too much, so I started to teach them notes. It took me six months and they would pretend to read the notes, but they played by heart. I taught them to play a March and thought it will knock people cold. But when they played it at an outstation at a Corpus Christi, the people didn't react. Then they played a native piece and everybody started dancing, so I thought why bother. I stopped teaching them notes and in 1950 I left the band to its own (as cited in Boozajer-Flaes and Gales 1992, p. 25).

My argument, therefore, is that since most music making, especially Western wind instrumental music making in Ghana, occurs in settings outside of academic institutions (Dordzro, 2012; Flolu & Amuah, 2003), it is prudent that attention is given to informal music participation as worthy study topics for discussion. Like Folkestad, I believe that an examination of music learning that occurs outside of formal schooling may reveal strengths and weaknesses which could better inform practice and re-define what it means to teach music in schools (Waldron et, al., 2009). Realizing the weaknesses mentioned above in wind instrumental music instruction in Ghana, the purpose of this research was to examine strategies that could lead to effective and efficient band rehearsals within the informal music education setting in Ghana.

2. A Brief Related Literature Review

This is not the place for a detailed account of all the research that had been done in the area of wind instrumental pedagogy, but a brief excursion back in time will be necessary to give proper context to the present discussion. My literature review of related books, articles, and videos touches on three areas: (a) specific conductors and their ideas regarding good conducting; (b) pedagogical ideas drawn from general conducting and music education books that are related to obtaining high-level musicianship, and (c) research studies focusing on effective and efficient rehearsals. Although there are many articles on rehearsal

strategies and techniques, I found that adolescent and young adult learners are often treated in a manner comparable to other age groups. I believe that instrumental music instruction in Africa, for that matter Ghana, offers unique challenges that need to be addressed. For instance, Worthy (2003) examined the differences with the same expert conductor rehearsing a high school band and a college band. He noted there was a difference with the pacing of the rehearsal and the number of directions given to the musicians at one time.

Studies have investigated the differences in approaches for ensembles of various levels of proficiency. Blocher, Greenwood, and Shellehamer (1997) looked at differences between high school and middle school directors' use of rehearsal time, types of instruction, and feedback to students. Results indicated that both high school and middle school directors spent approximately the same amount of time on non-musical activities (8%) and indirect verbal communication (31%). The two groups differed in their use of noninteractive listening with middle school directors using three times more than high school directors (34% and 9%, respectively). The high school directors also used more nonverbal communication (43% and 11%) and spent more time in conceptual teaching (3% and 2%). In a study by Worthy (2003), the researcher compared how one director rehearsed the same piece with a college group and with a high school group. The conductor focused on multiple musical concepts simultaneously when working with the collegiate group and mostly single musical targets with the high school group. Additionally, talking episodes were shorter but more frequent with the high school group which the researcher described as being faster paced.

How conductors use their rehearsal time is another topic that has been researched extensively through micro-analyses of the types of activities, their frequencies, and durations. Yarbrough and Price (1989) looked at several variables involved in music rehearsals. In terms of time spent on activities, all subjects spent over half of the time in performance and directions related to performance. Band teachers spent the most rehearsal time (M=66.14%) on performance compared to those teaching choir, college students, and pre-school children. Cavitt (2003) reported (28.98%) of instrumental rehearsal time being devoted to performance by middle school and high school band directors. Goolsby (1996) found that experienced band directors spent approximately (51.2%) of rehearsal time on performance with an average of (20.6%) of the time in warm-ups, (28.9%) on the first musical selection, and (32.5%) on the second musical selection. They also averaged between 8.3 and 13.3 rehearsals to prepare a musical selection (Goolsby, 1999).

The types of activities in which the teacher engages have been analyzed using many different frameworks. Goolsby (1999, 1997, 1996) looked at the amount of time spent on preparatory activities, teacher talk, warm-up, rehearsal, breaks, and dismissal. According to Goolsby's (1996) study, more rehearsal time was spent in full ensemble performance and verbal instructions while the least amount of time was spent on teacher talk at the end of the rehearsal. Goolsby's (1997) and (1999) studies indicated that experienced teachers more frequently used guided listening, focused questions, and specific positive feedback. Carpenter (1986) looked at more than 20 variables in band rehearsals, including pedagogical elements, procedural components, personal qualities, and error-detection approaches. Most of the time was spent on verbal/technical directions (80%) and 14.5% of the rehearsal was devoted to modelling. Cavitt (2003) similarly showed a high amount of time on teacher talk (52.57%) and lower use of modelling (6.12%), which occurred in episodes of approximately two seconds. According to Blocher et al. (1997), (8.47%) of rehearsal time was spent on non-musical activities.

Few studies have investigated learners' actions during rehearsals. Cavitt (2003) found that student talk occurred less than (1%) of the time. Yarbrough and Price's (1989) study showed that band and choir teachers engaged students in verbal and non-verbal responses the least when compared to pre-service teachers. Witt (1986) looked at student attentiveness during rehearsal and found that band students were more attentive than the orchestra students.

Considering the sizeable amount of time spent on teacher talk and instructions in rehearsals, researchers have analyzed the specific types of communication used by teachers (Blocher et al., 1997; Goolsby, 1999, 1997, 1996; Carpenter, 1988; Witt, 1986; Pontious, 1982). Pontious (1982) reported that, of their verbal communications, band directors focused on procedural instructions approximately half of the time (52%) and on musical elements the other half (48%). Blocher et al. (1997) reported that high school band directors used verbal communication (43.04%) more than non-verbal communication during rehearsals (31.84%). Goolsby (1996) found that experienced band directors only spent (.9%) of their rehearsal time on discipline; they additionally used verbal communication (24.1%) of the time and non-verbal cues (5.4%) of rehearsal time. A somewhat unique investigation found that band directors used verbal imagery (1.8%) of the time (Carpenter, 1988). Discrepancies exist among the literature regarding how teacher talk is used in rehearsals. Some of these can be explained by differences in definitions of the terms, the number of variables

being measured, as well as data analysis procedures. Nonetheless, non-verbal communication plays a large role in band rehearsals and directors address non-musical issues a considerable amount of time.

Feedback has been identified as an important component in becoming a self-regulated musician (McPherson & Zimmerman, 2002). Yarbrough and Price (1981) stated that feedback is an essential part of the teaching and learning process. Students need immediate and relative feedback on their performance. They found that band directors, compared with choral directors and pre-service teachers, had the highest degree of reinforcement in rehearsal and that it was usually specific feedback. Contrastingly, Blocher et al., (1997) found that band directors only engaged in feedback an average of one minute and 36 seconds per 20-minute rehearsal segment. When looking at correlations between rehearsal characteristics and highly rated rehearsals, Carpenter (1988) found that feedback accounted "for 43% of the observed variance in overall rehearsal rating" (p. 58). In a survey of new general music teachers, Button (2010) found that they ranked feedback as one of the least important factors for effective teaching. Out of 48 factors, feedback ranked 42nd. Napoles and Bowers (2010) compared the effects of teacher feedback and self-assessment on pre-service choral teachers' uses of specific reinforcement and found no significant difference between the two. Both approaches were identified as being effective in increasing the desired teacher behaviours.

Researchers have performed detailed analyses on the musical elements band directors address in rehearsals. Performance elements such as rhythm, intonation, and expression vary in definition, use, and categorization among the research literature making it difficult to compare results. Studies by Cavitt (2003), Goolsby (1999), Carpenter (1988) and Pontious (1982) have investigated which musical elements directors attend to most during rehearsals. Carpenter (1988) found that band directors focused mostly on rhythm, tempo, dynamics, style/articulation, and instrumental fundamentals, and spent the least amount of time on theory, tone, intonation, expression, and blend/balance. Cavitt (2003) found that intonation/tone and articulation were given the most focus in rehearsal; they were distantly followed by rhythm and dynamics; and the least amount of rehearsal time was spent on tempo, pitch accuracy, and technical facility. Goolsby's (1999) study showed that expert directors spent drastically more time on rhythm and articulation. Dynamics, blend/balance, style, and expression/phrasing received moderate attention and subdivision, notes, airstream/posture, energy, entrances/confidence, intonation, and tone received

the least amount of consideration. The variation among the studies makes it difficult to identify the degree of focus on musical elements, but it appears that rhythm, articulation, and dynamics generally receive the most attention. In summation, it is concluded that more time is spent on fundamentals rather than expression.

The National Standards for Music Education were developed to "advance both quality and accountability" (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994, p. 10) for arts education. These standards grew out of the movement towards comprehensive musicianship and encouraged music educators to focus on a variety of musical aspects in their classrooms, including listening, creating, performing, history, and culture (Diehl & Scheib, 2013). Although the performing and responding standards have easily been integrated into band classes, those focused on creating have been more difficult to implement (Diehl & Scheib, 2013). Diehl and Schieb (2013) found several factors correlated with the implementation of creating standards into rehearsals, including band size, performance schedule/demands, and the expressive qualities within certain musical selections. Interestingly, "teachers who selected repertoire based upon pedagogical criteria…were more likely to integrate the standards than those who emphasized technical or practical criteria" (Diehl & Schieb, 2013, p.5).

Teachers' perceptions do not always reflect what they are doing in their classrooms. Wang and Sogin (1997) found that general music teachers overestimated the amount of time they spent on activities and that teacher talk was relatively high. When looking at middle school teachers' use of student-directed instructional (SDI) practices, Bazan (2011) found that teachers who highly valued SDI still emphasized teacher-directed instruction significantly more in their rehearsals. In a national survey by (Miles, 1993), band directors identified their highest priorities as "teaching with the emphasis on aesthetic awareness" and "teaching with a comprehensive approach to music education" (Miles, 1993, p. 66). However, when asked about their programme strengths, they most often reported a high level of performance, community support, positive image of the programme, and large enrollment. This disparity between perception and action in the classroom makes it imperative that activities and interventions are measured for effectiveness.

In a case study of six wind-band conductors, Gonzalez (2001) identified two factors for rehearsal effectiveness as (1) achieving musical goals and (2) "satisfaction for all involved as a meaningful musical experience" (p. iii). The

analysis of the conductors' procedures and philosophies identified several unifying characteristics: their rehearsal formats were systematic; conductors maintained an effective pace, and they made timely interjections and appropriate instructional comments. Sink (2002) identified traits for effective music teaching as knowledge of the subject matter, use of modelling, use of verbal and nonverbal presentation skills, and analytic skills. Missing from these criteria are student performance and learning. The standards in these studies were identified by describing only what successful conductors do in rehearsals, without looking at the effects on students.

Music teacher evaluation approaches vary greatly among the literature and in practice. Madsen and Yarbrough (1980) promote the use of teacher self-evaluation using recordings of rehearsals and careful analysis of their behaviours, including verbal and non-verbal characteristics, use of approval/disapproval, and personal characteristics. They also promote analyzing student behaviours during rehearsals.

Doerksen (2006) discusses the importance of evaluating teachers in terms of reaching lesson objectives and suggests that the evaluation process can be especially challenging in music classrooms. The author emphasizes the necessity for defining teacher tasks and using a specified system to evaluate them.

In a meta-analysis of research on rehearsal effectiveness, Duke (2000/1999) only found 13 studies between 1972 and 1997 that included assessment of student achievement as a factor for determining effectiveness. As a conclusion, Duke stated that research needs to expand "to include the systematic measurement of teaching effectiveness in relation to the accomplishment of instructional goals" (p. 143). From this research, Duke (2000/1999) developed an approach to rehearsal evaluation called "rehearsal frames" (p. 19). The organizing principle of the frame becomes the performance goal rather than a time period. A variety of techniques may occur during a frame, including repetition, modelling, decontextualizing, and verbal directions. The frame concluded when the goal has been achieved. Irwin (2006) investigated the rehearsal frame as an instructional tool for choral directors and found that it increased the subjects' perceptions of effective teaching. Yarbrough and Price (1989) suggest that a specific pattern of instruction is the most effective teaching method. This "optimal pattern" (p. 179) consists of presenting the task, student responses to task, and feedback. When evaluating experienced and pre-service teachers' use of the pattern, they found that band directors completed the least number of complete patterns in rehearsals.

Research on student behaviour or achievement in rehearsals is sparse, but the variables investigated include attentiveness, teaching intensity, and comprehensive musicianship. Witt's (1986) study compared class time use and student attentiveness in orchestra and bands (N=48). The activities were classified as student performance, teaching, or getting ready. During performance, students were found to be off-task less (M=3.4%) than during non-performance time (M=17.8%). Orchestra students were reported to be less attentive than band students during all rehearsal activities.

In sum, the literature review above reveals important points that are pertinent to the purpose of this study: (a) it expanded my knowledge and understanding of specific conductors and their ideals regarding good conducting, (b) it revealed pedagogical ideas drawn from general conducting and music education books that are related to obtaining high-level musicianship; and (c) also helped examine the available research for relevancy in effective and efficient rehearsals. The findings in this review, indeed, have far-reaching consequences as far as the methodology and data collection for this study is concerned. It provided me with the necessary insight into wind band instructional strategies prevalent in instrumental music education, and help strengthen the validity and reliability of the current study by citing what other reliable authors have said about more effective wind band instructional practices.

Considering the above, the research questions that guided the study were:

1. What proportion of instructional time do instructors spend on: technique, teaching musical concepts and skills; conducting active music making; rehearsal management; waiting or wasting time?

2. How can instructors change their rehearsal practise to spend more time engaging students in developing proper wind instrument technique, active musical learning, and less time on non-musical tasks, thus improving the effectiveness and efficiency of their band rehearsals?

3. How do instrumentalists perceive and respond to their band rehearsals?

To answer these questions, I first gathered quantitative data concerning the amount of rehearsal time spent: instructing, actively making music, managing the rehearsal, and waiting or wasting time. I thought that, depending on the musical concept being learned or explored, the active music making time would vary. I wondered what previous research said concerning the optimum

percentage of time spent in active music-making. I reviewed the literature, related research, and design new ways to improve my rehearsal practice. I implemented these new practices and tracked their effectiveness. Finally, I gathered data from participants to discover what their perceptions were regarding active music-making time during rehearsal sessions.

3. Method

To address the research questions and to provide a framework for this research, it became necessary to employ a mixed-method approach in an action research design (Ivankova & Wingo, 2018). Mixed-method is increasingly being recognized across disciplines as a sound and pragmatic research approach (Coyle et al., 2016; Creswell, 2015; Alise & Teddlie, 2010). The utility of mixed-methods research has been enhanced by its methodological flexibility to intersect or to be meaningfully integrated with other research approaches (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016), such as action research, by adding a solid methodological foundation and creating an integrated approach for addressing complex problems of practical importance (Ivankova, 2015). By synergistically integrating qualitative reflections of both teacher and students with quantitative survey and rehearsal frames in an informal context, I am certain of producing scientifically sound and more transferable results.

Mills (2011), in support of the above, indicated that even though qualitative methods seem to fit action research more appropriately, research questions may necessitate action researchers to use both quantitative and qualitative data sources, particularly when there is a need to include numeric data to augment observations and qualitative narratives. These assertions are supported by the growing number of published action research studies in different disciplines in which a mixed methods approach was used to inform data collection and analysis at some or all stages in the action research process.

Based on the foregoing statements, qualitatively I have reflected on my own experience as a wind instrumental instructor, employing a phenomenological approach. According to Noe (2007), phenomenology focuses upon the investigation of experience itself. As Noe suggests, "In particular, it is an investigation of the world in so far as the world – the things and situation in which we find ourselves – gives contour to human experience" (2007, p. 236). I chose this methodology specifically to gain "a 'practical understanding' of meanings and actions" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 8) as uncovered in my reflections. To create greater depth to my understanding, emergent meanings and actions

were related to students' reflections and relevant literature as appropriate. I also focused on whether my experiences were parallel or divergent when compared to those of more senior colleagues and recommendations in the available literature. Quantitative data were generated using attitudinal survey and analysis of rehearsal frames. For each item of the attitudinal survey, mean scores were calculated to determine participants' responses to their band rehearsals.

The band included in the study was selected using the purposeful sampling method (Creswell, 2007). Participants in the study were 29 instrumentalists selected from the Wesley Cathedral Brigade band in the Cape Coast metropolis. The sample (20 male and 9 female) was selected using random sampling with replacement or independent (within-sample) random sampling methods (Glenberg & Andrzejewski, 2008), as well as, one band instructor (the researcher). I chose this band not just because of the rapport I have established with them during a previous study, or of proximity, but most importantly, based on the numerous deficiencies I have observed in the band's performance over the years. I have also sent video recordings of the selected band to three expert wind band instructors who confirmed my observations. For validity and reliability, these experts also served as advisors with the development of the study's aims, research questions, and the confirmation of the effectiveness of my intervention. Ages of instrumentalists range from 12-25 years representing a beginning band (youth band). I refer to it as a beginning band because in the Ghanaian context the average age for the beginning of wind instrument instruction is around thirteen to fifteen years (Dordzro, 2012) if you are lucky to be attending a school or a church that has a band.

During six-months, from January to June 2016, specific teaching innovations, drawn from the research and pedagogical literature review, were implemented to improve the technical ability level of instrumentalists, and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the selected band. These innovations focused on the use of non-verbal methods to help foster deeper levels of student musicianship. The primary instructional targets observed in Worthy & Thompson's (2009) study were developing embouchure, pitch accuracy, tone, and other performance fundamentals that contribute to the accomplishment of these primary instructional goals. Teaching strategies included a variety of performance contexts, including teacher modelling, ensemble, sectional, and individual performances, and opportunities for recuperation. Byo's (1990) article also discussed six specific musical elements that help foster a musician's independence. These six elements are rhythm, style, quality of sound, blend

and balance, phrasing, and intonation. Shayne Cofer's (1998) study concerned teaching students to recognize conducting gestures and how increased student knowledge is directly linked to their ability to be effective musicians. I incorporated seven specific conducting gestures during this study to see if specific instructions concerning conducting gestures do lead to more effective and efficient rehearsals. Menghini (2003) advocated students be conditioned to respond to a "set position". Conductors develop a stance that signals to the band that the time for active music-making is at hand. Conductors cannot talk while their arms are in the set "ready" position since this confuses the instrumentalists and they will stop responding effectively to the "set position". I created specific objectives for each rehearsal session which helped to focus rehearsals towards a defined purpose. These objectives incorporated one of Byo's listening elements and the related conductor gesture or gestures suggested by Shayne Cofer. Abeles, Hoffer and Klotman (1994) believe that through specifically stated objectives teachers clarify, in their minds, what they want to accomplish and have a better chance of engaging learners in all three domains of learning: cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

Daily exit slips were completed by participants to help instil self-reflection as a "habit of mind". Farrell (1996) stated that students needed to develop their ability to understand their work in relation to the work of others. Hewitt (2002/2001) advocated the use of self-evaluation but warns that the adolescent's self-reflections don't always match actual musical results. Use of the daily exit slips helped focus the participants' perception of the group's effectiveness and efficiency. Tips on how to reflect accurately on daily activities were discussed, and time was taken to share the data gathered with participants every other week.

Teacher delivery style has been noted in many studies (Steele, 2010; Allsup, 2003; LaCombe, 2003; Madsen, 2003; Townsend, 2003; Van Weelden, 2002; West, & Rostvall, 2003; Worthy, 2003; Bauer, 2001) as having a direct effect on rehearsal effectiveness and tone. I strive to keep my delivery style effective and engaging. This incorporates embouchure formation, facial expression, eye contact, varying tone of delivery, and the use of good posture during rehearsals (aspects of effective rehearsal practices that were not emphasized before now).

Band rehearsal sessions were videotaped and later analyzed using rehearsal frames (Worthy et al., 2009; Worthy 2003). Participants responded to the instructional innovations by completing exit slips daily and attitudinal surveys

at the beginning and completion of the research project. The teacher tracked their perceptions through daily journal entries and reflecting on the classes videotaped. Qualitative data were collected and then sorted by thematic codes while quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Pre- and Post-survey mean scores were calculated and compared using T-tests.

Videotape analysis consisted of two steps. First, videotapes were reviewed and organized into rehearsal frames (Worthy et. al., 2009; Cavitt, 2003; Worthy 2003; Duke, 2000/1999). The organizing principle for each rehearsal frame is the target- "the proximal goal toward which the instructional efforts are directed" (Duke, 2000/1999, p, 22). Rehearsal frames were coded according to five different areas:

1. Instruction (modelling, feedback, error correction)

2. Active music-making (playing or else on-task behaviour related to the musical subject – eg. composition)

3. Rehearsal management (discipline, etc.)

4. Waiting (for either teacher or instrumentalists to be ready, set-up of instruments and music, sectionals)

5. Announcements (band activities – eg. fundraising).

The total number of instructional minutes spent in each area was recorded.

The second way that the videotape data were assessed was through teacher reflection questions:

(a) Were the instructions clear and understandable to the students? (b) Were instructions repeated? Or were they stated clearly and succinctly one time only? (c) How long do I spend giving cues? Preparing in silence for a cue? (d) If a cue was given, was it clear? (e) Were several cues/ideas described at the same time so that students found it hard to follow or to know on what to focus?

The teacher journal reflections and answers to the video questions were coded to find common themes and categories from which to discover and report findings. Participants' short answers on the exit slips were coded similarly with special attention given to any epiphanies or significant experiences being described by the participant. Concept mapping was utilized to find themes for
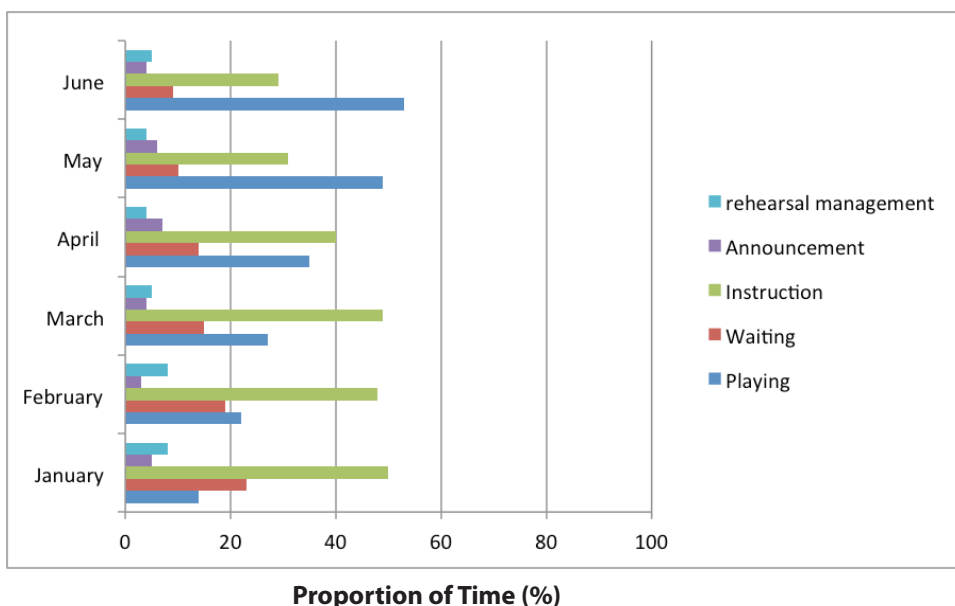
participants' and teacher's perceptions. General exit slip themes were shared and discussed with the participants following the completion of every second cycle.

For each item of the attitudinal survey, mean scores were calculated to determine participants' responses to their band rehearsals. To assess if there was a change in how students perceive and respond to their band rehearsals during the twenty-four weeks of research, their surveys and exit slips were statistically analyzed. The differences between participants' pre- and post-survey mean ratings were compared with T-tests for paired samples. A significance level of p≥.01 was set because multiple comparisons were made.

4. Results

The first research question asked, "What proportion of instructional time do I spend on: teaching musical concepts and technique/skills, conducting active music-making; rehearsal management; waiting or wasting time?" Video data were collected to help answer these questions. Figure 1 (below) summarizes the time spent on various activities in rehearsal.

Figure 1: Bar graph from video data showing the percentage of instructional time spent on playing, waiting, instruction, announcements and rehearsal management

4.1 Video Data

As revealed by the video data graph (Figure 1 above), there was a steady increase in playing time from January to June when a review of the band's performance occurred. Overall, the proportion of class time spent in instruction and playing time stayed relatively even. As playing time increases, instruction time decreases. Time spent making announcements and completing research forms varied throughout the study. The most interesting finding relates to the waiting category. "Waiting" time seems to amount to between (9%) to over (23%) of class time, however, this is misleading. Confusion resulted due to assigning too many activities to the "waiting" category. Time spent in individual warm-up, individual or sectional rehearsal, or individual or sectional instruction were all classified as "waiting" by the researcher. Non-musical waiting, such as waiting for silence from class or waiting for the instructor to be ready, was also included in this category. Next time I would use Cavitt's (2003) behaviour categories: teacher talk, teacher modelling, full ensemble plays, section plays, individual plays, performance approximation, student talk, and making music to help clarify the differences between active music-making, instruction, and waiting time. I would also be interested in knowing how other researchers, such as Worthy (2003) or Duke (1999), define playing time and whether or not individual warm-up and sectional playing are included in their definitions.

The proportion of class time spent in instruction varied from (29%) to (50%). These proportions are less than Cavitt's (2003) and Worthy's (2003) results where error correction and conductor talk amounted to approximately (49%) of the total rehearsal. This difference in results could be because this action research project was set in an informal band rehearsal setting, and not in a formal educational setting like high school or college setting. The amount of time spent in active music-making increased over the course of the study. I think this resulted partially from the innovations presented during this study and partially from my increased focus and attention to detail, viewed and reviewed following each class throughout the study.

A statistical analysis of the survey results gleaned from participants' responses to 15 fixed items, shown in Table 1 (below), yielded significant differences between the pre- and post-survey procedures for six statements but found no significant difference for the rest nine statements. T-tests assume equal variability in the two tests being compared; therefore F-tests were performed to check for significant differences in variability between the pre- and post-survey data. There was a significant difference between pre- and post-tests for the following statements: "I use my time effectively in band class", Musical ideas are presented

and discussed systematically", "I rehearse individually before band rehearsal sessions", "I can read music", "I actively think about my band pieces", and " I feel satisfied at the end of most band rehearsals" (p≤.01). No detectable differences between pre- and post-survey results were found for the other statements (p≥.01).

Table 1

Pre- and Post-Survey Mean Results

Survey Items (N=29)	Pre- Survey Mean Ratings	Post- Survey Mean Ratings
I use my time effectively in band class.	2.20	3.89
I follow the people around me to know when to play.	3.24	3.14
Musical ideas are presented and discussed systematically.	.01	4.34
I am a leader in my instrument section when we play.	3.20	2.96
I rehearse individually before regular band rehearsal sessions	1.01	3.94
I can read music	1.00	4.01
It is worth the time that it takes to make pieces sound great.	2.94	3.55
I am playing to the best of my ability.	2.40	3.72
I like playing things well in band class	3.44	3.74
I want to be a better musician	3.20	3.43
I like learning challenging music in band class	3.08	3.07
I like practising when I can see an improvement	2.92	3.04
I actively think about my band pieces outside of class	2.00	3.40
I feel satisfied at the end of most band classes	1.04	3.14
I enjoy being in a band.	3.43	3.07

The open-ended items asked respondents what they enjoyed about band class and what they would change. Two clear thematic categories emerged from the pre-survey data related to respondents' "enjoyment": (a) Playing and (b) Rehearsal Environment. The themes emerging from the post-survey item related to "enjoyment" were similar to the pre-survey results. "Playing" was again the most dominant sub-theme which included: (a) playing music; (b) playing fun songs; (c) playing my instrument; (d) playing with expression (new answer); and (e) learning more interesting music. "Rehearsal environment" was the second most prominent response with all the pre-survey responses recurring, in addition to "band trips" and "everything" being included as aspects of the band programme that students enjoyed. There were two instrumentalists who chose not to respond to this question on the post-survey.

In response to being asked what students would change, pre-survey data were categorized into four themes: (a) Homework Assignments; (b) Class Structure; (c) Music; and (d) Nothing. The post-survey responses indicating students' desired changes resulted in categories such as (a) Homework Assignments, (b) No Response (c) Nothing. The homework assignment, again, suggested having no more practice records. Practice records are a student's written calendar documenting their minutes spent in home practice. It is interesting to note that compared to 11 students who wanted this assignment eliminated prior to the study, only 2 students mentioned it during the post-survey. Changes to our class structure included suggestions for: (a) learning more about my instrument; (b) increasing class time; (c) improving student listening; (d) working on tone production and breathing more; (e) changing the seating plan; (f) being videotaped; and (g) increasing talking time. These responses are more specific to class content than the corresponding pre-survey responses. It might be inferred that participants were more aware of specific tasks being accomplished during each class.

Discussion

Question 1 - What proportion of instructional time do I spend on: teaching musical concepts and technique/skills; conducting active music-making; rehearsal management; waiting or wasting time?

Looking at the video data gathered, active music-making (i.e. playing) accounts for (14%) to (53%) of my class time. If the "waiting" category is included, then "playing" increases from (40%) to (70%) of class time. I believe the reality is in the middle with approximately (30%) to (50%) of music class spent in active music

making. The data collected shows that approximately (29%) to (50%) of classes are spent on instruction depending on the material being presented. The class time spent completing forms is atypical since this activity only occurred during this research project. Making announcements took up from (0%) to (7%) of class time with most classes involving less than (5%) of time on announcements. Surprisingly, less than (10%) of class time was used for classroom management, with the most rehearsals devoting less than (8%) of class time to classroom management issues. The literature provides support which indicates that these percentages are very close to less than (5%) which characterize efficient band rehearsals.

Question 2 - How can I change my rehearsal practice to spend more time engaging students in developing wind instrumental technique, active musical learning, and less time on non-musical tasks, thus improving the effectiveness and efficiency of my band rehearsals?

Innovations using the ideas of Worthy et. al., (2009), Byo (1990) and Shayne Cofer (1998) fostered student musical independence by introducing non-verbal music skills. These skills focused on: rhythm, style, quality of sound, blend and balance, phrasing, intonation, teacher modelling and conducting gestures. Also, regular use of a "set position" (Menghini; 2003) was incorporated into the rehearsal session which I believe was the most effective innovation introduced. This technique helped to create a "habit of mind" and a period of silent preparation for everyone in the room. As this habit formed, the length of time needed to prepare decreased, which contributed to the efficiency of the rehearsal. To be efficient, rehearsal sessions need to be well planned with post-evaluations occurring after each rehearsal. I will continue to incorporate Bauer's (2001) idea of writing the rehearsal order on the board and Munsons'(1998) post-rehearsal evaluations which evaluate both teacher and learners' activity.

Question 3 - How do instrumentalists perceive and respond to their band rehearsals?

Participants agree that they are involved during our daily rehearsal process. Exit slip data indicates that, overall, participants felt we created music for most of our band classes with everyone, participants and teacher (researcher), working efficiently. Participants enjoyed "playing" and the "rehearsal environment" as evidenced by their written comments. "Homework assignments" and "rehearsal structure" were the two areas where participants requested changes. This was because getting access to instruments after practice hours to work on

assignments was difficult, so I made changes to the rehearsal structure allowing them to come an hour or two earlier to work on their assignments as individuals before the main rehearsal time.

Participants felt that they regularly learned new things about "music" and "instrument technique", which is very encouraging and tells me I am succeeding in creating independent musicians. Survey responses to instructional innovations resulted in positive means scores, (particularly high mean scores for the post-survey) however, comparisons of pre- and post-test means analyzed using t-tests, showed statistically significant differences for only six statements but no statistical differences between students' responses at the beginning and end of the study for the rest nine statements. Although some participants were apathetic to the research project, most were enthusiastic and expressed interest in the findings of the study. Students in informal instrumental music settings are interested in their learning environment and most of them are excited about learning the instruments the proper way and playing music.

4.2 Implications for Music Education

Music teacher trainees, agencies and individuals involved in music teacher preparation should consider the implications of these findings. There has been a concern about the quality and depth of the musical leanings derived from instrumental performances due to the absence of an in-depth curriculum for band instruction in our tertiary and teacher training institutions (Dordzro, 2017). Instructing young instrumentalists requires teaching skills and strategies that are different from those required for general music instruction. Ghanaian wind band instructors should work to increase their knowledge of instruments, including good playing technique, the ability to model effectively on a variety of instruments, and should develop a teaching style that is appropriate for the pace of instruction in beginning band.

This research project provided professional growth for the teacher/researcher and the participants. By the researcher systematically studying his own practices, he has improved. The data derived from exit slips and video recordings does reflect this improvement, and I feel I have increased my understanding of pacing and my instrumentalists' overall perception of the band programme. Allsup (2003), West and Rostvall (2003), and Broomhead (2001) discussed different musical experiences that help tap into a student's inherent creativity or expressiveness. It is therefore suggested that wind band instructors should continue to use engaging, but challenging, listening warm-ups, and composition assignments

to try and assess each student's inner creativity. They should also use teaching ideas from the literature and new practical knowledge they have gained from this research to challenge and assess their own musical creativity, and to help keep themselves energized in their chosen vocation.

5. Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn based on the above findings: Informal wind instrumental instruction in Ghana offers unique challenges that need to be addressed. To have a successful rehearsal takes a lot of preparation and planning, therefore, it is important that wind band instructors learn from the current research by allocating sufficient time for all aspects of instrumental fundamentals such as teaching musical concepts, good conducting gestures, active music-making, and above all, good wind instrument technique/skills. Adopting the ideas of Worthy et. al., (2009), Byo (1990) and Shayne Cofer (1998) by employing non-verbal music skills focusing on rhythm, style, quality of sound, blend and balance, phrasing, intonation, and teacher modelling; resulted in significant improvement in the performance of the selected band. Encouraging personal rehearsal by allowing students to have access to instruments an hour or two before rehearsals proved effective. Also, regular use of a 'set position' (Menghini, 2003) was incorporated into the current study which I believe was the most effective innovation introduced. Generally, the teaching and learning innovations drawn from the available research and implemented in this study had a positive influence on the selected band hence worth emulating by other wind bands.

5.1 Suggestions for Future Research

While reviewing the related literature and conducting this research, many different ideas for future research came to mind. Future research that grows directly from this study would be to examine the following questions: What band instructional strategies are best appropriate for the informal band rehearsal setting, especially with players who cannot read music? Is there a link between the length of silent cue preparation time and effective rehearsals? Is there a notable difference when a conductor uses silent cues as opposed to count-off cues? What is the correct pacing to use when under pressure-preparing for an upcoming performance? Is there a direct time link between the length of piece, difficulty of piece, age of participants, and so on, or do conductors just gradually develop a "feel" for correct pacing as they mature into their art form? Finally, is there a direct link between students perceived music responsibilities (e.g. expected practice time) and an ensemble's musical expressiveness?

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