HIGH SCHOOL BAND SIGHT READING IN THE UNITED STATES:
PROCEDURES, PREPARATION, ATTITUDES, AND EXPERIENCES

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Sight reading is the ability to read and perform music at first sight without preparatory study of the pieces. Each year, high school large group instrumental and choral adjudicated events occur throughout the United States. Evaluation in sight reading is a part of these events in some states, however, the results of the nationwide sight-reading overview by Paul (2010) show fewer than half of the state-sponsored music contests require assessment in sight reading. The purpose of this study was to investigate the state of sight reading in band performance evaluations and classrooms across the nation. This study in sight reading sought to identify baseline knowledge, which explored the traditions and procedures, attitudes of directors, and event experiences in high school large group band performance evaluations. This research specifically focused on large ensemble, band sight reading in both the rehearsal and adjudicated performance room. A mixed methods approach was used, which allowed the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative paradigms to emerge. Utilizing portions of both models aided in the discovery of answers to the research questions in this study.

Initially, data regarding sight-reading procedures at large group sight-reading evaluations was gathered from each state. Next, responses to a survey were collected from band directors across the United States. Feedback in the areas of sight-reading participation, director training, student preparation, and director attitude toward adjudication in sight reading was given. Finally, participants were selected for a more in-depth interview. The line of questioning involved a more focused look at their attitudes and experiences surrounding sight-reading adjudication. Results
from this study have yielded information that can potentially impact teacher training, professional development, and the organization of the sight-reading adjudication system.

The *Sight Reading Instruction Training Attitude Survey* (SRITAS) was developed with the guidance of several surveys used as source material. Results of the survey provided a broad portrait of sight-reading instruction and adjudication throughout the United States. Participants revealed that they have a varied structure in which they teach sight reading within their schools, and a mixture of attitudes when it comes to sight reading adjudication. All participants believe that sight reading is an important aspect of the music education of a child, but the manner in which that skill is taught varies greatly. It is evident that many of the states share characteristics in sight reading education, such as placement in the adjudicated process, and desire for the students to be actively engaged in the study time. Some of the procedural aspects differ from one state to the next. Preparatory study time and directors’ communication during the performance are a few of these aspects.

Discussions among band directors and state leaders, based on the importance of including sight-reading evaluation in their festival, need to serve as a platform from which to continue development of classroom learning standards that align with the national music standards, and the inclusion of sight reading in that process. Teachers are continuously searching for resources to better their instructional techniques in this area, and are passionate about cultivating meaningful, musical, and educational experiences for their students in sight reading. With so much supporting evidence on the importance of sight reading, teaching sight reading is an accepted and recommended piece of instrumental music instruction.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

The onstage performance was complete. A nervous relief fell on the students and me as we left the auditorium stage. As the band exited the stage, they came to realization that the performance was not complete. In a single file line, the students were led through the hallways of the unfamiliar school to a room where they would be judged on their sight-reading abilities. All settled in their seats, silence, stillness, and anticipation filled the room. Finally, the adjudicator rose from his chair and stated, “Welcome to sight reading, are you ready to begin?”

The basis for this study derives from questions in my own high school teaching. As a music educator, and director of an ensemble that attends large group adjudicated events in our state, I realize the importance of sight reading, as well as assessment in that area. Through my experiences, I have started to have questions encompassing different aspects of sight reading. First, concerns have emerged surrounding the systems and methods of the evaluation in the large group sight-reading setting. Second, there is curiosity about what directors do in their daily classrooms for them and their students to feel prepared for their experience in the sight-reading room. Lastly, I would like to have a better understanding of how sight-reading evaluation is used across the nation, and how student and teacher attitudes toward the process are influenced by their experiences.

Sight reading is the ability to read and perform music at first sight without preparatory study of the piece (Elliott, 1982a). Proficiency in music sight reading has been defined as the ability to accurately perform a musical composition from the printed score without benefit of
practice (Wolf, 1976). Sight reading is a significant part of instrumental music education (Galyen, 2005; Gromko, 1994; Harris, 1993; Stebleton, 1987), and the development of sight-reading ability among musicians is a vital skill which students must possess (Demorest, 2004; Henry, 2008; Mursell, 1948).

A prime educational goal of any discipline is the development of an independent learner. There is almost universal agreement on the emphasis of teaching music literacy as a means to musical independence (Demorest, 2001). In music, a prerequisite to independence is the ability to sight read (Gregory, 1972). The sight-reading process reveals many learned musical proficiencies including; aural, technical, and cognitive skills of the performing group. Successful development of these measures of musical independence and literacy are generally considered essential for enhancement of lifelong learning of music (Orman, Yarbrough, & Neill, 2007).

The importance of sight reading is evidenced in its inclusion in the National Standards (MENC, 1994), the publication of instruction materials (Paul, 2010), its appearance as an accepted method of evaluation for both individuals and ensembles (Harris, 1993), and the emergence of research to which sight reading is related (Elliott, 1982b; Galyen, 2005; Harris, 1993; Paul, 2010; Yarbrough, 2007). The incorporation of sight reading as a part of music education has become commonplace in many contexts; however, few devote significant rehearsal time to teaching it (Harris, 1993). Many teachers do not feel competent when teaching sight reading (Kuehne, 2007), which may make them insecure about teaching it, and contribute to their failure to include this type of training in their classrooms.

Sight reading is not exclusively a phenomenon encountered in traditional Western music, but has been a part of any culture that possesses music notation and literate musicians (Lehmann & McArthur, 2002). Musical notation systems are highly culture-specific, and extensive
knowledge is needed on the part of the performer to be able to accurately interpret the symbols on the page. In the 19th century, performers began the tradition of performing well-rehearsed, existing pieces by other composers. Before this time, solo and ensemble performers were accustomed to playing new scores at first sight and extensive rehearsals like those of today were uncommon (Lehmann & McArthur, 2002).

The early 20th century brought the inclusion of band in public high schools (Mark & Gary, 2007). While school bands were growing in number, the professional bands were rapidly disappearing. Successful touring bands such as those of Patrick Gilmore and John Philip Sousa stimulated and enthused crowds for years, but during the time surrounding the turn of the century these bands decreased in popularity. By 1920, most of the professional touring bands had succumbed to the simultaneous attacks of the jazz era, development of the automobile, the motion picture, and the phonograph. The great concert bands stopped touring and the village bandstands stood empty (Holz, 1962).

The decline in professional bands and the increase in public school bands led to the development of national music contests and evaluations (Birge, 1928). After the decline of the professional bands, promotional ventures in the instrument manufacturing industry stimulated the growth of school band contests, led to the organization of school bands, and introduced instruction manual and class instruction books (Holz, 1962). By 1923, a number of things had happened which made the national band contest movement possible. A large number of school bands had come into existence, a committee of dedicated music supervisors was created to focus on school band, and the band instrument industry was in desperate need of increased sales. The combination of these factors brought about the beginning of the nation’s band contests that were initially sponsored by band instrument manufacturers (Holz, 1962).
The inclusion of the sight-reading component throughout the early years of band contests points to its role as a cornerstone in music education. The first national band contest was held in 1923, and by 1927, large ensemble sight reading had been incorporated into the evaluation of all bands. C. M. Tremaine, the secretary of the National Bureau for Advancement in Music, referred to adjudicated sight reading as the “thing that one particularly dislikes” even for the best-trained bands, yet encouraged it to improve general musicianship, and to decrease an undue amount of drilling on contest music (Moore, 1972, pg. 236). Sight reading started as a test that would be given to determine the first-place winner of a contest in the event of a tie, and morphed into a requirement of all competing bands (Bianco, 1970).

Musical literacy encompasses active music-making as well as musical understanding that comes from experiential knowledge. The concept of musical literacy is an evolutionary process from which students need varied opportunities for growth (McCuster, 2001). Sight reading can be considered one tool or resource in the developmental process of musical literacy.

Mursell (1956) wrote of the importance of music literacy: “In a program planned to promote musical growth, the development of music reading ability will proceed as the development of a progressively clearer, fuller, and better understanding of music” (p. 129).

Music reading is a tool; those who can read can do more with music than those who cannot. Reading music means learning to understand certain symbols and notations, which in turn allows one to create a more musical response, a deeper feeling, and ultimately a more satisfying musical statement (Mursell, 1956). Most musicians in the Western tradition sight read to some extent. Their level of sight reading can be determined by the difference between their ability to perform a musical example at first sight, and their ability to perform that same musical example after rehearsal. The performance product of an outstanding sight reader will show little change.
between the sight-reading example and the rehearsed example (Lehmann & McArthur, 2002).

The teaching of music reading has an essential place in a developmental program of music education. The development of music reading ability is a continuous process, starting at the very beginnings of the musical education of a child. Music reading should always be treated as one special component of a continuous sequence of musical growth (Mursell, 1956).

Every activity in the music program can and should contribute to the development of reading ability, because every activity can contribute to the development of musical understanding. The development of music reading ability propels the learner on to more significant and mature levels of achievement. Independent, rapid music reading comes from understanding. One must establish sequences that are comprehensible, and work slowly and, most importantly, thoughtfully. Mursell advocated for a whole-part-whole pattern of learning, and spoke to musical understanding as evolving rather than accumulating. He suggests that factual knowledge about music will be gleaned from songs that students have learned, and enjoyed. Each time they sing a particular song, they will do something different with it, learning more each time about the pieces of the musical language. Many music teachers follow the advice of Mursell (1956), which suggests that if we want to establish skilled and rapid music reading, there is only one way to do it, and that is by extensive music reading. A program with an emphasis on musical understanding, and therefore, music reading, will certainly produce solid musical growth (Mursell, 1956).

Each year, large group instrumental and choral adjudicated events occur throughout the United States. While the debate of their benefit continues, music associations and music education associations in forty-nine states sponsor music contests (Paul, 2010). Researchers have regarded music sight reading as a standard and accepted method for evaluating both ensembles
and individual students in the band program (Gaylen, 2005; Harris, 1993; Stebleton, 1987). The results of the nationwide sight-reading overview by Paul (2010) show fewer than half of the state-sponsored music contests require assessment in sight reading, suggesting that the opinions of the previous research might not be aligned with the state adjudicated contest requirements. Music educators have built a case for the importance of sight reading in the classroom and in adjudication.

Demorest (2001) also discussed the importance of teaching musical literacy as a means to musical independence, and asks questions about the difference between belief and practice. A few factors and obstacles have been outlined that may influence a director’s decision to include or not include sight-reading instruction in their curriculum and assessment (Demorest, 2001). The first factor suggests the educational phrase “teachers teach as they have been taught” may play an important role (Demorest, 2001, p. 1). If sight reading was not a part of the teacher’s own instruction, likely it will not be a part of the curriculum they design for their own classroom. The second factor looks at the possibility that the teacher might not be a good sight reader. Painful memories and their own insecurities might keep the teacher from presenting this skill to their students.

Demorest (2001) also refers to two mythical obstacles to which directors indicate when choosing whether to include sight-reading instruction in rehearsals and assessments. The first obstacle is the belief that sight reading is boring. This myth can be addressed in the presentation of the material. When sight reading is presented as an important and attainable skill that is central to musicianship, it can become an exciting and challenging part of rehearsal. The second obstacle is the perception that there is not enough time. Although time for sight-reading instruction may seem wasteful in the short term, consistent instruction will become a time saver
and can actually improve the level of performance in the ensemble (Demorest, 2001).

Beyond the requirements of external standards, there are more fundamental reasons to teach sight reading. The confidence and independence that come with developing one’s personal musicianship are something that last a lifetime (Demorest, 2001, pg. 3). With an understanding of the integral nature of sight reading to music education, we can now move forward to a more detailed discovery of the status of sight-reading practices throughout the United States.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the state of sight reading in band performance evaluations and classrooms across the nation. This study in sight reading sought to identify baseline knowledge, which explored the traditions and procedures, attitudes of directors, and event experiences in high school large group band performance evaluations. Knowledge in the area of sight-reading instruction and evaluation is essential to band directors, teachers in institutions of higher education, and organizations designed to support music education as they embark on their quest to provide meaningful musical experiences for students in their classrooms.

In many areas, statements can be quoted as research suggests, or this study shows; however, in this instance, this type of foundational information in instrumental large group sight reading is limited. Musicians generally agree that the ability to read music at sight is an essential skill for the instrumental performer (Elliott, 1982b); however, Carey (1959) states that despite this consensus of importance, within public school music, there is perhaps no single problem which is as universal in scope as that of sight reading. Elliott (1982b) reaffirms that thought, and stated there are likely few areas of music teaching about which so little is known and much conflicting research exists. Therefore, this is an important study that has provided baseline
knowledge from which future studies can be developed.

Sight reading has become a standard evaluative device in the school band program in many states. One of the ways the value of sight reading is shown is by its inclusion at state-sponsored ensemble contests (Hayward & Gromko, 2009). On the individual level, band directors often use sight reading as a tool when auditioning members for seat assignments, grade determination, or other discriminative purposes (Harris, 1991). The importance of sight-reading ability has also been evidenced by the growing body of research on individual sight reading (Gregory, 1972).

From the large group performance ensemble perspective, there is a similarity in requirement of instrumental and vocal sight reading in the states across the nation. The number of states that require this type of assessment is almost equal between choral and instrumental groups. Ensemble sight reading is required of school bands participating in music contests in 24 states (Paul, 2010), while 25 states require choral sight reading (Norris, 2004). Ratings for ensemble sight-reading achievement, both instrumental and choral, are often assigned and factor into the evaluative device for the school band or choir program.

In large ensemble band rehearsals, sight reading has become a traditional part of our warm-up, and is more focused during the months and weeks leading up to large group adjudicated events. Instruction of sight reading in my classroom consists of meagerly running through the process that is implemented in the adjudication room. Students are expected to improve achievement in this area based on repetition of exercises as opposed to learned practices and techniques.

Pedagogues and researchers regard sight-reading ability as an important component of a complete instrumental music education, however, results of the study by Paul (2010) suggest that sight-reading assessment at large group band contests throughout the country may not reflect
these opinions. Previous research, specifically that of Paul (2010) which provides a general survey of the sight-reading requirements at festivals in each state, leads to a number of open-ended thoughts for future research. The purpose of this study was to expand on previous research, generate data that will assist in the understanding of adjudicated sight reading from a national perspective, and pave the way for future studies in this area.

Research Questions

A combination of my own experiences as a band director and knowledge grounded in the literature has led me to ask many questions about sight reading. This study will focus on large ensemble, band sight reading in both the rehearsal and adjudicated performance room. Four research questions were used to guide this study.

1. What procedures are common to high school band sight-reading events in the United States?

2. How do high school directors prepare themselves and their bands for sight-reading evaluation?

3. What are band director attitudes toward sight-reading evaluation, and how do they influence instructional practices?

4. What experiences of sight-reading evaluation influence participant views in high school band settings?

Investigation of these questions occurred in a variety of formats, including individual investigation, survey, and interview. The structure of this study included an Internet search pertaining to question number one above. Following the initial investigation, a mixture of a survey to provide quantitative data and an interview to provide qualitative data have occurred for the examination of the remaining questions. Utilizing multiple data sources and analysis strategies provided the comprehensive approach needed for complete exploration of the topics relevant to the research questions.
Need for the Study

This study is likely significant to band directors, sight-reading adjudicators, professional organizations, and the general music education research community. Investigation of the adjudicated event sight-reading procedures and logistics will provide much information for event organizers to consider. It is my assumption each state does not run their sight-reading adjudication in the same manner. With knowledge of how each state manages their sight-reading adjudication, people making assessment decisions in each state might be able to learn from another. This could provide an answer to the dilemmas of sight reading in individual states. Therefore, this knowledge can contribute to learning best practices of classrooms and sight-reading evaluation within band settings in the United States.

Inquiry will be focused in several areas: first, on the training and preparation of teachers to teach sight reading, and second, teacher training and preparation to sight read themselves, while teaching and conducting. These lines of inquiry will provide research within a topic that does not have a broad base. Further investigation on how teachers prepare their students to sight read will add to the limited body of literature on large group sight reading that already exists (Paul, 2010; Harris, 1993; Orman, Yarbrough, Neill, & Whitaker 2007; & Casey, 1991).

The body of research referencing individuals and sight reading is plentiful (Austin, 1988; Elliott, 1982a; Gregory, 1972; Hayward & Gromko, 1995; Pierce, 1992; Stebleton, 2009). Research devoted to large group band sight reading, however, is quite limited, particularly in the area of adjudicated sight reading. Although substantial research has been conducted in the area of individual sight reading, only a few studies have attempted to measure and evaluate factors affecting ensemble sight-reading performances (Harris, 1993). Studies regarding large group

Norris (2004) wrote an overview of vocal sight singing at nationwide adjudicated events. A replication of that study, focusing on instrumental groups was completed by Paul (2010). The general focus of the literature ranges from the effectiveness of notational variations to instruction strategies (Orman et al., 2007), but little emphasis has been placed on sight reading from the perspective of the large instrumental ensemble director.

As a band director, I have felt ill-prepared to assist my students in sight-reading adjudication, and feel that there is much more that can be done to ready directors for this experience. The experience of adjudicated sight reading requires directors to not only have the knowledge to teach their students to sight read, but also to be prepared to read and talk through the musical score, predict potential musical pitfalls, and guide their students through the reading of the piece. Regular sight reading in the rehearsal room is only a part of the educational needs when it comes to evaluation in sight reading as a part of a contest or festival. This study will provide background in both rehearsal sight reading and evaluated sight reading.

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) made a strong statement of the importance of sight reading by its inclusion in The National Standards for Music Education (MENC, 1994). These standards of musical achievement have been set for public school students. This publication confirmed that the teaching of sight reading is a recommended component of the music curriculum at many levels, including high school. The fifth content standard states that students in grades nine through twelve be able to read and notate music. Achievement objectives are then listed for each content standard for students who participate in an instrumental or choral ensemble. The achievement objective that is correlated with the fifth
content standard states: students must sight read, accurately and expressively, music with a difficulty level of three, on a scale of one to six (MENC, 1994).

Both Norris (2004), and Paul (2010) suggest that the assessment of sight reading at large group adjudicated events is not consistent with research showing a generally positive attitude about the importance of sight-reading instruction, nor in accordance with the expectations for instruction and assessment outlined in the National Standards (MENC, 1994). Norris’ (2004) nationwide overview of sight singing requirements at choral festivals show that only 25 states in the United States require a sight-reading component in their assessment. Likewise, the overview of sight reading in band adjudications by Paul (2010) assert that only 24 of the states require sight reading as a portion of their assessment. Literacy is a necessary component of musical independence, which is one of the main goals of music education (Gregory, 1972). Consequently, it would seem notable that so few high school band and choir festivals across the United States require assessment in sight reading, a skill which most teachers and directors consider essential for autonomous musicians (Paul, 2010).

Choral sight reading is commonly known as sight singing. Although, in concept, the procedures of sight reading and sight singing are the same in music performance evaluations, much variation exists in the manner in which it is taught and executed. Research surrounding the inclusion of choral sight singing in a high school rehearsal setting is plentiful (Demorest, 2001 & 2004; May, 1993; Norris, 2004). With similar questions, problems, and concerns in existence in the band sight-reading area of music education, the need for research in the band sight-reading area is tremendous. Research in choral sight singing is much more extensive than that of band
sight reading, making it necessary to include some choral sight singing research in my presentation of information (Demorest, 2004; Kuehne, 2007; May, 1993; Norris, 2004; Stamer, 2006).

Although there have been several sight-reading areas addressed in the research, this particular topic, that of large ensemble adjudicated sight reading, is lacking. Any director should benefit from information on this topic. All directors should be sight reading with their students in their classroom on a regular basis. Directors who regularly participate in these types of events with their students will benefit from this knowledge base with a broader perspective of sight-reading assessment across the nation. Background research in preparation for this study has exposed the imbalance of inquiry when it comes to individual versus large group as well as choral versus instrumental sight reading. The whole of this study will add to the existing literature on instrumental sight reading, pick up where others have left off, and finally, provide a foundation for future research.

Overview of the Study

For this study, I used a mixed methods approach, which allows the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative paradigms to emerge. The central premise of such research is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Utilizing portions of both models will help me find the answers to the research questions in this study; therefore, mixed methods is an appropriate choice. There is a need for both a general understanding of the state of sight reading in the United States, as well as a more detailed recognition of directors’ thoughts and feelings regarding sight reading.
In combining these methodologies, the mixed methods researcher hopes to lessen the weaknesses of either approach or view the problem from several vantage points (Fitzpatrick, 2008). For the purposes of this study, both the quantitative and qualitative approaches will be used. The quantitative phase will provide a large-scale view of sight reading in many areas of the country. The qualitative phase will provide a detailed, in-depth understanding of the experiences of large ensemble adjudicated sight reading.

To gain national perspective, reaching a large number of band directors from a wide geographical area was imperative to the purposes of this study. The quantitative portion of the method will fulfill this requirement. Following up with select participants for a more thorough, in-depth look at their attitudes about sight reading is also an essential goal of this research. The rich, narrative details that came from this form of inquiry are essential to our perception of the participants’ feelings about sight reading. Qualitative data from interviews will provide a more detailed understanding of the numerical evidence, and give us information that numbers alone cannot show.

Mixed methods can be broadly defined as research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both quantitative and qualitative approaches or methods in a single study or inquiry (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). The mixed methods mode of inquiry has evolved to the point where it has become the third major research approach or research paradigm. Mixed methods research fills the notion of a paradigm that can be sufficiently flexible, permeable, and multilayered to reflect the reality of social science research in the 21st century (Denscombe, 2008). Mixed methods research is increasingly being used today in many disciplines such as sociology, psychology, health, and education.
This study falls into the complimentary framework of Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989). The complimentary framework seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration, and clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method. Occurring in two distinct interactive phases, the Sequential Explanatory Design (SED) will be used in this study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The mixed methods SED consists of two distinct phases: quantitative, followed by qualitative (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this design, a researcher first collects and analyzes the quantitative (numeric) data. The qualitative (text) data are collected and analyzed second in the sequence and help explain, or elaborate on, the quantitative results obtained in the first phase. The second, qualitative phase builds on the first, quantitative phase, and the two phases are connected in the intermediate stage of the study. The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and their subsequent analysis provide a general understanding of the research problem. The qualitative data and their analysis refine and explain those statistical results by exploring participants’ views in more depth.

Explanatory design is the most straightforward of the mixed methods designs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The design will start with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. This design should be used when the researcher wants to follow up the quantitative data with subsequent qualitative research. Once both types of data have been collected and analyzed, broader conclusions and discussion will develop from the combination of results of both data types. Data of varying form will provide responses to the overall purpose and questions of this study.
Scope of the Study

The inclusion of all states that incorporate sight reading is paramount for the purposes of this study. The initial framework of this inquiry included sight reading in all 50 states of the United States. Gaining a national perspective on the nature of sight reading, both in rehearsal rooms and in adjudication from the viewpoint of the director, is the primary goal of this study.

Paul (2010) conducted an overview of nationwide sight-reading requirements at band adjudications, and showed that only 30 of the 50 states offer evaluation in sight reading as a part of their contest setting (Paul, 2010). Twenty-four of the states require sight reading as a component of their assessment, the other six states offer sight reading as an optional, but not required, part of the overall band adjudication. Therefore, parameters for this study were set to include high school band directors who participate in the large group adjudicated event in these states. Given that the research points to 30 states offering sight reading, only band directors from those states will be included in the study.

Other instrumental and choral directors are outside the scope of this study. Although there are a few states that include sight-reading adjudication at the middle school level, they will not be incorporated in this study, as this particular line of inquiry pertains only to high school directors and their ensembles. Some directors may teach across grade levels or disciplines. While this may impact their answers to the survey questions, their role as a high school band director will allow them to be included in the study.

Regular public and private schools have the option to be included in this study. Alternative, special education, and vocational schools, which typically do not have cohesive arts programs, fall outside the scope of this investigation. The type of school will be determined by the listing from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) database.
Definition of Terms

The following terms have been defined in relation to the current study. Each word or phrase has been noted, along with an operational definition. This section has been provided to assure the clear understanding of each topic by all readers. The nature of this study incorporates participants and readers from a large geographic area, from various backgrounds, and varied prior knowledge. One cannot assume that the same terms are used in each state, or even for each event. To provide a sense of clarity, the terms below have been defined for the purposes of this study.

*Adjudicated performance* – A performance or portion of a performance that is evaluated by an adjudicator. For the purposes of this study, adjudicated performances will occur in settings with a large ensemble/group. An adjudicator can also be known as an evaluator or judge.

*Adjudicated events* – An event created to provide an opportunity for performance that is evaluated by an adjudicator or judge. These events are created for the purposes of assessing individuals, small ensembles, or large ensembles. An adjudicated event can also be known as a festival, music performance assessment, or performance evaluation.

*Attitude* – In this study, attitude will be defined as an abstract concept based on beliefs, which are deeply held by an individual. Attitude determines if a person will be inclined toward a certain behavior or turned away from it (von Kampen, 2003).

*Festival* – An event created to provide an opportunity for performance that is evaluated by an adjudicator or judge. These events are created for the purposes of evaluating individuals, small ensembles (chamber groups), or large ensembles (bands, orchestras, choirs). A festival can also be known as an adjudicated event, music performance assessment, or performance evaluation.

*Large group* – A musical ensemble that is comprised of many musicians playing a variety of instruments, and has a specific name. Names of these ensembles might include wind ensemble, symphonic band or concert band. This may also be called a large ensemble.

*MENC* – Music Educators National Conference: The National Association for Music Education, used for references prior to 2011.
Music performance assessment – An event created to provide an opportunity for performance that is evaluated by an adjudicator or judge. These events are created for the purposes of evaluating individuals, small ensembles, or large ensembles. A music performance assessment can also be known as an adjudicated event, festival, or performance evaluation.

NAfME – MENC changed their name to the National Association for Music Education on September 1, 2011.

Performance evaluations – An event created to provide an opportunity for performance that is evaluated by an adjudicator or judge. These events are created for the purposes of evaluating individuals, small ensembles, or large ensembles. A performance evaluation can also be known as a festival, or music performance assessment.

Ratings – Categories of assessment which ensembles earn for their performance in an adjudicated event. Ratings are given by the adjudicators and are typically based on a criterion reference sheet. Superior, excellent, good, fair, and poor are often examples of the ratings.

Sight reading – The performance of instrumental music with little preparation and no prior knowledge of the musical example in front of the musician. Sight reading can occur in many settings including: individual practice, individual assessments, large ensemble rehearsals, assessment, and evaluations. In this context, sight reading will refer to large group settings.

Sight-reading evaluation – In this context, I have referred to sight-reading evaluation in two different ways. One is an event created to provide an opportunity for performance that is evaluated by an adjudicator or judge. The other reference to sight-reading evaluation is in relation to the assessment, and evaluation of the quality of an ensemble’s sight-reading ability.

Sight singing – The performance of instrumental music with little preparation and no prior knowledge of the musical example in front of the musician. Sight reading can occur in many settings including: individual practice, individual assessments, large ensemble rehearsals, assessment, and evaluations. In this context, sight reading will refer to large group settings.

The nature of this study takes us to many areas of the United States. In doing so, terminology will vary in different areas of the country. The previous listing of terms will assist the reader in ease of comprehension throughout this study. The terms listed above are integral parts to the current study; therefore, a clear understanding of each definition is imperative.
Summary

Successful sight reading shows several components of music literacy that may contribute to lifelong music making, which teachers and researchers have historically considered to be a primary goal of music education (Birge, 1928; Galyen, 2005). Although researchers have found that music educators believe instrumental and vocal sight reading are an important part of music education (Norris, 2004; Paul, 2010; Orman et al., 2007; & MENC, 1994), there is concern regarding their lack of presence and use at adjudicated events throughout the country (Norris, 2004; Paul, 2010). This study will use the explanatory design of the mixed methods methodology to investigate the effectiveness of the traditions and procedures, attitudes of directors, and event experiences in high school band large group adjudicated events across the nation.

Following Chapter 1, the introduction to the study, Chapter 2 contains a review of literature on topics closely related to sight reading and each of the research questions. Chapter 3 contains discussion of the methodology used in this study, including a rationale for using mixed methods procedures. Data, both quantitative and qualitative, will be presented in Chapters 4 and 5. The explanatory design of this mixed methods study presents the data individually, not concurrently. In Chapter 6, results from data will provide the opportunity for discussion and conclusions, including data analysis, findings, and implications for further research.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

A careful look at previous research in sight reading and sight singing is a necessary precursor to the current investigation. Research studies included in this review of literature were chosen for their contributions to the area of sight reading or sight singing. The review also allows the reader to learn the need for additional research to be done specifically in instrumental adjudicated sight reading. Studies presented in this chapter include only a few regarding large group instrumental sight reading. The existing body of sight-reading literature does not contain more than just a few studies of this type.

A variety of topics within sight reading will address both instrumental and vocal adjudicated sight reading, teaching techniques, predictors of sight-reading ability and large ensemble sight-reading preparation. Their direct relation to the research questions, their contribution to the overall body of existing literature, and their relevance in background understanding for this study have determined sections of the review of literature. The inclusion of studies in the area of sight singing is due to their impact on the topics covered in this study. Literature on choral sight singing is more plentiful than research dealing with the large instrumental ensembles. The sight singing aspect of this literature review can help one see the areas of large ensemble sight reading that have yet to be studied or addressed.

Experiences of both the teacher and the student are relevant to in this study. For the purposes of this inquiry, adjudicated sight-reading experience includes all aspects of sight-reading adjudication, both during and after the event. The final section of this chapter will look at student and teacher experiences in the contest/festival setting.
Large Group Adjudicated Sight Reading

This portion of the literature will cover pertinent studies related to details within the adjudication/festival setting. Although there is an ongoing debate regarding the benefits and detriments of participating in these events, studies in this section have been limited to those regarding the student and director experiences as well as the practicalities of ratings and time usage.

Ratings

Identifying correlations between festival sight-reading ratings and types of instructional behaviors and techniques exhibited by band directors in the sight-reading room was the basis of the study by Harris (1991). Participants included middle, junior high, junior/senior high, and senior high school bands from four districts of the Florida Bandmasters Association. Data were gathered via real time observation techniques because the use of audio or video recording was not permitted. A special form was created to assist the researcher in note taking throughout the observation time. During the sight-reading event, instructions and comments, both verbal and non-verbal, given by the directors were annotated on this specially designed observation form. The form included options for comments in six different categories: expressive, general, notation, pedagogical, rhythm, and style.

Analysis indicated that junior high and middle school directors whose ensembles received a superior sight-reading rating tended to allow fewer student questions, give fewer instructions to individuals, and use less silent study time than directors whose ensembles received less than superior. Directors of high school ensembles showed more use of ensemble singing and more use of expressive instructions. Those directors also gave more directions than those whose bands earned less than a superior rating, who tended to give more general and individual instructions.
Differences between instructions given and school type indicated that middle school directors tended to give more pedagogical instructions, use more section-targeted instructions, and make greater use of simulation techniques than high school directors. High school directors tended to use more group-targeted instructions, ensemble singing, individual study time, and have a greater percentage of members taking private lessons than directors with ensembles that earned less than a superior rating (Harris, 1991).

Sorrells (1992) found that the majority of band directors who received superior ratings in sight reading at festivals used a guided model technique. This technique involved a combination of verbal instruction and aural singing, humming, or chanting by the band director with active participation by the students, who clap or vocalize rhythms or finger the notes. Of the bands receiving superior ratings in sight reading, 85% used the guided model technique with active student participation, while only 15% did not include student participation. Of the bands receiving a good rating, 25% used active student participation, and 75% used no student participation. Other characteristics of bands rated as superior included attentive students, precise and organized instructions from the band director, and wise use of sight-reading study time (Galyen, 2005).

A study by Hash (2012) was designed to examine the procedures for analyzing ratings of large group festivals. Data came from senior division concert band contests in South Carolina. High ratings can boost morale, attitude and interest, just as low scores can result in reduced student retention, or negative attitudes toward the program. High inter-rater reliability existed in sight reading, averaging .91 for Cronbach alpha. The high reliability in sight-reading ratings is because the adjudicators listened to the same selections multiple times, which allowed them to become more familiar with the selection and then more effectively compare one band to another.
Overall results showed that ensembles whose directors programmed easier repertoire earned lower ratings than ensembles that performed music at higher levels of difficulty.

Pre-Adjudication Time Usage

Band directors’ time usage during sight-reading pre-adjudication was the focus of the Orman et al. (2007) study. Analysis was completed on the seven and a half minutes that each director/ensemble has in sight reading at a contest/festival. All directors used the entire time allotted to them. The complete analysis shows that directors spent 55% of their allotted time presenting musical information, such as defining who has the melody, and who has the background. Following closely at 40% was time devoted to directions and counting music for the students.

Results from the Orman et al., (2007) study reveal that overall, directors spent 25% of the allotted time talking about or modeling rhythms exclusively or in conjunction with pitch. The results of the study do not indicate if the amount of time spent on rhythm is enough time or not enough time. The majority of directors elected to deliver some of this rhythmic information along with tonal information in the form of sight-reading portions of the music to their band. All directors addressed tempo through the course of their analysis of the piece with the students.

Predictors of Sight-Reading Ability

The purpose of a study by Elliott (1982a) was to investigate the relationships among instrumental sight-reading ability and seven selected variables. Analysis specifically included which variables could best, singly or in combination, account for the variance found in sight-reading scores of college instrumental performers as measured by the Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale. The seven variables included: (1) technical proficiency, (2) sight singing ability, (3) rhythm reading ability, (4) cumulative grade point average, (5) cumulative music
theory grade point average, (6) cumulative jury grade point average, and (7) major instrument grade point average.

Data analysis, using a multiple correlation, and discussion pointed to a few major threads. A strong positive correlation ($r = .81$) exists between wind instrumentalists’ general sight-reading ability and the ability to sight read rhythm patterns. Rhythm reading ability is the single best predictor of wind instrumentalists’ sight-reading scores. The best predictors of wind instrumentalists’ sight-reading performance scores combine the performance jury and the rhythm reading score (Elliott, 1982b). The findings of this study do not show any direct cause and effect relationships between rhythm reading and sight-reading ability; however, these findings support that regular practice of reading rhythm patterns is likely to be beneficial for improving sight-reading ability.

Ciepluch (1988) investigated the correlations between sight-reading achievement in instrumental music performance, as determined by the Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale. Each of the following factors were included: field-dependence/field-independence, sensory mode preference, musical aptitude, grade point average, math achievement, and reading achievement. Participants included all students from one high school band program. Data analysis showed a strong relationship between sight reading and all the tested factors. The study did not find any significant differences between sight-reading achievement in instrumental music performance and the sensory mode preferences of listening and activity.

Gromko (1994) stated that skilled music reading could be predicted by a combination of cognitive abilities, including reading comprehension in the language arts, comprehension of mathematical concepts, spatial orientation and visualization, visual perception, and audiation of tonal and rhythmic patterns. The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship among
music sight reading as measured by the *Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale*, and tonal and rhythmic audiation, visual field articulation, spatial orientation and visualization, and academic achievement in math concepts and reading comprehension.

Results of the study showed that music sight-reading ability can be predicted by a combination of cognitive abilities. The study also indicates that musical intelligence draws on, and enhances development in, other domains bringing evidence in support of transfer effects of music education. Instead of individuals transferring from one intelligence to the next, findings of this study suggest the notion that intelligence is broad-based, fluid, and multifaceted.

The purpose of the Townsend (1992) study was to investigate relationships between sight-reading ability of college freshmen wind instrumentalists and variables in three categories: music experience, band experience, and music aptitude. Data were collected from 92 undergraduate university students. Three judges rated student sight-reading performances using the Sight-Reading Score Form.

This study revealed significant relationships between sight reading and private instruction, and sight reading and number of selections performed/sight read by the high school marching and concert bands. Results of this study led to the recommendation that students be encouraged to study privately. Discussion within the study also suggested that band directors present students with varied music to perform and sight read on a regular basis.

**Teaching Sight Reading**

Although sight reading has been going on in school band programs since the early 20th century, the methodical process of teaching sight reading as a skill has gained much focus over the past half a century. Concepts in both individual and ensemble sight reading have been developed to assist teachers and students alike in the development of this skill. Although
techniques being used to teach sight reading are evolving over time, some of them that were
developed in the mid- to late-21st century are still applicable and used today. For the purposes of
this study, the emphasis will be placed on instructional materials, practices developed for
teaching sight reading within the band, and potential sight-reading performance errors.

Methods

Garafolo (1976) stated that teaching sight-reading skill in performing ensembles is a
seriously neglected aspect of instrumental music at the secondary school level. Every time a
composition is read in a rehearsal for the first time the ensemble is sight reading and it should be
treated as such. In this pedagogical article, the author suggested that the approach for each of
those sight-reading opportunities should mirror the sight reading that is used when groups
participate in an adjudicated event. First, allow the students a few minutes to silently analyze the
music following the guides of rhythm, pitch, style, and expression. Second, the director should
walk through the composition with the students, point out typical problems, meters and tempo
changes, key changes, climaxes, and repeat signs. The final step is to sight read straight through
the piece without stopping, if possible. With the assumption that students can recognize their
own mistakes, Garafolo (1976) suggested directors ask the students to analyze their own
mistakes to determine how they can become better sight readers on their own.

Kelly (1997) investigated the effects of conducting instruction on beginning band students’
individual and group rhythmic reading performance. One hundred fifty-one fifth grade band
students were the participants in the study. Participants were divided into groups where some
groups received instruction in conducting, and some did not.

A possibility exists for students’ individual rhythm reading abilities to improve at a faster
pace when they are exposed to conducting instructional activities. The instruction in conducting
appeared to have a greater effect on the large ensemble performances than it did on individuals in the ensembles. Suggestions were made to music educators searching for new or additional methods to teach music concepts. Some suggestions involved the inclusion of conducting as a part of the instructional process.

A three-fold sight-reading approach for directors to use with their students was suggested by Ranucci (1976). In this pedagogical article, the author suggested a series of steps allowed the student to have a process each time they are about to sight read. These steps included: look at the staff, note the key and sense the distance between adjacent notes. Then listen, in the mind, to the expected intervals. Finally, sing or hum the interval, assuming that eventually all three steps will merge into one and become a better part of their sight-reading experience. Ranucci (1976) reminded directors that sight-reading music is like reading words; when you first learned to read, you were preoccupied with letters, then words, then sentences, but eventually, you can read a book without much thought.

Pierce (1992) tested the effects of four learning procedures: clapping, counting, clapping and counting simultaneously, and sizzling, a technique of hissing with appropriate articulation, rhythm, and dynamics (Paul, 2010; Galyen, 2005), on the rhythm-reading skills of band students. Results show no significant differences between the effectiveness of each method in regard to teaching rhythm; however, there were significant differences in the amount of time required for each student to learn the rhythms. According to Pierce (1992), the sizzle method required the least amount of time. Pierce (1992) also found most rhythmic reading errors occurred when the learning and the performance tempi were different.

Instrumental ensemble directors continue to debate how working on instructional exercises enhances musical performances. Price, Blanton, and Parrish (1998) ask questions about teaching
fundamentals through the use of music. According to their research, they found opposing sides of the issue. Many directors focus on a musical fundamentals approach, consisting of technical drill, usually drawn from ensemble method books. The idea is that repetition of technical exercises develops skills and knowledge that are then applied to the performance of music. On the other side of the issue, some directors advocate what would be called the music literacy method. This approach uses music taken directly from works being prepared for performances as teaching tools, and the music becomes the source for the drills and exercises.

In their study, Price et al. (1998) made comparisons between the common practice in band of employing method books and the use of music excerpts as a teaching tool for the development of music performance skills. Results of the study suggest that students using music excerpts were no weaker in sight-reading ability than those using drills, had higher performance achievement, and indicated more positive attitudes than those who used method books.

Music performance results favored the musical excerpts, given the additional time spent, in place of exercises. Students in the excerpt groups showed more positive attitudes about their musical experiences. It is common practice in ensemble settings for directors to use exercises devised to teach specific skills, in the hope that students will transfer these skills to the music currently being prepared and to other music in the future. The results of this study do not appear to support the common practice of using exercises devised to develop music reading and performance proficiency (Price et al., 1998). The authors recommended that directors reconsider the reliance on musically isolated exercises when using the music at hand as instructional material may be more efficient and functional.

In a study by Neill (2004), 76 secondary-level ensemble directors were surveyed. Of those surveyed, 75% of the directors reported teaching sight reading from August to May, spending 12
and a half minutes per day sight reading. A majority (67%) of directors reported testing their students individually throughout the year, although the number of individual assessments varied from one to eight times per year. Directors reported spending time teaching procedures involved with a large group sight-reading adjudication; it is unclear how much time, if any, was spent on instructing students in individual procedural strategies.

**Ensemble Preparation**

Casey (1988) identified practices of successful teachers that could serve as part of a curricular model for preparing students to sight read successfully and improving a sight-reading performance by the conductor. The study utilized observational and interview techniques to gather data on conductor behavior and student participation for contest sight reading. Videotapes were made of each conductor in a simulated sight-reading session. The *Verbal Topic Information Form* was designed to categorize all conductor comments made to students prior to sight reading. Another document, the *Conductor Activity Information Form*, recorded conductor behavior during the sight reading itself.

Each conductor was interviewed following the sight-reading session. The interview contained questions concerning the means the conductor used of organizing time during the sight-reading session, communicating and implementing solutions to technical problems found in the sight-reading music, and devising curricular techniques to prepare students for the contest sight-reading session. Based on the recorded observations and interviews, a composite conductor profile was constructed which encompassed the procedures that a model teacher or conductor might employ to prepare students for contest sight reading. Also, the profile provided model procedures for time management and effective problem solving in the restricted time frames allowed at district and state music competitions.
Conclusions showed most conductors implemented an approach based on fundamentals and topics, mirroring the approach used in regular rehearsal practices. Conductors who chose to not use this style did so because it did not reflect their regular rehearsal style, and their students did not require a review of fundamental techniques. Conductors who have matured with each year of experience consistently redefined their expectations, demanded more responsibility from their students, and expected their students to perform at higher musical levels. Conductors with this mindset achieved greater results, and created increased student confidence while promoting and nurturing growth in musical maturity for both the student and the conductor.

Most directors approach sight reading as they would in a contest or festival setting. Time is divided into three main parts: an overview, group study, and student questions. Using this sight-reading procedure had obvious benefits for training the students by mirroring the evaluation setting. Benefits included: (1) time limits were set, (2) students were forced to examine their parts quickly, (3) the director’s comments were given, and listened to intently by the students, and (4) students could ask questions regarding the piece before they played it. Emulating the contest scenario minimizes both student and director anxiety regarding the actual sight-reading performance (Casey, 1991). Although there are procedures that teachers can use to aid students in the learning process, nothing replaces regular, systematic exposure to sight reading.

Casey (1991) discussed the responsibility of directors for the sight-reading process. The most critical factor of sight reading is the instructor’s ability to identify problems, discuss solutions with the students, demonstrate the solution in the shortest amount of time possible and drill the students in those specific areas. From the perspective of the director, management of
those few minutes of time requires that the director break down problems into small,
understandable pieces and provide quick, simple solutions.

Instructors refer often to prior works performed, previous rehearsal experiences or similar
problems found in the sight-reading music. During the overview period, it is the first
responsibility of the director to increase mental awareness in preparation for the physical tasks to
follow. Calling attention to specific technical problems, or asking direct questions, will
accomplish this task. Casey (1991) identified five areas that need to be identified: key, meter,
style, tempo, and rhythm. Topics are not consistently addressed in the same order; however, the
previous five areas must always be covered during the overview time period. The purpose of the
overview is to call students’ attention to items that need to be looked at in the group study time.

Most teachers approached this task knowing that although a few of their students could
work through the established routine independently, most students could not. Directors felt
compelled to use a structured, topic-driven discussion method. The directors’ score analysis
procedures and use of time with the students is the most critical part of this portion of the sight-
reading process. According to Casey (1991), during the time period known as the group study,
problems related to unusual note patterns, repeated sections and endings, pauses in the music and
solo or group entrances were identified, demonstrated and drilled. Directors would find the
specific problem areas and repeat instructions for those areas as many as three times. Many
readily admitted that they had decided to focus on rhythmic problems rather than musical
interpretation. This decision was primarily based on previous experience.

Those who were concerned about the fundamental playing skills of their students
determined that missed notes and rhythms would negatively affect their sight-reading experience
more than poor balance, blend, intonation, or characteristic sound. In the final period of time, the
discussion session, directors allowed students to ask for more information on any problem areas and to identify any possible problem not yet discussed. Most questions focused on unfamiliar rhythmic patterns, cued notes, and correct fingerings. It is uncommon for students to not have questions, but in that case, instruction should continue with comments on style or overall integrity of the piece (Casey, 1991).

An alternative to the typical contest approach to sight-reading emerged during the Casey (1991) study. This newer and different approach has been termed the holistic technique. Use of this technique takes students beyond the typical rudimentary level. Rather than identifying technical problems, teachers sought to acquaint students with the broader features of the compositions. Examples include discussing the composer by referring to literature previously performed by the ensemble members, or by explaining the possible musical intents of the composers of the work. Fewer problem areas are covered, leaving much of the problem-solving responsibility to the student performers. Typically, members of the ensembles whose directors used this technique exhibited maturity of sound, mastery of skills, and independence as performers.

**Performance Errors**

The primary purpose of the Elliot (1982a) sight-reading study was to identify and categorize the sight-reading errors made by undergraduate wind instrumentalists. Possible error categories were pitch, rhythm, expression, and articulation. Thirty participants were given sight-reading exercises to perform. Performances were recorded and independently scored by two instrumental music education graduate students. Grades were based on the *Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale*. 
Findings showed that more than 61% of the errors were classified as rhythm errors. Further inspection of the data detailed that half of the rhythm errors were meter signature errors. Although the findings did not show a direct cause and effect relationship, the fact that nearly two-thirds of the errors committed were rhythm errors seemed to support the contention that rhythm reading might be the single most important component in the sight-reading process.

Gregory (1972) completed a study with the purpose of analyzing the effect of stimulus presentation variables on sight-reading errors with the hope that it might aid in the development of more effective and efficient instructional designs. Four representations of the rhythmic stimuli were presented. They included: 1) notation spaced conventionally regarding rhythm, 2) notation spaced conventionally regarding rhythm but with beats indicated, 3) notation spaced proportionally to its rhythmic duration, and 4) notation incorporating stemless note heads elongated in proportion to the notes’ duration.

Only seventh grade clarinet players were used for the study and were asked to perform the exercise. The Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale was used to evaluate the performances. Results of the study confirmed that the total number of errors made was not significantly affected by the spatial logic of the notation.

Sight Singing Instruction

Sight singing is the ability to vocally perform music at sight. It is important to include several key studies in this area for a few reasons. First, the conceptual foundation of musical literacy is the same in both choral and instrumental areas. Secondly, to this point, more literature is available in the area of ensemble choral sight singing than in ensemble sight reading. Lastly, some of the purposes and goals of this inquiry have been briefly discussed in the choral area. Researchers of choral sight singing have already explored several of the topics that the current
study is set to investigate, therefore the following studies have been included because they
specifically pertain to the purposes of this study.

In 2004, Steven Demorest wrote *Choral Sight Singing Practices: Revisiting a Web-Based Survey*. This article was developed to present the results of his choral sight singing practices survey. The survey was initially created for his book *Building Choral Excellence*, but the results of the survey were presented in the article in a limited form. The survey asked choral directors who were active sight singing teachers to identify how much time they spend teaching sight-singing, the methods or materials they prefer, and how they assess student progress. Results indicate significant differences based on whether sight singing was a part of contest participation, as well as preferences for certain pitch and rhythm reading systems, and a varied approach to assessment.

Kuehne (2007) examined materials and methods used while sight singing was taught in Florida middle school programs. Members of the Florida Vocal Association completed online or paper surveys. Data provided support for previous research and a more in-depth look at the instructional practices and techniques of the respondents.

Although most respondents agreed on the elements to be taught and the materials to be used, they often disagreed on the order in which those skills should be taught. These participants were influenced regarding teaching sight singing by several sources, including their own experiences, or other colleagues or mentors. Few participants claimed that their music education professors influenced their sight singing practices. The authors suggest this could indicate that music education professors are not covering the teaching of sight singing, or that there is so much to cover in only a few semesters that teaching about sight singing is limited, as are the rest of the class topics. Suggestions for further research included surveying a more diverse
population, and getting a larger sample, allowing for more generalizable conclusions.

May (1993) completed a sight singing study in Texas. The purpose of this research was to determine what methods, how much class time, and which printed materials are used by the high school choirs of Texas for melody reading/sight singing purposes. Selected mixed choirs from 927 high schools eligible for Texas contest participation were the participants. Directors were surveyed for information regarding which systems are used in their classrooms, how much time is spent on reading practices, and what books or materials are used for these purposes. Results of the survey found that movable do was the most-used system, the relative minor was most frequent used format. The largest percentages of time in rehearsal of sight singing were as follows: 55% practiced 31-36 weeks a year; 79% four to five days a week; 52% practice six to 10 minutes per rehearsal.

von Kampen (2003) sought to examine sight singing instruction in Nebraska. The purpose of this study was to describe sight singing in Nebraska high schools, determine choral directors’ attitudes toward teaching sight singing, and to determine the extent to which selected demographic factors influence choral directors’ decisions on whether to include sight singing instruction. A survey was distributed to members of the Nebraska Music Education Association with a final sample of 201 responses. Results showed more than half of the choral directors did not use a method for sight singing, and that they only had a mildly positive attitude toward sight singing. Survey responses indicated that the larger schools with more resources were more likely to include sight singing in their rehearsals. Suggestions for further research included a need to compare these results with those of other states, making a larger, national scale study.

Large Group Sight Singing Adjudicated Events

Norris (2004) provided a nationwide overview of sight singing requirements of large group
choral festivals. The following questions were posed to each state: (1) Are there ratings-based large group choral festivals?; (2) Is sight singing a requirement?; (3) Are there specific levels or classes of difficulty?; (4) Is musical content specified for each level or class?; (5) Is there an overall rating that includes both the performance and sight singing ratings?

Data were collected initially from each MENC affiliate website, the ACDA website, and other state music associations. When clear answers or information related to the research questions were not available via the website, emails were sent to the primary executive officers of each of the remaining states. Data from the study revealed that less than half of all the states require sight singing at large group festivals. Fewer states delineate levels of difficulty, outline musical content to be addressed, and use the sight singing rating in an overall final rating.

Data suggests that assessment of sight singing at large group festivals is neither consistent with research that identified positive attitudes about the importance of sight singing instruction, nor in accord with the expectations for instruction or assessment outlined in the National Standards for Arts Education (MENC, 1994). Large group festival adjudication, when organized and administered effectively, can serve as an important and informative component of not only school choral directors’ larger assessment plans, but also their music reading curricula.

The purpose of Yarbrough, Orman, and Neil (2007) study was to analyze the instructional period, including time spent by both teacher and students, before sight singing adjudication. Participants of the study were choral directors whose ensembles were participating in the sight singing portion of a district-wide contest. The choral directors appeared to instruct each age group differently. High school directors gave more specific musical information and allowed more nonverbal student response time than the middle school directors. Very few middle school directors, and less than half of the high school directors, addressed the more expressive elements
of phrasing, dynamics, style and tone. These choral directors showed a very defined and sequenced way of teaching sight singing, one that successfully prepares students to compete at the contest (Yarbrough et al., 2007).

Adjudication Experiences

Austin (1988) examined the effect of two music contest formats on the music achievement, self-concept, achievement motivation, performance achievement, and attitude of elementary band students. In this study, with fifth and sixth grade students were divided into two groups. Students prepared solos and performed for either written comments or written comments and a rating. Results suggest that a rated competitive music contest format may benefit students without producing the negative side effects that educators fear. The majority of students said that they would choose the rated format again because it was more rewarding than the comments-only option.

Stamer (2006) provided information on the perceptions of students concerning the instrumental music contest experience. To collect data for the study, the Choir Competition Survey was used to measure student perceptions in response to a variety of statements about the music contest experience. Results show that changes occur in choral student perceptions of the music contest experience as they mature. As students grew older, results showed that they believe less emphasis should be placed on contests and that competitions do not necessarily make choir more enjoyable. More activities should be created to provide a sense of achievement for students to help maintain a high-performance standard.

Howard (1995) investigated students' attitudes toward four types of music contests: concert band, marching band, small ensemble, and solo contests. Six perceptions of music contests were examined: (1) enjoyment, (2) importance, (3) motivational value, (4) anxiety, (5) increased
musicianship, and (6) goal structure. Attitudes about the importance of contest participation, ratings, and enjoyment differed significantly among the contest types, with concert band contests receiving the most positive responses. Concert band contests and solo contests also received the highest scores for motivating students and improving musicianship. Contest attitudes also differed according to gender differences. Females typically reported higher levels of response. Specifically, solo contests were more stressful for females and they valued small ensemble and solo contest ratings more than males. Males assigned higher levels of cooperation to concert band, marching band, and small ensemble contests than did the females.

Summary

This study is one of sight-reading procedures, preparation, attitude, and experiences in the states that provide adjudication in large group ensembles. Procedures in sight reading include those used to train the students to sight read accurately, as well as those used at festivals which evaluate the ability of a band to sight read as an ensemble. Preparation refers to study and training of both the teachers and the students. The portion regarding attitudes addressed the feelings and dispositions of the band directors on the process of sight-reading evaluation. Experiences in sight reading were discussed specifically in relation to the evaluation process.

The review of literature establishes a strong background of sight-reading research. It includes the areas of adjudicated sight reading, predictors of sight reading achievement, teaching sight reading, student and teacher experiences, and sight singing. The findings in this literature suggest there is a continued need for focus on large group sight reading. While there are numerous relevant studies on sight reading, there is not a substantial representation of literature on large group adjudicated sight reading.

Previous literature regarding large group adjudicated sight reading included several studies
about festival ratings, pre-adjudication time usage, and predictors of sight reading ability. Research, as presented, about large group adjudication does provide insight into large group adjudications. The literature does not address the experiential or attitude aspects of large group sight-reading evaluation.

Teaching sight reading was an additional topic which was addressed in the review of literature. Specific subjects related to teaching sight reading, and included in this chapter, were sight-reading teaching methods, ensemble preparation, and performance errors. These topics provided insight into what band directors do to prepare their ensembles for evaluation in sight reading. Some preparatory aspects were specific to the rehearsal structure, and others were in regard to the time in the sight-reading evaluation room.

Studies about adjudication experiences and attitudes were included. The only experiential study about instrumental evaluations specifically addressed solo and ensemble adjudication. Student and director experiences at choral sight singing adjudicated events were addressed, however there is not current research replicated for instrumental sight reading.

The literature in sight singing supports many ideas inherent in this study. The concepts of sight singing instruction, teacher education, rehearsal strategies, and methods are all addressed throughout the literature; however, like studies in the area of sight reading are not present because research on these topics is scarce. A baseline study in sight reading needs to be complete to provide more foundational information on the state of sight reading throughout the nation. This type of data has not been gathered, however it will provide information to teachers, and professional organizations as they continue their quest to improve the musical experiences of students. This demonstrates the need for additional research to be done with large group instrumental sight reading. The purpose and research questions posed in this study both fill in the
gaps left by current research, as well as tie together a number of studies needing further inquiry.

Across the nation, sight reading is regarded as an important part of music education. This statement is evidenced in the inclusion of sight-reading evaluation at large group festivals. It is necessary to note that there is a significant lack of literature surrounding the teaching of sight reading in a large group, and the evaluation of sight reading in an ensemble setting. The current research provides much information in several areas having to do with differing aspects of instruction, ratings, evaluation, sight reading, and sight singing. Significantly absent, however, is research into how teachers teach sight reading to their students, how directors prepare themselves to educate their students in sight reading, how teachers feel about their experiences in sight-reading evaluation, and how their experiences impact their attitudes regarding sight reading in their classrooms.

Chapter 3 will provide a methodological background and procedure for the current study. The mixed methods sequential explanatory design specifics will be discussed. Chapters following the methodological information will encompass the presentation of both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as a final discussion including data analysis, findings, conclusions, and implications for future research.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

A mixed methods methodology was chosen for this study to provide a comprehensive view of sight-reading education and adjudication throughout the United States. This study is rooted in the ability to gain a large number of responses from a large geographical area, and also collect very specific responses in a descriptive manner. A need for mixed methods exists because, for this study, one type of data source was deemed insufficient. Using multiple sources to acquire data provided the depth and breadth of information necessary to address the research questions. Responses to questions from a survey yield a national perspective on sight-reading practices and experiences; however, the detailed, in-depth data that the interview process produced was essential to understanding of the participants’ true attitudes regarding sight-reading adjudication. Mixed methods allowed me to investigate the breadth of attitudes and individuals lived experiences in sight reading within the same study.

The beginnings of mixed methods can be traced to its use in fieldwork for sociologists and cultural anthropologists early in the 20th century. According to Denscombe (2008), those who have sought to place the evolution of mixed methods research in a timeline of sorts have done so with the background of debates about paradigms and their use in research settings. During the past half century, several debates have erupted in the social and behavioral sciences regarding the superiority of one or the other of the two major social science paradigms or models; positivist approach, and the constructivist approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Mixed methods, as a research paradigm, is seen as emerging from the 1990s onward, established alongside the previous paradigms so that we are now in a three-methodological world with
qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research all thriving and coexisting (Denscombe, 2008). Mixed methods research is recognized as a third model of research in social and behavioral sciences (Ponce & Pagán-Moldanado, 2015).

Mixed methods research is gaining acceptance among researchers according to Hong and Espelage (2011). The different design options impact the overall body of knowledge. Mixed methods research can enhance study validity beyond quantitative or qualitative research studies, provide greater insights, challenge researchers through divergent or contradictory findings, encourage researchers to alter research questions and hypotheses, and conceivably fill in the gaps ultimately enhancing our understanding of the phenomena.

Although the emergence of mixed methods research as a viable alternative to qualitative or quantitative designs has been relatively recent in music education, it has been more widely utilized within other fields of educational research (Fitzpatrick, 2014). Despite its growing presence in other educational fields, published mixed methods research remains rare in the field of music education. Fitzpatrick (2014) speculates this is due to the historic dominance of quantitative research within the field of music education and relatively recent emergence of qualitative research. There are increasingly more published studies and dissertations in the field of music education that utilize a mixed method approach. The growing popularity of this research approach suggests that mixed methods is truly beginning to emerge in the field of music education.

Research problems suited for mixed methods are those in which one data source may be insufficient, results need to be explained, exploratory findings need to be generalized, a second method is needed to enhance a primary method, a theoretical stance needs to be employed, and an overall research objective can be best addressed with multiple phases, or projects (Creswell &
Qualitative data provide a detailed understanding of a problem and quantitative data provide a more general comprehension of a problem. Qualitative understanding comes from studying a few individuals and exploring their perspectives in great depth. The quantitative data comes from examining a large number of people and assessing responses to variables. Mixed methods is both practical and intuitive in that it helps offer multiple ways of viewing a problem, much like something we find in everyday living.

At a general level, mixed methods was chosen because of its strength in drawing on both qualitative and quantitative research and minimizing the limitations of both approaches. At a practical level, mixed methods provided a sophisticated, complex approach to research that appeals to those on the forefront of new research procedures. At a procedural level, it was a useful strategy to have a more complete understanding of problems and questions (Creswell, 2014).

When an author synthesizes the findings from both data types, one is able to gain insights that are greater than those that would be obtained from either analysis alone. Sims (2011) wrote that this is a guiding principle for mixed methods research. The developing nature of this methodology creates a much-needed discussion and explanation of the implementation of research design. Research design, within the mixed methods methodology, will determine if paradigms can be integrated within one study, and where the integration will occur in the process (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007).

Within this chapter, the reader can expect to gain insights to the methodological design of this study. Research design and purpose, the benefits and challenges of using a mixed methods design, and the background information on the SED will be addressed in the coming paragraphs. A discussion of state involvement in sight-reading adjudication has been included to assist the
reader in understanding which particular states will be included in the study. The chapter will conclude with a review of methodology divided by phases, including sampling procedures, instrument design, and analysis procedures.

**Theoretical Framework**

Philosophical assumptions in mixed methods research consist of a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that guide our inquiries. An important determinant of design selection is the theoretical perspective of the researcher. This perspective has also been referred to as a paradigm, worldview, or conceptual framework. Theoretical frameworks are conceived through the researcher, guide the research, and are often influenced by the worldview. This research will be informed by a combination of a constructivist and a social constructionist theoretical framework. The worldview has been presented as a precursor to the framework. In this section, I will discuss the worldview, proceed to the framework, and then connect it to my study.

There is a widespread view within mixed methods research that the appropriate philosophical partner for qualitative research is constructivism, and for quantitative research, postpositivist empiricism (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010). This view makes mixed methods research a problematic union, however methodological philosophers have argued that methods can be combined based on their practical utilities (Nastasi et al., 2010). This view has gained substantial acceptance within the mixed methods research community, and pragmatism has been promoted as the appropriate philosophical stance for mixed methods research (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010).

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) present four possible worldviews that may inform mixed methods research: postpositivist worldview, constructivist worldview, participatory worldview, and pragmatist worldview. I come to this study with a pragmatist worldview. The
pragmatist philosophy or worldview, based on the work of such authors as Pierce, Mead, James, Dewey, Rorty, Murphy, Patton, and Cherryholmes, posits that finding solutions to problems is of greater importance than the method used to solve those problems (Fitzpatrick, 2014). The pragmatic philosophical position used in the development of most mixed methods designs focuses on the value and fruitfulness of using evidence from both paradigms to address a broader range of research questions and produce more robust and interesting findings than either approach could do in isolation. Thus, it is argued that mixed methods research has greater potential to prove the value to both practitioners and policymakers (Sammons, 2010).

Pragmatists adhere to a philosophy, which encourages the use of whatever methodological approach works for the problem under study. Pragmatism does not claim that any one philosophy of the nature of knowledge and reality is correct, but rather allows for utilization of many techniques and methodologies in the service of solving a problem. The problem is of primary importance, and truth is what works at the time (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). John Dewey’s (1922) pragmatism helps a researcher think about the notion of truth and emphasizes that research can provide us with insights into what has been possible, not about what is or will be the case. Pragmatism based on the philosophy of John Dewey does not provide a blanket justification for all forms of mixed methods research, but helps field a more precise method for answering questions about strength, status, and validity of the knowledge claims (Biesta, 2007).

Pragmatism places emphasis on the practical aspects of research, the context, and potential consequences of the research. Pragmatism offers a very specific view of knowledge, one claiming that the only way we can acquire knowledge is through the combination of action and reflection (Biesta, 2010). My worldview as a pragmatist has afforded me the opportunity to
focus on the consequences of research, on the primary importance of the question, and on the use of multiple methods of data collection to inform the problems under study.

Constructivists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences. Constructivists view people as constructive agents and view the phenomenon of interest as built instead of passively received by people whose ways of knowing, seeing, understanding, and valuing influence what is known, seen, understood, and valued (Troudi, 2014). The goal of this research through lens of a constructivist was to rely as much as possible on the views of the participants in the area of instrumental sight reading. I have been able to recognize that my own background in sight reading has shaped my interpretation of data. It was my intent to interpret the meanings that others have about sight reading, and generate meaning from the data collected from the participants.

Social constructionism is the view that learning and meaning making are social endeavor. Culture plays a major role in shaping our social realities and learning experiences, and the collective generation and transmission of meaning is at the focus of the researchers within this framework. Social constructionists see human experience as culturally and historically mediated through social practices that are constantly changing (Troudi, 2014). The educational practices, and traditions examined in this study are a product of social constructionism, and have been shaped through time by the culture surrounding the event.

Constructivism and social constructionism come together to create the theoretical framework known as Activity Theory (Glassman, 2001). Activity Theory is all about who is doing what, why, and how (Hasan, 2014). This theory is grounded in the work of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, and his students in the 1920s. Within Activity Theory, the subject,
teachers and learners, brings their personal and institutional histories to the activity. The object, or purpose of the activity, is understood by the people involved. Additional rules that govern the activity, including formal requirements of policy makers and the routines of schools involved, are a third component of Activity Theory. These aspects of the theory match the sight-reading evaluation with the teachers being the subjects, the sight-reading evaluation being the object, and sight-reading procedures as the rules.

Activity Theory recognizes that the teachers have tools, or previous knowledge; available to them that enables them to carry out the activity. In relation to sight reading, these tools include prior knowledge on sight reading themselves, teaching sight reading to their students, any of the professional development they have had in this area, and all of the expertise they share in their rehearsals about preparation for sight-reading evaluation. All of this activity takes place within a community, which has general expectations, and culturally defined goals that will influence the activity. In sight reading, this community is the group of teachers, students, adjudicators, event leaders, that provide the activity and performance expectations to be associated with the outcome of the sight-reading evaluation.

Through the constructivist lens I have been able to explore participant beliefs and opinions about sight reading. Activity Theory of Vygotsky (Hasan, 2014), and Dewey’s social constructivism (Postholm, 2008) are brought together to form an educational perspective on the state of sight reading in the United States. In this setting I have examined the context or situation in which the activity (sight reading) takes place, and placed the teacher (and their tools) as the central role of the learning environment, creating the experiences for the students, within the confines of the activity (sight-reading evaluation), and governing rules (procedures, and guidelines from the event organizers). The combination of constructivist and pragmatist
philosophies has afforded me the opportunity to connect my interactions with the participants to the need for workable solutions to the problems presented in this study.

Research Design and Method

Mixed methods research allows the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to emerge (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003). When using a mixed methods design, the research questions are of primary importance, and the method utilized to answer them is secondary. The main purpose in the utilization of multiple methods is to recognize that all methods have limitations. In combining these methodologies, a mixed methods researcher seeks to lessen the weaknesses of each approach and view the problem from several vantage points (Fitzpatrick, 2008).

This study employed the *Sequential Explanatory Design* (SED), as defined by Creswell & Plano Clark (2011). The mixed methods SED consists of two distinct phases: a quantitative phase, followed by a qualitative phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). A typical procedure might include collecting survey data in the first phase, and then following up with qualitative interviews in the second phase (Creswell, 2014). In this design, a researcher first collects and analyzes the quantitative (numeric) data. The qualitative (text) data are collected and analyzed second in the sequence and help explain, or elaborate on, the quantitative results obtained in the first phase. The second, qualitative phase builds on the first, quantitative phase, and the two phases are connected in the intermediate stage of the study. The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and their subsequent analysis provide a general understanding of the research problem. The qualitative data and their analysis refine and explain those statistical results by exploring participant’s views in more depth.
The SED is a particularly straightforward choice of the mixed methods designs. In this study, the SED is characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data generated from surveys, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data generated from the interviews. Priority is typically given to the quantitative data, and the two methods are integrated during the interpretation phase of the study. SED is a straightforward design, and the steps of implementation fall into clear separate stages.

For the purposes of this study, stages included a survey phase followed by the interview phase. Frels and Onwuegbuzie (2013) recommended more rigor in the data collection process such as utilizing mixed methods interviews. Researchers are encouraged to enhance quantitative instruments integrated with open-ended questions. The gathering of quantitative data during qualitative interviews offers researchers more in-depth opportunities to evaluate participants’ statements and responses. This practice would offer the field of education the best of both research methods. Clarity of the stages in this design make it easy to describe and report, allowing the final discussion to bring the results together. (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003)

Social research examines a society's attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, trends, stratifications and rules. The scope of social research can be small or large, ranging from the self or a single individual to spanning a country. The mixed methods approach can be seen as offering a third paradigm for social research through the way it combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies in a practice-driven need to mix methods. This paradigm is framed by a variety of practical issues and demands. Researchers using mixed methods research have used a variety of purposes and means to combining the qualitative and quantitative elements. This variety has opened the door for several design forms to emerge within the mixed methods paradigm.
Reviews of mixed methods studies show the variety of ways in which social researchers are using mixed methods research. Denscombe (2008) provides readers with a list of purposes for using mixed methods research:

Synthesizing the various typologies that arise from reviews of existing mixed methods research, some researchers use mixed methods to improve the accuracy of their data, whereas others use mixed methods to produce a more complete picture by combining information from complementary types of data or sources. (p. 272)

Statements regarding some of the benefits of using this methodology are also included:

Sometimes mixed methods are used as a means of avoiding biases intrinsic to single-method approaches, as a way of compensating specific strengths and weaknesses associated with particular methods. Mixed methods have been used as a way of developing the analysis and building on initial findings using contrasting kinds of data or methods. (p. 272)

Evaluators of educational and social programs have expanded their methodological use to include designs that incorporate both qualitative and quantitative methods. Greene et al., (1989) analyzed 57 empirical mixed methods studies. In the review of these mixed methods studies from the 1980s, Greene et al., (1989) listed five facets of mixed methods research: triangulation, complementary, initiation, development, and expansion.

**Triangulation** seeks convergence, corroboration, and correspondence of results from the different methods. **Complementarity** seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration, and clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method. **Development** seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method, where development is broadly construed to include sampling and implementation, as well as measurement decisions. **Initiation** seeks the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks, the reassessing of questions or results from one with questions or results from the other method. **Expansion** seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by
using different methods for different inquiry components (Greene et al., 1989).

Mixed methods research encourages the use of multiple worldviews and encourages us to think about a paradigm that encompasses both quantitative and qualitative research. It is also practical in the sense that the researcher is free to use all methods possible to address the research problem. Individuals tend to respond to problems in both numbers and words, as well as combine inductive and deductive thinking; therefore, it makes sense to employ mixed methods research as a method of understanding. The timeline of the study is shown in Table 1. This is a comprehensive view of the study from the time of proposal through final defense.
Table 1

Timeline of the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 2014</td>
<td>Presenting and defending the proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2014</td>
<td>Updates to dissertation based on defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compile sampling database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data collection on state procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2014</td>
<td>Updates to dissertation based on defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compile sampling database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data collection on state procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2014</td>
<td>Letter and survey sent to the expert reviewers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compile sampling database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data collection on state procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2014</td>
<td>Meet with advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative pilot study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2014</td>
<td>Qualitative pilot study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analyze pilot study/finish edits to survey and interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January – August 2015</td>
<td>Quantitative Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transcription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2015 – August 2016</td>
<td>Launch survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Write and edit chapters 4, 5, and 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2016 – March 2017</td>
<td>Dissertation revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissertation pre-defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2017</td>
<td>Final defense</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the section I outlined the timeline for this study. Now I will move on into more specifics of the research design. The research design sections will include all aspects of the qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, and the combined analysis of both data types.
Benefits, Challenges and Opportunities of Mixed Methods Inquiry

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) write that mixed methods study is a relatively new approach to inquiry, and it requires openness to using multiple perspectives in research. The straightforward nature of the *Sequential Explanatory Design* is one of its main strengths. It is easy to implement because the steps fall into clear, separate stages. The design also makes it easy to describe and report. In fact, this design can be reported in two distinct phases with a final discussion that brings the results together (Creswell, et. al., 2003).

In addition to benefits, mixed methods study also has challenges. Research paradigms exhibit their own variations and inconsistencies; therefore, there should be no suggestion that just because the mixed methods approach does not achieve complete coherence and consistency it is automatically disqualified from the status of a research paradigm. The purpose of such a research methodology is to highlight the need for a notion of paradigm that can be flexible, permeable, and multilayered to reflect the reality of social research in the 21st century. Drawing attention to the existence of variations and inconsistencies does not automatically invalidate the claims of the mixed methods approach to be a research paradigm (Denscombe, 2008).

Mixed methods is a viable research design for a researcher with requisite acquaintance of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques. It is important to understand the essential issues of rigor in quantitative research, including reliability, validity, and generalizability. Similar issues pertaining to qualitative research also include credibility, trustworthiness, and common validation strategies. In addition to knowledge in the previously mentioned areas, it is also important that the researcher have a solid grounding in mixed methods inquiry (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).
Mixed methods studies may require extensive time, resources and effort on the part of the researcher. The main weakness of the SED is the length of time involved in data collection to complete the two separate phases (Creswell, et. al., 2003). Areas that need to be examined prior to commencing a mixed methods study include time to collect and analyze two different types of data, sufficient resources available to work with multiple data types, and the skills of the researcher to complete the study. Analysis of those areas of concern should be complete before work on the projects starts. Perhaps the most important challenge is educating and convincing others of the need to employ a mixed methods design to effectively complete the study. The researcher must have a solid grounding in mixed methods research purposes and design to fully execute a study using this new research paradigm (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Design Background

The purpose of this study was to investigate the state of sight reading in band performance evaluations and classrooms across the nation. This study in sight reading sought to identify baseline knowledge, which explored the traditions and procedures, attitudes of directors, and event experiences in high school large group band performance evaluations. Initially, I gathered data regarding sight-reading procedures from each state. Information from the 30 states that utilize sight reading in adjudication was gathered from the Internet or direct contact with the sponsoring professional organization as needed. Next, responses to a survey were collected from band directors across the United States. Feedback was provided in the areas of sight-reading participation, director training, student preparation, and director attitude toward adjudication in sight reading. Finally, volunteer participants from across the nation were selected for the more in-depth interview. The line of questioning involved a more focused look at their beliefs,
perceptions, and experiences surrounding sight-reading adjudication. Conversations were needed for this final portion of the study to give a more complete picture of sight reading in the states.

Overview of Research Questions

In the following section, I will present each research question along with details regarding the plan to answer each one. Commonly, mixed methods design incorporates a variety of data collection and sampling procedures. Different procedures are used for each question to allow the most appropriate response to be utilized. Following each research question, a short description of the procedures related to that question will be given.

1. What procedures are common in high school band sight-reading events in the United States?

Initially, I explored adjudicated sight-reading practices in each of the states that offer sight reading as a part of their large group band performance assessment. This was accomplished by an informal inquiry on websites for state music organizations. My investigation sought to find data regarding procedural aspects of the sight-reading evaluation. I looked for material regarding study time, student participation, adjudicator involvement, and placement within the evaluation process, but this process did not yield sufficient data. In the event that information was not available on websites, communication with representatives of the states was initiated in hopes of obtaining information on the procedural aspects of their sight-reading adjudication. Research was done to determine which of the state organizations sponsor the sight-reading event. In many cases, the state music education association was the primary sponsor of these performance evaluations, however, there were several instances when that was not the case. Further investigation was needed to discover which organization within the state was the sponsor of such
events. Once that was determined, further online investigation looked for specifics from each state regarding the procedural aspects for the sight-reading portion of their adjudicated event. Procedures, protocols, and regulations from each event have been addressed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of how sight-reading adjudication occurs in each state. Analysis occurs by looking for similarities and differences among the procedures in each of the states.

2. How do high school directors prepare themselves and their bands for sight-reading evaluation?

The quantitative phase of this study garnered feedback regarding sight reading from members of the band director community across the country. For this question, I was looking for a large number of respondents; therefore, a survey was used as the only means of data collection. The survey tool that was developed incorporated different areas of interest. It was important that participants were not part of one general group, but from a variety of locations, experiential levels, and teaching situations. The survey tool (SRITAS) was divided into several sections. A large portion of the instrument addressed director preparation to teach sight reading in their classrooms, and how those directors train their students for sight-reading adjudication. Other topical areas included background information, as well as attitude toward sight reading teaching and evaluation. Analysis of data looked for commonalities in the process of sight reading for a performance evaluation as well as teaching sight reading in the classroom. In addition, areas of accomplishment and concern with regard to director training were also addressed. This question was looking for how these areas are concentrated on with directors in classrooms around the country. A portion of the results from the survey answers this research question.
3. What are band director attitudes toward sight-reading evaluation, and how do they impact instructional practices?

Answers to the above question were achieved within the quantitative portion of the study. Within the same survey referenced previously, one line of questioning revolved around band director attitudes toward sight-reading adjudication. Other topical areas included background, director preparation and training, and methods used to teach sight reading in the classroom. In these areas, quantitative data were collected and subsequently analyzed using descriptive statistics. This question intended to look for commonalities and differences in band director attitudes about sight-reading adjudication among all of the states. Importance has been placed in specific areas where directors strongly agreed or disagreed with a sight-reading attitude statement. Results from this section of the survey answered the research question as listed above.

4. What experiences of sight-reading evaluation impact participant views in high school band settings?

The final segment in this study is the qualitative phase. To achieve a more in-depth understanding of their adjudicated sight-reading beliefs, attitudes, and experiences, this phase required interviewing specific band directors in a variety of states. During the interviews, participants were questioned about their own sight-reading abilities, their perceived preparation to teach sight reading to their students, experiences in the sight-reading adjudication room, how they felt about the experiences, and how they perceived their students felt about the experiences. It is important to include data collection with this type of thorough investigation, as the interviews have provided the opportunity for a more candid exploration of thoughts and feelings of the band directors. Introductory material has been presented for each participant, followed by his or her answers to the interview questions. The rich description, and personal quotations of these experiences by the participants have helped to provide insight into the perceived benefits
and challenges of this type of evaluation in sight reading, in addition to ways that the adjudication might be improved.

State Sight-Reading Procedures

With this study, I sought to identify the traditions and procedures, attitudes of directors, and event experiences in high school large group band performance evaluations. Information gained from this initial component of the study provided a basis of knowledge in adjudicated sight-reading procedures in the United States. Qualitative descriptions are given with regard to procedures in each state. Frequencies, means and modes have been used to give numerical substance to the data.

Each year, large group instrumental and choral adjudicated events occur in 49 states in the United States. Those states that do not include sight reading are shown in italics in the table below. The results of the nationwide sight reading overview by Paul (2010) show fewer than half of the state-sponsored music contests offer assessment in sight reading (30), fewer still require the sight reading (24) and even fewer (18) require and include sight reading in the final evaluation rating. Table 1 provides detailed information regarding the particulars of sight reading in each state.
Table 2
Sight-Reading Assessment by State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States Where Sight Reading Occurs</th>
<th>Sight Reading Occurs, Not Included in the Final Rating</th>
<th>Sight Reading Assessment is Optional</th>
<th>States Where Sight Reading Does Not Occur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Alaska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Delaware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>Iowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nevada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>North Dakota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oregon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Dakota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each of the states listed in Table 2, information collected looked for background material on their sight-reading practices and procedures. Background information included: (1) What is the name of the organization that sponsors assessment in sight reading? (2) Is that organization an affiliate of NAfME? (3) What are the procedures during the sight-reading process?
assessment? (4) How does the sight-reading segment fit with the other portions of the overall band performance adjudication?

Answers to the previous questions were retrieved by the researcher primarily through Internet research. The NAfME website provided the web addresses for each of their state affiliates. The researcher went to each of these sites in search of the background information needed. If the NAfME affiliate was not the sponsoring organization of the sight-reading events, further Internet research was done until the correct organization was discovered. Additional websites were examined until the appropriate information was found. Other possible sponsors included state band associations, bandmasters associations, alternative state music organizations, and state activities associations.

When procedural information was available online, it was utilized for the purposes of this study. In the event that sight-reading procedures were not given as a portion of the website, the researcher made a decision on who to contact to get the information based on the organization’s leadership structure. When available, leaders of adjudication were the people to be contacted for the requested information. All communication was made by email and when necessary, documents were sent as attachments via email. For this portion of the study, basic sight-reading procedural information was needed from the 30 states. It was important to achieve an extremely high participation rate for this portion of the study, therefore, data collection continued until I achieved 100% participation from all of the necessary states.

Data collected from this procedure provided a departure point for reference in later parts of the study. In addition to the presentation of sight-reading procedures, basic numerical analysis was done. Differences and similarities inherent to the sight-reading procedures are presented in Chapter 5 with the data analysis.
Approval was gained to conduct this research project from the Internal Review Board (IRB) of Kent State University on April 16, 2014 (see Appendix A). Potential participants were contacted via email inviting them to participate in the survey, and later the interviews. Participants agreed to participate in the study by marking the “I Agree” box on the Consent Form page of the survey instrument. (see Appendices B and C). I was a responsible steward of their privacy throughout the project. Real names of the participants and places to which they referred were never used in audio or text data in order to protect the confidentiality of the participants. All data were kept in a secure place in my personal office and were only accessible to me.

Phase One: Quantitative

The purpose of this study was to investigate the state of sight reading in band performance evaluations and classrooms across the nation. This study in sight reading sought to identify baseline knowledge, which explored the traditions and procedures, attitudes of directors, and event experiences in high school large group band performance evaluations. The goal of the quantitative portion of this study was to gain a breadth of information regarding sight-reading preparation and attitudes in many states across the United States. Data inquiry for this portion of the study provided insight to sight-reading preparation and attitudes of the respondents.

Quantitative Instrument

A survey is a system for collecting information from or about people to describe, compare, or explain their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior (Fink, 2003). It is a standardized measuring system in that each participant receives the same measure, administered in the same manner. Data are typically summarized in the form of descriptive statistics (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2010). Figure 1 is a listing of the best uses for online surveys.
1. The survey needs wide geographic coverage.

2. You are hoping to reach a very large number of people.

3. You have access to valid email addresses and permission to use them.

4. You or your agency or institution conducts surveys relatively frequently so that the technological and software infrastructure is set.

5. You have designed some survey questions to be answered by all respondents, but other questions will only be answered by some of the respondents.

6. Online surveys can produce real time data as each person completes the questionnaire; so getting responses in a timely manner is expected.

Figure 1: Best Use for Online Surveys

In this study, a self-administered, online survey, developed through Qualtrics survey service, was used. Screen shots of the online survey have been included in Appendix D. The decision to use an online survey was made following a checklist created by Fink (2013). Figure 1 indicates the points in the checklist that are pertinent to this study and have contributed to this decision.

Self-administered surveys consist of questions that individual respondents complete by themselves. Questionnaires can include web-based, email, and computer assisted surveys (Fink, 2003). Respondents complete online surveys on laptops, desktops, notebooks, tablets, and even on mobile phones. Researchers tend to prefer online surveys because respondents are becoming used to them, they can easily reach very large numbers of people across the world, and the online survey software is accessible and relatively inexpensive (Fink, 2013).
No singular complete survey is available that addresses the specifics of this study. Five different surveys that pertain to this topic were located and cited in Figure 2. These examples have been used because of their relationship to the purpose and research questions of the current study. These sources will be the foundation from which a new survey instrument will be created.

A Description of Melody Reading in the Select HS Choirs of Texas (May, 1993)
Sight Singing Materials Survey (Demorest, 2001)
Sight Singing Instructional Practices in Florida MS Choral Programs (Kuehne, 2003)
Sight Singing Questionnaire (von Kampen, 2003)
Attitudes of HS Band Directors toward Solo and Ensemble in the U.S. (Meyers, 2011)

Figure 2: Sight-Reading Survey Creation

Questions that make up the survey were derived from the research questions found in this study, information and questions gained in the review of literature, and a few surveys that have already been completed with similar topics. As a guideline, the following surveys have been used for reference while setting up the questionnaire for this study.

Inclusion of the choral surveys has been done because of their applicability to the needs of this study. As previously discussed, research in choral large ensemble sight singing has been more apparent than that of bands, however many of the major topics can cross disciplines. The final survey source (Meyers, 2011) has been included because it poses attitude questions like the current needs of this study. That inquiry references the attitudes surrounding performance in solo and ensemble festivals, which is similar to my desire to analyze the attitudes of components of large ensemble festivals.
Clarifying the Population

The population for this study must be clarified. There are several factors that have been used to determine the correct grouping for the population. Initially, all band directors in the United States were considered. Through my research, I discovered work that had already been done that addressed sight-reading activity across the United States.

Paul (2010) conducted a national survey of sight-reading requirements at concert band festivals. Results of this study provided details regarding elements of sight reading in each state, showing that only 30 of the 50 states offer sight-reading assessment. Consequently, the population for this study was narrowed to band directors in those 30 states. A list of those states can be found in Table 1.

Although the general population is all band directors from the 30 states that offer sight reading, it was necessary to narrow the field further. The initial, background section of the survey was used to further reduce the population. Participants were asked to clarify the grade level that they teach. This study has been developed to look at directors of high school bands only. Therefore, those who teach or have taught high school band continued to be included; those who have not were finished with the survey at that point and were not included in the study.

This initial question diminished the population, however further limitations were placed on respondents through the use of an additional survey question. Participants were asked if they have directed a high school band in sight-reading assessment at a concert band festival. If they had, they continued through the survey and were able to be a participant in the study. Those who have not were finished with the survey at that point, and were not included in the study.

The above procedures ensured that the population for this study included a sample that is knowledgeable about the research topic and questions. Participants needed to have taught high
school band, and been the director of a group that has performed in a sight-reading assessment. The survey assisted in the reduction of the population to ensure the participants have had the necessary experiences to answer the questions.

**Meyers Example**

In the process of determining the most appropriate sample size and procedures, a dissertation by Meyers (2011), stood out as an example. In review of the Meyers study, it was determined that this would serve as precedent for the sampling protocols to be used in the current study. The following section will be presented with the intent to familiarize the reader with the basic tenants of the Meyers example, which was replicated in the quantitative portion of this mixed methods study.

Meyers (2011) conducted a national survey that investigated the attitudes of high school band directors toward solo and ensemble festivals. Like this study, his initial population size was band directors in the United States. Meyers took a specific approach to determining the appropriate sample size. When considering a sample size of a large population, researchers must be careful to neither over-represent nor under-represent the population (Meyers, 2011).

Meyers’ (2011) sample size was determined through a series of proposed equations. The first was that of Cochran (1977). Factors that have been taken into consideration with this equation are: the abscissa in both tails of the normal curve of the level of precision desired (Z), the desired level of precision or confidence (e), and the estimated proportion of an attribute in the population (p and q, where q is equal to 1 − p). The resulting equation is as follows:

\[ n = \frac{Z^2pq}{e^2} \]
Yamane (1973) proposed a simplified model of Cochran’s equation that utilized the total population \((N)\), and the desired level of precision \((e)\) to obtain an appropriate sample size as shown below:

\[
n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}
\]

Using this equation, Meyers determined his sample size, and moved on to discuss sampling strategies. To find a sample that was appropriately representative of the population, a stratified random sample was used where the number of potential participants per state reflected the state’s proportion of all high schools in the United States.

Although the previous equation is dated, the work of Cochran remains influential in the prominence of statistics in the United States. William Cochran was highly influential in the development of statistics in the United States. With an extensive background in mathematics and statistics, Cochran moved throughout the United States working to develop statistics departments in institutions of higher education such as the University of Iowa, the North Carolina Institute of Statistics, John Hopkins University and Harvard University. Cochran is still known as one of the foremost statisticians in the country. Having retired as professor emeritus from Harvard University, his teaching skills and statistical knowledge have lived on in his students who are now leading statisticians in the United States (Pedhazer, & Schmelkin, 1991).

Once the specific percentages and desired samples sizes were determined for each state, a listing of all public high schools, including charter schools, was obtained from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) database. Within that database for each state, Meyers assigned numbers to each school and randomly selected numbers to be included in the study. An
email address database was compiled by visiting each school’s website. Schools without a band program were discarded and a replacement school was chosen using the same technique.

The survey was sent out via email to all the addresses. Follow up email invitations continued to occur until a 50% response rate was achieved. If surveys came back as unusable due to lack of solo and ensemble experiences, replacement schools were chosen using the same, initial random sampling technique.

After much consideration, I decided to replicate this sampling procedure for the current study. Minor changes will occur due to initial population size differences, as well as participants needing to have performed in sight-reading adjudication. The following section will take the information from the Meyers dissertation and place them in the context of the sampling procedure for the current study.

Quantitative Sampling Procedures

Mixed methods studies frequently require mixed methods sampling procedures to simultaneously increase inference quality and generalizability (Kemper, et al, 2003). The population for this study was all high school band directors from each of the 30 states that offer formal performance assessment in large group band sight reading. The 30 states included are referred to in Table 1.

Due to the similarities between this and the Meyers (2011) study, I have closely replicated the sampling and participant selection procedures that were outlined above. Both studies involved a large population, as well as the need for representation from all included states. Likewise, it is necessary to benefit from data specific to the individual states, while also being able to generalize the results across the entire country.

To begin, a list of all public and private high schools was obtained for each state from the
National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) database. The number of schools for each state was compiled and resulted in a population of 11,726 high schools in the 30 states being examined. This large number of schools required mindful sampling techniques to generalize the results across the entire population while also maintaining the manageability of the study.

To obtain the appropriate sample size, Yamane’s (1973) simplified model of Cochran’s (1977) equation will be used. The equation considers the total population, the desired level of precision, and is shown below.

\[ n = \frac{N}{1+N\epsilon^2} \]

With the total population of 11,726 and a desired confidence level of +/- 3%, the resulting sample size was \( n = 1,015 \). This figure was rounded to \( n = 1,020 \) as the desired sample size for this study. This sample size that is derived from the formula above equates to 8.70% of all the high schools in the 30 states that are being examined.

Many sampling strategies were investigated for use in this study. Initially, a random sample was considered, but was replaced because sight-reading festivals are potentially different in each state. With these differences, maintaining consistency among the states was imperative. It was also necessary to get a sample from each state. With all the potential for differences among the states, it cannot be presumed that a single or group of responses would be generalizable to a region or the entire country. Comprehensive gathering of information from each state can paint a national perspective on the sight-reading topics related to this study.

A random sample of an exact number of band directors from each state was also considered. This notion was discarded because the number of band directors surveyed in each state must maintain proportional to the number of schools in that state. Using this sampling
method may lead to over-representation of one state, and under-representation in another. A random sample of a specific percentage of schools was also considered, but disregarded for similar reasons.

Achieving an appropriate representative sample is of utmost importance, therefore a stratified random sample was used. The number of potential participants per state will reflect the state’s proportion of all high schools in the 30 states being examined. To get the right proportion, the number of schools in each state was divided by the total number of schools in the 30 states. The proportion that results was multiplied by the desired sample size ($n = 1,020$), and become the number of schools in each state that will randomly be selected for inclusion in this study. For example, there are 382 public and private high schools in Alabama. That is 3.20% of the total number of high schools (11,726) in the 30 states being examined. Multiplying that percentage (3.20%) by 1,020 (the desired total sample size), equates to 33 schools from Alabama being included in this study. The total number of public and private schools per state, the resulting proportion, and the number of schools for each state included in the study are shown in Table 3.
Table 3
State Proportions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of High Schools</th>
<th>Proportion of Population</th>
<th>Schools Included in Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>3.40%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>8.50%</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>4.30%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>6.40%</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>1.90%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>8.50%</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>4.20%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>4.10%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>1177</td>
<td>10.20%</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative Participant Recruitment

A listing of schools in each state was retrieved from the NCES database. Once that was complete, schools were listed in alphabetical order and assigned a chronological number.

Random numbers were generated and the schools associated with each number were selected for
participation in the study. Once that list was created, a list of names and email addresses for band directors at each school was compiled by looking at school and district web pages. If their information did not appear on the website, the school was contacted directly for individual directors’ contact information. When a school was randomly chosen that did not have a band program, it was discarded and a replacement school was chosen using the same technique. Schools continued to be selected at random until the desired sample size was achieved.

**Quantitative Data Collection Procedures**

The goal of my sampling procedure was to gather an accurate representation of band directors from each of the 30 states. Based on the sample size, a percentage of respondents was needed from each state. Survey research customarily samples 20% of the population, although that number is variable based on the size of the population. The larger the population size, the smaller the percentage of the population required getting a representative sample (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). When the minimum sample size was not initially achieved, an email link to the online survey was sent two additional times to those who had not responded to achieve the desired response rate in each state, and overall.

The response rate is the number of persons who respond divided by the number of eligible respondents. Although researchers hope for a high response rate from their survey distribution, no single rate is considered the standard (Fink, 2013). My goal for this portion of the study is to acquire around a 40% response rate from each state. According to Phillips (2008), anything above a 40% rate is acceptable, and smaller rates may be acceptable, but with caution. To gain that reliable return rate, the email invitation to the online survey may be sent as many as three additional times.
Quantitative Data Analysis Procedures

Once collected, data from the survey was analyzed. Background data were collected to provide an overall description of the sample, including: teaching location, highest degree obtained, total years of teaching experience, years of experience in current position, approximate program enrollment, and directors’ experience with sight-reading adjudication. Survey results created quantitative data that was analyzed based on the numerical data provided by the survey program Qualtrics. Data were then explored, with a close eye on developing trends, reading through the data, making memos, and gaining a preliminary understanding of the database. Onwuegbuzie & Combs (2010) suggest that the components of the quantitative analysis will include a detailed, narrative analysis.

During the exploration, quantitative data were inspected visually, and a preliminary descriptive analysis occurred, including computations of frequency, mean, and mode. This use of nominal data were specifically determined based on the purposes and research questions of this study. This project was planned to provide the answers to what occurs in the classroom and sight-reading room regarding director attitudes. However, it is not meant to place judgment, draw comparisons, or reach conclusions on what is happening, but to identify details of the circumstances surrounding the teaching and adjudication of sight reading in a large ensemble setting.

Data analysis continued through descriptive statistics, and examination of data in relationship to addressing the research questions. After the results or findings were presented, an interpretation of the meaning of the results was given in the form of a discussion. The interpretation of the results involved taking a step back from the details of the results and advancing the larger meaning, being mindful of the research questions, existing literature, and
general research problems (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Importance of the quantitative analysis has been discussed as a part of phase one, and then mixed with the qualitative data in the final discussion of this study.

Phase Two: Qualitative

The purpose of this study was to investigate the state of sight reading in band performance evaluations and classrooms across the nation. This study in sight reading sought to identify baseline knowledge, which explored the traditions and procedures, attitudes of directors, and event experiences in high school large group band performance evaluations. The qualitative second phase is intended to provide breadth of understanding about band sight reading across much of the country. The purpose of the qualitative portion of this study was to narrow the focus and search for a depth of understanding regarding director experiences and director perceptions of the student experience during high school band large group adjudicated sight-reading events.

Qualitative Instrument

Johnson and Turner (2003) state that interviews are a good choice of qualitative data collection strategy due to their strengths. Some strengths include they are good for measuring attitudes, can provide in-depth information, high response rates are often attainable, and they are useful for exploration. For these reasons, the qualitative phase of this study utilized interviews to investigate sight-reading evaluation further. Directors’ attitudes regarding their experiences during the large group adjudicated sight reading, what they perceive their students’ feelings are about their experiences, and how those attitudes impact their instructional practices in the classroom will all be focused talking points. Interviews involve the collection of verbal data through direct interaction between the researcher and the individuals being studied.
The main advantage of an interview is its adaptability. Typically, the researcher creates a schedule of questions for the interview but allows the interviewers to ask additional questions to obtain the fullest possible response from the individual or to follow up on a response (Gall, et al., 2010). In this study, I have chosen to use the interview guide approach (Johnson & Turner, 2003; Patton, 2002). This semi-structured approach is almost the purest qualitative form of interview in which predetermined topics are discussed, but specific questions are not asked. When using this type of approach the topics are decided ahead of time, and listed on an interview protocol, but do not have to be talked about in a specific order and can be reworded as necessary. This approach lends itself to a more meaningful discussion that can flow naturally, without the sometimes awkwardness of typical interview protocol.

The researcher developed a series of topics to be used in this component of the study. This list can be found in the Proposed Sight-Reading Interview Topics (see Appendix F). According to Creswell & Plano Clark (2011), the researcher needs to determine which of the quantitative data needs to be followed up with the qualitative interview topics. An examination of the quantitative data must occur to determine where there is lack of clarity, or which areas require further investigation. Topic areas will adhere to the purposes and research questions of this study and steer the discussion toward the attitudes and experiences of sight-reading adjudication.

Qualitative Sampling Procedures

Mixed methods studies frequently require mixed methods sampling procedures to simultaneously increase inference quality and generalizability/transferability. To do this, there is often a need for two types of samples: a probability sample (to increase generalizability) and a purposive sample (to increase inference quality). In sequential mixed methods studies, such as this, information from the first sample is often required to draw the second sample. This
A combination of probability and purposive sampling procedures is a very powerful type of mixed methods sampling strategy (Kemper, et al, 2003).

The final few questions of the survey used in phase one of the study asked for volunteers to fulfill the interview portion of phase two. If survey responders were willing to participate in the second phase, they were asked to contact the researcher directly by email so the interview could be arranged. When contacted by the participants, the researcher added them to an ongoing list of those interested in the interview portion.

For the phase two interviews, I sought six participants. The goal was to have one participant from each NAfME region, but to not have more than one participant from any single state. The goal was reached in the fact that there were six participants, one from each region of NAfME, and not more than one from any given state. To increase generalizability of the study, securing participants from each of these regions allowed a large geographic area to be covered. The NAfME regions are listed in Figure 3.

Eastern (CT, DE, DC, EU, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)
North Central (IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI)
Northwest (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY)
Southern (AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)
Southwestern (AR, CO, KS, MO, NM, OK, TX)
Western (AZ, CA, HI, NV, UT)

Figure 3: National Association for Music Education Geographical Regions (NAfME)

Potential interview participants contacted me via email, as provided at the conclusion of the survey. Contact was made with the possible participants in the order that they initiated
contact with me. If the first person who contacted me was unable to fulfill the interview requirements, I would move on to the next person who had contacted me. After final decisions were made regarding participants for phase two, all who volunteered were contacted by email to confirm their participation and determine a time frame for the interview.

**Qualitative Data Collection Protocols**

The Proposed Sight-Reading Interview Topics (see Appendix F) were used when speaking with each participant. When using the interview as a method of data collection, the interviewer should establish a rapport and start the conversation with the topics for discussion. The interviewer can probe for clarity or more detailed information when needed. Each participant was contacted by telephone for the interview. Once participants were on the telephone, they were made aware that the interview was being digitally recorded for later analysis. Interviews started with specific topics as listed, but left the chance for flexibility in the ensuing discussion. The interviewer followed the natural flow of the conversation to provide the best opportunity for collection of pertinent data. In the event that the conversation become stagnant, the interviewer posed the next topic or interview question to get the exchange going again. Interview topics were loosely connected to general survey topics. Each interview was planned to last about one hour, and was recorded in its entirety to ensure accuracy in verification of the data.

**Qualitative Data Analysis Protocols**

Analysis of the data followed the descriptive and interpretive process outlined by Elliott & Timulak (2008). Prior to analysis, data were prepared and transformed into usable text files. Raw data were converted into a form useful for analysis. The first step was to transcribe all audio recordings of the interviews into text format. In this case, preparing meant organizing the data into a document after having transcribed the text from the interview. The transcription was
checked for accuracy. Additional steps were taken to incorporate the researchers notes from each interview. Notes included length of time spent on each interview topic, as well as the overall time taken for each interview.

The next step in the process was to explore the data. Exploration involved reading through the data to gain a general understanding of the newly made documents. The interview transcripts were read and evaluated several times. During this time, short notes or memos were made to later assist in the development of codes or themes. The interviews were coded in order with relationship to relevant topics. This type of pre-analysis can start to influence future steps of the analysis as relevancies start to unfold.

Qualitative data analysis involved coding the data, dividing the text into small units, assigning a label to each unit, and then grouping the codes into themes. Codes can be developed from a few different places; the exact words of the participants, or phrases composed by the research. The coding process included the identification of emergent codes according to the research questions, survey questions, and interview protocol. Codes were then assembled, and grouped into broader themes according to each research question. The creation of categories is an interpretive process on the part of the researcher. The larger categories in this case, mostly aligned with specific interview protocols. Fragments, words, and phrases were highlighted, creating themes and concepts useful in analysis and presentation of the data.

The concept of coding is the core feature of qualitative data analysis, and groups the evidence and labels ideas so that they can reflect broader perspectives. The themes or larger perspectives are the findings that will provide answers to the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Themes are abstract constructs that investigators identify before, during, and after data collection. As additional data were read, much of in the process included looking for
similarities and regularities between the already established categories and themes. Words, phrases, and concepts that were addressed frequently by the participants became the foundational source of the themes of the study.

The analysis of qualitative data is presented in a manner that adheres to the theoretical framework, as well as my pragmatic lens. Presentation of the data in this manner gives importance to the activity, tools, and rules, as are common components of Activity Theory. Data have been presented in terms of the interview topics, which were based on research questions. My pragmatic viewpoint, and theoretical framework were the basis for my decision to present the qualitative data by topic area. Pragmatically, I was able to stress the importance of the topics by presenting their collective data in a way that emphasized the experience of individual participants, in accordance with the components of Activity Theory. When I was looking at the data through this framework, I was able identify the topics and correlate them to key parts of Activity Theory. The connection of the interview topics and data have been displayed in Chapter 5.

Through the evaluation of the data, I was able to read, and search for commonalities in concepts among participants. These commonalities became the foundation of themes. Additional emphasis was given to topics that were discussed for a longer period of time during the interview, as this typically showed importance to the participant. The themes were then evaluated for their connection with quantitative data. The main points that were developed through the qualitative and quantitative data became the themes for the study, were connected to the implications, and have been presented in Chapter 6.

*Qualitative Data Validation Protocols*

After the data were analyzed, validation procedures took place. Generally, checking for
Qualitative validity means assessing whether the information obtained through the qualitative data collection is accurate. While using the term validity may not seem connected to qualitative research, authors such as Hatch (2002), and Gall, Gall & Borg (2010) use the term validity in both quantitative and qualitative settings. In this portion of the study validation and validity do not refer to statistical measures, but rather, knowing that the data is reliable. Two common terms used to describe validity in qualitative research are trustworthiness and understanding.

Trustworthiness is important because it involves establishing confidence in the truths of the findings. Trustworthiness can be established by addressing the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the studies and findings. Researcher memos and member checking were used as a source of validation (Gay et al., 2009). Summaries of the findings have been presented to the participants, and they were asked if the findings accurately reflected their experiences. Participants read the data presentation, and findings to ensure accuracy. Hatch (2002) refers to trustworthiness as a necessary component of data validation and reliability.

Pilot Study

Consistency in the study has been maintained through the use of pilot studies. Pilot studies were completed for both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. In an effort to provide clarity, pilot study protocols from both phases have been discussed in the coming paragraphs.

A pilot study is a trial, and its purpose is to help produce a survey form that is usable and that will provide you with the information you need. All research should undergo this test before being put into practice. This process will quickly reveal whether people understand the directions you have provided and if they can answer the survey questions. Testing the survey helps it run smoothly (Fink, 2013).
A pilot study using the survey questionnaire developed by the researcher was completed. A link to the survey was sent by email to a panel of expert reviewers, as well as a group of high school band directors from school districts in states that offer formal assessment in large group band sight reading. The panel of expert reviewers included people from around the United States with terminal degrees in their field. The panel of expert reviewers included individuals with expertise in multiple methodological backgrounds. The size of the pilot study included 48 participants. Participants of the pilot study were not included in the formal study.

The goal in completing a pilot study was to gain information regarding the clarity of the survey items. Participants were not asked to complete the study to provide data for the research questions; however, participants were asked to provide feedback and comment on the survey. Pilot participants and expert reviewers were asked to respond to the following questions in the form of an email (see Appendix F). Suggestions for questions to ask when pilot testing a survey instrument were created by Fink (2003). Those questions are as shown in Figure 4.

The extent to which items in a single test are consistent among themselves and with the entire test is considered internal consistency reliability. In this study, Cronbach’s alpha was used to assess the internal reliability. This measures estimated internal consistency reliability by determining how all test items relate to all other items on the test, and the test as a whole.
Are instructions for completing the survey clearly written?
Are questions easy to understand?
Do you understand how to indicate your responses?
Are the response choices mutually exclusive?
Are the response choices exhaustive?
Do you understand what to do with the completed survey?
Do you understand when to return the completed questionnaire?
Do you feel that your privacy had been respected and protected?
Do you have any suggestions regarding the addition or deletion of questions, clarification of instructions, or improvements in questionnaire format?

Figure 4: Pilot Testing Guidelines

Following the pilot testing of the survey, a pilot of the interview phase also took place. A pilot interview with one participant occurred. Like the full-scale study, the participant of the quantitative phase was asked to volunteer for the qualitative portion of the study. During the pilot interview, sight-reading experience topics were discussed in accordance with the Proposed Sight-Reading Interview Topics (see Appendix H). After the interview topics were discussed, the participant was asked to react to the topics and questions regarding their understanding, and clarity.

After the pilot study was complete, the survey instrument and interview questions were revised, considering the respondents’ comments and concerns. The amount of time it takes to complete the survey and ask the interview questions were also considered. Once revisions to both were made, the full-scale study was ready for distribution.

Summary

In mixed methods research, qualitative and quantitative data are first analyzed separately according to the traditions of each methodology (Fitzpatrick, 2008). Each of the research questions have been presented along with a rationale for the use of the question, and how it might be answered. The theoretical framework, Activity Theory, that has been used in this study
was discussed with understanding that this framework has been influenced by my worldview as a pragmatist. This chapter also focused on providing an in-depth look at both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the sight-reading study. Sampling procedures, data collection instruments, and data analysis procedures have all been addressed.

In the coming chapters, detailed presentation and analysis of quantitative data will be found in Chapter 4, and likewise with the qualitative data in Chapter 5. In this study, because both forms of data should provide a wealth of information about sight reading and are valuable in their original state, the data has been compared through the use of a subsequent discussion. Techniques for merging the data have included convergent and divergent findings in a merged data analysis and transformation merged analysis. Both strategies listed above create meaningful ways to display both data types in a merged analysis. Throughout the final discussion in Chapter 6, merged data has been displayed and discussed using mixed methods techniques. Table 3 is a proposed timeline for the completion of this project.
CHAPTER IV
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the quantitative portion of this study will be presented. The quantitative phase provides a broad portrait of the participants of the study, and generates a perspective regarding instruction, director training, and participant attitudes in relation to large group sight-reading adjudication. The following sections will introduce and present data from *Sight-Reading Instruction, Training, and Attitude Survey (SRITAS)*.

Review of Questions

In alignment with the mixed methods design protocol, different data collection procedures have been used for each of the research questions. Two of the four research questions (questions two and three) were addressed by gathering data from the survey. The other research questions (questions one and four) were addressed through the researcher’s own inquiry via web searches, as well as the qualitative portion of this study, where data were collected through interviews.

When compiling questions for the SRITAS, no singular complete survey was found or was available that addressed the specific research questions of this study. Five different survey instruments that pertain to this topic of sight reading in large group band adjudication were located. Those survey instruments have been cited in Figure 2. These particular examples have been used because of their relationship to the purpose and research questions of the current study. These sources were the foundation from which the SRITAS was created. The survey instrument was constructed with eight sections and a total of 69 questions. Answer format included multiple choice, short answer and Likert scale options, depending on the question.
Sections of the survey included: director background, program information and background, sight-reading rehearsal instruction, reason or need to teach sight reading, director preparation and training, previous sight-reading experiences, sight-reading rehearsal and evaluation, and attitude.

Research Question Two

How do high school directors prepare themselves and their bands for sight-reading evaluation?

The quantitative phase of this study was one that garnered feedback regarding sight reading from members of the band director community from specific states across the country. The survey tool (SRITAS) that was developed to gather data from participants incorporated different areas of interest. In addition to participant background, a large portion of the survey addressed director preparation to teach sight reading in their classrooms, and how those directors train their students for sight-reading adjudication. Inquiry included questions regarding rehearsal structure, time allocation, pacing, and materials used to teach sight reading, and the training of the band director to teach this topic. This research question is looking for information on how these areas are addressed by directors around the country. A portion of the results from the survey was intended to answer this research question.

Research Question Three

What are band director attitudes toward sight-reading evaluation, and how do they impact instructional practices?

Within the same survey tool (SRITAS), one line of questioning revolved around band director attitudes toward sight-reading adjudication and instruction. These attitudinal statements were developed to include topics surrounding the procedural aspects of sight-reading adjudication, the reasons sight reading is taught in the classroom, and their own personal outlook on the necessity of sight-reading evaluation. Quantitative data were collected and subsequently
analyzed using descriptive statistics. This research question was developed to look for commonalities and differences in band director attitudes about sight-reading adjudication.

Survey Results

*Demographic Data*

The survey was distributed to 1020 band directors throughout the country. At the time the survey was distributed, 519 (51%) public school music educators opened the survey link. Of the 519 potential participants, 519 (100%) agreed to participate in the study. The director background portion of the study included six questions, including those intended to limit participation in the study. Further limitations were placed on survey participation based on the requirements of this study, and will be discussed in the following sections.

Prior to 2010, there was no assessment of coast-to-coast practices concerning sight reading at adjudicated band festivals. Therefore, the purpose of the work done by Paul (2010) was to gather and examine sight-reading requirements at district or regional festivals where large numbers of students would be asked to show their sight-reading competency. For the purposes of this study, it was necessary to know which states include an organized system of band festivals, and if there was a required sight-reading assessment at each of the state large group festivals.

In the results of his study, Paul (2010) indicated 30 states that either require or offer sight reading as a part of their large group performance assessment. Survey responses indicate representation from all 30 states. A listing of each state represented and the number of participating directors from each state has been provided in Table 4.
Table 4

Participant Representation by State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Percent of the Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The educational background of the participants has been illustrated in Table 5 showing that all respondents hold at least a bachelor’s degree in music. The majority (58%) of the directors in
This study holds a master’s degree in the field of music. Very few participants (2%) have earned a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) or Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA).

**Table 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D. or DMA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>510</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The nature of this study requires only participants who have taught high school band to be included. Directors who have only taught age levels other than high school were excluded. Based on a survey question posed to limit participation, 48 of the directors indicated they had not taught high school band, were automatically guided to the end of the survey and their responses excluded from the data. This limiting question reduced the participants to 89% of the original response number, creating a sample of \( N = 462 \). Further exclusions to participation were made regarding whether a director had participated in sight-reading adjudication with their ensemble. Of the 462 participants, 90 indicated that they had not been involved with sight-reading adjudication; these respondents were also automatically guided to the end of the survey, and their responses excluded from the study. The remaining 77% (\( n = 372 \)) of those taking the survey indicated that they had participated in high school, large group sight-reading adjudication with their ensembles, and therefore were able to continue to be participants in the study (\( n = 372 \)).

The final response rate was 37% of the initial 1020 surveys that were sent.

Results of the study showed that teaching experience ranged from one year to more than 36 years of teaching. The majority of participants (30) had taught for two or eight years. Directors in
this study averaged 15 years of teaching, and most had been in the same position for 10 years. More than half of the respondents (51%) were in their first seven years of teaching.

The second section of the survey examined school and program background information. Ten questions were included, aimed at investigating the details of the school band programs in which the participants taught. The number of students participating in each of the director’s band programs ranged from 25 students to 305 students, with a mean size of 168 students.

On average, directors who participated in this study instruct one ensemble as part of their teaching duties. The number of bands taught by participants is displayed in Table 6. The majority (54%) of directors are responsible for teaching only one band, while only 3% of directors are responsible for directing four bands. No participant was responsible for teaching more than four bands.

Table 6
Participant Teaching Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Bands</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequency of the ensemble rehearsals varied from once per week to more than five times per week. The majority of directors (72%) rehearse their ensembles five times per week. The length of rehearsals ranged from less than 30 minutes (2%) to more than 60 minutes (35%). A rehearsal lasting 30 minutes to 60 minutes was the most common among the participants (62%). Rehearsal frequency and length are outlined in Tables 7 and 8.
Table 7

Participant Rehearsal Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rehearsals</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once Per Week</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 Times Per Week</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Times Per Week</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 Times Per Week</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8

Participant Rehearsal Length

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Rehearsal</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 30 minutes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-60 minutes</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 60 minutes</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 372 participants, 369 indicated that they participate in large group adjudication with their ensemble. All (100%) of the participants that participate with their ensembles in large group adjudication (369) noted that there was a sight-reading component to the adjudication. The size of the student population varied greatly from school to school. School size of the participants varied from 240-2,000 with an average student population of 932. The majority of high schools represented in this study house students in grades nine through 12, with only 1% of the schools contained only grades 10-12.

*Sight Reading in the Classroom*

One section of the SRITAS was specifically designed to investigate procedural practices of sight-reading education in the day-to-day classroom. There were six survey questions included in this section. The following paragraphs will look at frequency and length of instruction, instructional tools, and logistical concerns in regard to teaching sight reading.
All the participants (100%) indicated that they teach sight reading to all the ensembles they direct. The frequency of sight-reading instruction varied from less than once a month (8%) to daily (10%). The majority of participants (53%) teach sight reading to their students one to three times per week in their ensemble rehearsals. Sight-reading instruction within the rehearsal setting has been outlined in Table 9.

Table 9
Participant Sight-Reading Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than Once a Month</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a Month</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 Times a Month</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a Week</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 Times a Week</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please explain</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants were asked to explain their answer if the appropriate response was not provided as an option. The survey question was: How often do you teach sight reading to the group that you take to sight-reading adjudication? Open-ended responses have been recorded in Figure 5.
It depends on the time of year, minimum once a week, maximum every day.

We start our system of sight reading in our beginning band and continue to build those fundamentals all the way through high school.

Rhythm and note reading exercises are incorporated into our warm-up daily.

We practice the logistical parts of sight-reading adjudication when we read a new piece, but we practice scales, and rhythmic or melodic excerpts daily.

Daily, beginning in the second semester.

In the last few weeks before the adjudication we will incorporate reading the full piece to practice the process used at the festival.

Figure 5: Participant Sight-Reading Frequency Open-Ended Responses

The frequency of sight-reading instruction has already been discussed, however the length of rehearsal time spent on sight reading rehearsal has not. Participants were asked to indicate how much of their rehearsal time was spent on sight reading on the days in which it was taught. A vast majority (75%) of the directors stated that they spent 5-15 minutes of their rehearsal time on sight-reading instruction. Some directors (8%) spend fewer than five minutes of their rehearsal on sight-reading instruction, while more than 15 minutes of rehearsal time was dedicated to sight reading by 17% of the participants. Methods of sight-reading instruction will be discussed in the coming sections.

The next few questions in the survey addressed the way sight-reading instruction is delivered. More than half (61%) of directors indicated that they do not use a specified book or published method to teach sight reading to their students. Those directors (39%) that do use a book or published method were asked to indicate what they used. A compiled list of the sight-reading methods used by directors, along with the author, and publication information has been outlined in Table 10.
Table 10
Sight-Reading Methods/Books

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 Days to Sight Reading Excellence</td>
<td>Cotov/Murphy</td>
<td>Music Educators Resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 Rhythmic Rest Patterns</td>
<td>Yaus</td>
<td>Alfred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Weeks to a Better Band</td>
<td>Maxwell</td>
<td>Barnhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>204 Sight Reading Tunes</td>
<td>Winslow</td>
<td>Harold Gore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 Rhythmic Studies</td>
<td>Yaus</td>
<td>Alfred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accent of Achievement</td>
<td>O’Reilly/Williams</td>
<td>Alfred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bach and Before for Band</td>
<td>Newell</td>
<td>Kjos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basics in Rhythm</td>
<td>Whaley</td>
<td>Kjos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best in Class</td>
<td>Pearson</td>
<td>Kjos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorales and Rhythm Etudes</td>
<td>Hilliard</td>
<td>FJH Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercises for Ensemble Drill</td>
<td>Fussell</td>
<td>Belwin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentals for Superior Performance</td>
<td>Williams/King</td>
<td>Kjos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habits of a Successful Musician</td>
<td>Rush</td>
<td>GIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habits of Musicianship</td>
<td>Duke/Byo</td>
<td>Center for Music Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonized Rhythms</td>
<td>Thorton</td>
<td>Kjos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm Builders</td>
<td>Curnow</td>
<td>Hal Leonard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm Sets</td>
<td>Akey</td>
<td>Alfred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphonic Warm-ups</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Hal Leonard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sight Reading Book for Band</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Wingert-Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winning Rhythms</td>
<td>Edwards</td>
<td>Kjos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Directors were asked about other rehearsal techniques and methods that they would have considered as sight-reading instruction. Regardless of which published method was used for instruction, or if no method was used at all, respondents indicated several other instructional techniques that were considered part of their sight-reading instruction. Rhythm exercises are considered sight-reading instruction by 95% of the directors. Unison melodic excerpts are used to teach sight reading by 72% of the directors. Pieces written for full band are used for sight-reading instruction by 99% of the participants, even though a third of the directors find the logistical hassles of sight reading a full piece detrimental to the sight-reading process.

Presenting the Data

The next portion of this study asked participant directors to respond to Likert scale
Reason and Need to Teach Sight Reading

The first topic was the reason or need to teach sight reading. Statements asked the participants about their reasons for teaching or not teaching sight reading in their classrooms. The four statements that comprised this section were answered by 366-369 of the participants. Most notable is that all participants who answered this question (369) stated that band directors should teach sight reading in their classrooms. The list of statements included in the Reason or Need to Teach Sight-Reading topic are displayed in Figure 6. Data gained from this portion of the survey is listed in Table 11.

High school band directors should teach sight reading because their state and/or school district require it.

High school band directors should teach sight reading because of the NAfME National Standards.

High school band students should learn to sight read because they go to sight-reading adjudication.

High school band directors should teach sight reading to their band students.

Figure 6: Reason or Need to Teach Sight-Reading Statements
Table 11
Reason or Need to Teach Sight-Reading Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State or district requirement</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAfME Standards</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight read in adjudicated events</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should teach sight reading</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Director Preparation and Training

The next topic was director preparation and training. Statements asked the participants to respond about training in their personal sight reading, their abilities to teach sight reading and information about their training to do both. The eight statements that comprised this section were answered by 363-366 of the participants. More than 50% of the participants (192) do not believe that it is easy to find professional development to aid in their growth as a teacher of sight reading; however, 88% (321) state that they would seek out these professional development opportunities if they felt that they needed more training in this area. The list of the statements included in the director preparation and training topic is displayed in Figure 7. Data from this portion of the survey is listed in Table 12.
I seek out professional development opportunities in sight reading.  
Sight-reading instruction is a focus at events such as conferences/clinics/meetings.  
It is easy to find professional development in sight reading.  
Sight reading is difficult to teach.  
I feel qualified to teach sight reading.  
I think I could make sight-reading instruction exciting for my students.  
I feel very positive about my own ability to sight read.  
I feel well-prepared to teach sight reading in a high school band rehearsal.

*Figure 7: Director Preparation and Training Statements*

*Table 12*

**Preparation and Training Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seek out professional development</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight reading at conferences</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find professional development</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight reading is difficult to teach</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified to teach sight reading</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sight reading exciting</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive in my own sight-reading abilities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared to teach sight reading</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Previous Sight-Reading Experiences

The third topic was previous sight-reading experiences. Statements asked the participants about their background in sight reading as both a teacher and performer. A variety of time frames were also addressed, from the participant’s high school experiences, through many levels of their collegiate years. The six statements that comprised this section were answered by 330-366 of the participants. Director participants (240) state that as an undergraduate student, they spent much time sight reading. More respondents (120) did not agree that their college band director was an advocate of sight-reading practice than those that agreed (117). The list of the statements included in the previous sight-reading experiences topic is displayed in Figure 8. Data gained from this portion of the survey is listed in Table 13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sight-reading instruction was addressed in my doctoral degree program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight-reading instruction was addressed in my master's degree program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a high school band student, I had good sight-reading training in band.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My college band director was a strong advocate for regular sight-reading practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My collegiate band did not spend any time practicing sight reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As an undergraduate music student, I spent much time sight reading.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8: Previous Sight-Reading Experiences Statements
Table 13

Previous Sight-Reading Experiences Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sight-reading instruction in doctoral program</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight-reading instruction in master’s program</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight-reading training in high school</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College band director sight-reading advocate</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College band did not sight read</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sight read a lot</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sight Reading Rehearsal and Evaluation

The fourth topic was sight-reading rehearsal and evaluation. Statements asked the participants about their perceptions of their students’ desire to sight read, as well as the impact that sight reading has on the way their band learns music. The 11 statements that comprised this section were answered by 357-366 of the participants. The majority of the directors (232) indicated that they believed their students enjoy sight reading. A total of 97% of the participants (354) indicated that teaching and practicing sight reading is well worth the time it takes to practice it. The list of the statements included in the sight-reading rehearsal and evaluation topic is displayed in Figure 9. Data gained from this portion of the survey is listed in Table 14.
I would spend less time on sight reading if it were not required at district band contest.
My band meets too seldom to include sight-reading instruction in the rehearsal.
My band would not learn music any faster if I spent more time teaching sight reading.
My band would learn music much faster if I spent more time teaching sight reading.
I do not feel that there is much need for teaching sight reading in rehearsal.
I believe that the time I spend teaching sight reading in rehearsal is well worth it.
My band would not be successful at contest if there were a sight-reading component.
I think my students do not like spending time practicing sight reading in rehearsal.
I do not have time to teach sight reading.
I think district contest should include sight reading as part of the final rating.
My students enjoy sight reading.

Figure 9: Sight Reading Rehearsal and Evaluation Statements
Table 14
Sight-Reading Rehearsal and Evaluation Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No sight reading if not at festival</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough rehearsal to sight read</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not learn faster with sight reading</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn faster with sight reading</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight reading is worth the time</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band not successful with sight reading</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students do not like practicing sight reading</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time prohibits sight reading</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival should include sight reading</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students enjoy sight reading</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attitude

The fifth topic was attitude. Statements asked the participants about their attitudes, and perceptions of their students’ attitudes toward sight reading in both the rehearsal room and adjudication. The 18 statements that comprised this section were answered by 351-357 of the participants. A vast majority (98%) of the directors believe that sight-reading activities are
beneficial for the development of their students, are important for both high- and low-
achieving students, and that sight reading increases performance confidence in their students.
More than 75% of the participants generally feel good about the sight-reading adjudication,
judges, and process in which they participate.

Participant answers were fairly even when asked if festival would be more beneficial
without the sight-reading portion, however 243 of the respondents felt that festival was, at least
in part, beneficial to their students because of the sight-reading component. Based of the
director’s perceptions of how their students felt, 120 directors disagreed that their students were
afraid to sight read, and 102 directors agreed that their students were afraid to sight read. The
majority of the directors (237) indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement
that their students enjoy sight reading while in a rehearsal setting. The list of the statements
included in the attitudes in sight-reading adjudication topic are displayed in Figure 10. Data
gained from this portion of the survey is listed in Table 15.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I generally have a positive attitude toward the sight-reading adjudication.</th>
<th>Figure 10: Attitude Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I generally have a positive attitude toward sight reading as a part of the rehearsal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjudicators at our sight-reading adjudication are knowledgeable, positive, and helpful.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am pleased with the format/procedures and operation of the sight reading adjudication.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The format of our sight-reading adjudication is conducive to the success of my students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments received at sight-reading adjudication are beneficial to my students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in festival might be good for my students if sight reading was not included.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in festival is beneficial for my students because of the sight-reading component.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students demonstrate sight reading as a large ensemble at concerts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students are afraid to sight read.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students enjoy sight reading as a part of a contest/festival.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students enjoy sight reading while in the rehearsal setting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight reading at contest/festival does not motivate my students to want to participate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight reading activities are an excellent way for students to show their musical knowledge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight reading helps to motivate my students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight-reading activities help increase the performance confidence of my students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight-reading activities are beneficial for both high- and low-achieving students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight-reading activities are an important part of the musical development of my students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15
Attitude Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive about sight-reading instruction</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive about sight reading in rehearsal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjudicators are helpful</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleased with sight-reading procedures</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjudicated format successful</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight-reading comments beneficial</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival more beneficial without sight reading</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival is beneficial because of sight reading</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate sight reading at concerts</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students afraid to sight read</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy sight reading while at festival</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjudicated sight reading does not motivate students</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate musical knowledge</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student motivation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance confidence of my students</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High- and low-achieving students</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical development</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Applying Quantitative Data to the Research Questions

With the qualitative data in mind, I will move toward answering the research questions. Research questions two and three are the questions that will be answered by the quantitative data. Given the data as presented throughout Chapter 4, answers to two of the four research questions have been provided in the coming section. Answers to questions one and four will be addressed in Chapter 5.

Question Two: *How do high school directors prepare themselves and their bands for sight-reading evaluation?*

Responses to survey questions have provided a great deal of information regarding the ways directors prepare themselves and their bands for sight-reading adjudication, as well as their view about their current ability to train their students. All directors who participated in this study do teach sight reading to the students in their performing ensembles.

Discrepancies were found between what participants considered as sight-reading material. When teaching the skill of sight reading, some directors use rhythmic or melodic exercises. However, there are several teachers who shared that when they are teaching the procedure of sight reading, pieces written for full band will be used. During this allotted time for teaching sight reading, most of the directors do not use a specified book or method to teach sight reading. Instead, directors often create different instructional techniques using rhythm exercises, unison melodic excerpts, and full pieces for band. The frequency of teaching sight reading varied from once a month to daily. The majority of participants taught sight reading one to three times per week for five to 15 minutes each time.

There was agreement that teaching sight reading is an important part of a solid music education. A variety of reasons were given by the directors for the importance of teaching sight
reading. Common reasons given for teaching sight reading included: sight reading is one of the National Standards for Music Education, sight reading is a primary goal of every independent musician, and sight reading is a requirement at local and state adjudicated events. Regardless of the reason, it is evident that all band directors included in this study said that teaching sight reading is an important part of their band curriculum.

Band directors generally feel qualified and prepared to teach sight reading to their students. Most of the band directors made strong statements regarding their desire and willingness to seek out professional development in any area that is needed. In addition, directors have a strong desire to seek out professional development to aid their growth as a teacher of sight reading, however, professional development in this area is not easy to find. Directors do not have significant recollections of being taught to sight read throughout their time in teacher training programs, or even as musicians themselves. When specifically asked when they learned to sight read, participants were not able to provide clear, definitive answers; instead there were moments of recalling that they had not been taught to sight read, or taught to teach sight reading. Even more poignant statements came from a few of the directors when, during the interview, they realized that there were missed opportunities to be taught sight-reading techniques throughout their times in college or university ensemble and pre-service teacher training classes. Through detailed conversations with some directors it has become clear that the more confident they are as a sight-reading musician, the more confident they are in teaching the skill of sight reading to their students.
Question Three: *What are band director attitudes toward sight-reading evaluation, and how do they influence instructional practices?*

Results from both the qualitative and quantitative phases of this study show that band directors overwhelmingly agree that sight reading is beneficial for their students. Consistent work in sight reading provides musical knowledge, growth and development, confidence in their performance abilities, and reaches students at all ability levels. Band directors have shown that there is a generally positive attitude toward sight reading in both the rehearsal room and adjudicated festivals.

Looking beyond the general attitude statement of feeling that sight reading is positive for students, there are a lot of inconsistencies in attitudes of band directors about sight reading adjudication. Consistent differences in attitudes revolve around sight reading in the rehearsal room as opposed to sight reading as a part of an adjudicated festival. Directors attest that many more of their students seem to enjoy the process of sight reading in the rehearsal room than they do in adjudication. Similarly, directors comment that they, as directors, have a more positive attitude toward sight reading in rehearsal than they do in adjudication.

Inconsistencies continue to exist when it comes to director attitudes about the adjudication and judges. In the survey, when invited to write comments about their attitudes regarding sight-reading judges, directors made positive statements about the judges’ contribution to the overall process and the experience of their students. Directors attributed the overall positivity in sight-reading adjudication to knowledgeable and helpful adjudicators. It is also believed by directors that the comments and suggestions made by the adjudicators were helpful for positive student growth. Contrary to the positive comments given in the survey, primarily negative comments were made about the adjudicators in the qualitative interviews. The majority
of interview participants had neutral or negative perspectives on the adjudicators that were present during their sight-reading adjudication. In fact, commentary from the interview transcripts stated that adjudicators often made students and directors feel uneasy, uncomfortable, and added tension to the room. Adjudicators’ comments were knowledgeable, but not necessarily helpful for the present circumstance. The overarching theme to all comments made about the adjudicators was that their demeanor and interaction with other people in room, directors and students, highly impacted the attitudes of the directors about their experiences in sight-reading adjudication, much more than the actual process of sight reading itself.

The other main area that showed inconsistencies among director responses was whether the incorporation of the sight-reading component as a part of the adjudicated festival performance was beneficial to their students. Through survey responses we can see that the vast majority of directors agree that the sight-reading component of the adjudicated festival is indeed beneficial for their students. However, the responses within the survey also indicate that the majority of directors also feel that the adjudicated festival process would be better without the sight-reading component. Open-ended responses by directors substantiate this difference of opinion with two bold statements: participation in festival might be good for my students if sight reading was not included, and participation in festival is beneficial for my students because of the sight-reading component.

In conversation with directors, it became clear that if they felt more positive about the potential for a good experience in sight-reading adjudication, then they were more positive about teaching sight reading to their students. All the directors could agree on the fact that one of the universal goals in teaching sight reading is to improve student musicianship. There were several other reasons given as to why sight reading is important, such as looking at music for their
younger ensembles, and defining music level difficulty for their current ensembles. Their attitudes about these additional reasons spurred enthusiasm about the topic of sight reading.

Chapter Summary

This chapter was dedicated to the analysis of the responses made by the participating directors. The results of the Phase 1 survey provide a broad portrait of sight-reading instruction and adjudication throughout the United States. The survey instrument (SRITAS) was developed with the guidance of several surveys used as source material. Through this analysis, there were some areas that would warrant further discussion and analysis in conjunction with the coming qualitative data. Data were analyzed within the predetermined categories within the survey.

General results of the Phase 1 survey reveal that participants use varied structures to teach sight reading within their schools. A mixture of attitudes was shown when it comes to sight-reading adjudication. All participants believe that sight-reading is an important aspect of the music education of a child, but the way that education happens shows great diversity.

The majority of participants in this study have earned a master’s degree in music education, have a wide variety of years of experience, and take one ensemble to an event that includes sight-reading evaluation. This foundation of strong participants could provide detailed information about the manner in which they teach sight reading to their students in their rehearsals. Participants teach sight reading to their students one to three times a week for five to 15 minutes, averaging 20 minutes of rehearsal time per week on sight-reading instruction.

Data showed a discrepancy in what participants considered as sight-reading material. When teaching the skill of sight reading, some directors use rhythmic or melodic exercises, which are 16-32 measures in length, and typically are provided in a method book or created by the director. In contrast, when teaching the procedure of sight reading, many directors will use
pieces that have been written for full band. They are passed out to the students, the adjudication procedures are followed, the piece is read, and then collected again from the students. Although reviewing the procedural aspects of sight reading is important, many directors find that particular method cumbersome and time consuming.

All the directors, to varying degrees agreed that teaching sight reading in their classrooms was an important part of the curriculum. Although there was agreement about the s importance of teaching sight reading, the reasons for its importance varied greatly. Common reasons given for teaching sight reading included: sight reading is one of the National Standards for Music Education, sight reading is a primary goal of every independent musician, and sight reading is a requirement at local and state adjudicated events. Regardless of the reason, it is evident that all band directors included in this study said that teaching sight reading is an important part of their band curriculum.

Most of the band directors made strong statements regarding their desire and willingness to seek out professional development in any area that is needed, but specifically sight-reading instruction and adjudication. There were equally strong statements made regarding the participants’ discouragement at the lack of professional development that seems to be available in the area of sight reading. There is a desire for more sessions about sight reading to be included at professional conferences to assist directors in their preparation to teach sight reading.

Band directors stated that they, as practicing musicians, they have had much experience sight reading on their individual instruments. Most of those experiences occurred during applied lessons, individual practice time, or professional performance opportunities. Regarding teaching sight reading to a large ensemble, however, participants strongly stated that they did not feel adequate training was received in this area. The majority of participants stated they received
little, if any, instruction during their collegiate experience, on teaching sight reading to a large ensemble.

A large portion of the survey was dedicated to attitudes about sight-reading instruction. Band directors generally maintain a positive attitude regarding sight reading both in rehearsal and in adjudication. The teachers included in this study feel that their adjudicated festivals are beneficial, in part due to the evaluation of sight reading, but that their students enjoy sight reading in rehearsal more than as a part of the adjudication process. Band directors agree that sight reading is one of the parts of the curriculum that is inclusive of all students regardless of ability level. Students can sight read individually at whatever level is appropriate for them, promoting achievement for ability levels.

This summary has included particularly poignant information within each topical area, and will be further addressed throughout the final chapter where the research questions will be explored, as well as discussion, and implications for future research. The purpose of the following chapter is two-fold. Phase 2 of this study was the qualitative portion. The first section will present procedural information about the logistics of sight reading in each of the 30 states. The second section will give a focused, in-depth look at six individual teachers in regard to their beliefs and practices in sight reading. Conclusions, analysis, and discussion will occur in the final chapter.
CHAPTER V
QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Introduction

The mixed methods *Sequential Explanatory Design (SED)* consists of two distinct phases: quantitative followed by qualitative (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Based on the format of this design, I first collected the quantitative data, and then collected the qualitative data. The second, qualitative phase builds on the first, quantitative phase, and the two phases are connected in the final, analysis stage of the study. The qualitative data and their analysis refines and explains those statistical results by exploring participants’ views in more depth.

In this chapter, the results of qualitative researcher inquiry, and interview portions of this study have been presented. The qualitative phase provides a broad portrait of each state’s sight-reading procedures, as well as a more in-depth look at individual director sight-reading experiences. The following sections will introduce and present data from both the researcher inquiry of procedural information as well as participant background and data from the interviews based on personal sight-reading adjudication experiences.

Review of Questions

In this chapter, I have first reviewed the qualitative research questions, and then reviewed the methodology used for those questions. Next, I have presented the data that was gathered when researching sight-reading procedural information in each of the states that use sight-reading performance evaluation. Finally, the interview participants were introduced, and data from their interviews will be presented.

Two of the four research questions (questions one and four) were addressed by gathering data using various qualitative research techniques. Researcher inquiry via web searches and
Interviews were used to collect qualitative data in this portion of the study. As we discussed in Chapter 4, a survey was used to gather data to address the other two research questions (questions two and three).

*What experiences of sight-reading evaluation impact participant views in high school band settings?*

The qualitative phase of this study was one that garnered feedback regarding sight reading from members of the band director community across the country. The interview questions were developed based on the survey topics. Additional questions were aimed at discussing sight-reading experiences as both performers and teachers. This question is looking for how previous sight-reading experiences impact the way a director uses, teaches, or leads sight reading in their classroom. The interview topics were aimed at answering this research question.

*What procedures are common to high school band sight-reading events in the United States?*

A different part of the qualitative phase of this study was one that garnered feedback regarding sight-reading procedures from states and organizations across the country. Through researcher inquiry into the details of sight-reading procedures in each state, basic information on common sight-reading adjudication procedures was gathered. Answers to this question intend to show similarities and differences among the states as far as the procedural aspects of sight-reading adjudication are concerned.

**Review of Qualitative Methodology**

The initial qualitative investigation was completed by the researcher through online investigation. The list of states that offer sight-reading adjudication (Paul, 2010) was used as a starting point for this investigation. With these 30 states on the list, research was done via the Internet to find information regarding the sight-reading procedures for each of those states. When
there was a situation in which the data could not be readily found online, the researcher made contact via email with a person in the organization who may have the answers to the questions. If the initial person contacted was incorrect, typically they provided a new contact person that would have the right information.

The qualitative phase of this study utilized interviews to investigate sight-reading evaluation further. Directors’ attitudes regarding their experiences during the large group adjudicated sight reading, what they perceive their students’ feelings are about their experiences, and how those attitudes impact their instructional practices in the classroom were all focused talking points. Interviews involved the collection of verbal data through direct interaction between the researcher and the individuals being studied. After the survey portion of this study, select participants volunteered for a more thorough, in-depth look at their attitudes about sight reading, which is also an essential goal of this research. The rich, narrative details that will come from this form of inquiry are essential to our perception of the participants’ feelings about sight reading. Qualitative data from interviews will provide a more detailed understanding of the numerical evidence, and give us more information that the numbers alone cannot show.

Presentation of State Sight-Reading Procedures

With the 30 states on the sight-reading list, research was done via the Internet to find information regarding the sight-reading procedures for each of those states. The data inquiry sought to reveal a few specific pieces of information on each state. Categories included: 1) what is the organization that sponsors the sight-reading evaluation, 2) what is the name of the event that incorporates sight-reading evaluation, 3) does the sight-reading portion of the event occur before or after the performance of the prepared pieces, 4) how much, if any, study time is allotted for analysis of the sight-reading piece by both the director and the students, 5) what type of
instruction is permitted by the director during the study time(s), 6) are the students permitted to
be actively involved in the study process by means of talking, playing, clapping or other
methods, 7) what, if any, is the specified warm up allowed in the sight-reading room, 8) what
commentary is allowed by the director once that performance of the sight-reading piece has
started, 9) is there time allowed for follow-up commentary by the adjudicator.

Data searches started with the NAfME affiliate organizations, followed by web searches
for band sight-reading events in the state of inquiry. Most often, using one of these two methods
garnered the desired information. Typically, something similar to a handbook of procedures,
rules for the adjudication, or script for the adjudicator provided the data as needed. For a
complete list, see Appendix G or the reference list.

Although the method discussed above was able to yield much of the desired data, for some
of the states, information could not be found by those methods. In those situations, the next step
that was taken was band association executive directors or band chairpersons in each of the
remaining states received an email. The email included information about this study, as well as a
list of the procedural data that was desired. In some cases, a return email was sent with a
document attached providing the requested information. Over a period of several weeks, data
were collected from all 30 of the states to be included in the study.

Initial inquiry in this study was based on states that provide evaluation in sight reading as
identified by Paul (2010) in his study, *Sight-Reading Requirements at Concert Band Festival: A
National Survey*. In a replication and extension of a survey conducted by Norris (2004), Paul
collected data from the 50 states in the United States via a survey of five questions, and focused
on those festivals where the most students might be expected to evidence sight-reading
proficiency at the district or regional levels.
Large group sight-reading data were acquired from 25 of the states identified by Paul, however, in the other five states data that was retrieved was not what was expected. Responses to the emails from state adjudication leaders in Connecticut, Illinois, New York, Massachusetts, and Utah explained that large group sight-reading evaluation does not currently exist in their state. The state of Illinois has recently changed the rules of their adjudication, and no longer includes sight reading as a part of that evaluation. Massachusetts and Connecticut incorporate sight-reading evaluation on an individual basis as a part of the solo festivals, but not as part of the large group evaluations. Massachusetts and New York do not and have not provided a large group assessment in sight reading.

The following section will present data for each of the states divided by procedural questions. Brief, short answers have been provided for the answers to the questions, and a complete listing of all details have been included in Appendix G. In the event that information was not available, it is listed as unknown or unspecified. It is important to note that all 30 of the states indicated by Paul (2010) have been included in the tables of Appendix G. The states that do not include large group sight reading — Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, and Utah — have been marked.

Sponsoring organizations vary from state to state and can include the state National Association for Music Education (NAfME) affiliate, an association for band directors, or the activity association associated with the secondary schools in the state. Each state has an organization that is listed as the NAfME affiliate, and in many cases, that is the organization that sponsors large group band performance evaluations that include sight reading, however, there are several states in which this is not the case. It is necessary to know which organization sponsors the activity to find out more information about the event. Some states regulate all activities that
occur within a public secondary school, in those cases the secondary schools’ activities organization was the one sponsoring the sight-reading assessment. Organization titles can be found in Appendix G.

Although the concepts of large group competitive events are similar in each state, the title that the event has been given differs from state to state. Within each of these large group events, some type of large group sight-reading evaluation has been incorporated. The different titles for the events have been included in the definitions of the study and consequently, used interchangeably throughout the remainder of the study. Names of the events in each state have been listed in Appendix G.

Information regarding the sight-reading evaluation placement within the event was one of the areas researched. Whether the sight-reading portion takes place before or after the performance of the prepared pieces is displayed in Appendix G. In almost all cases that are known, the sight-reading portion of the evaluation takes place after the performance of the prepared pieces. The performance of the music that is prepared by the band well in advance takes place first, and then is followed by the performance of the sight-reading piece.

In each state, there is an amount of time allocated for studying the new piece of music. Study periods include one for silent study of both the students, and the director, and usually a second period that is allocated for instructions given by the director. Typically, a given amount of study time is allocated in preparation for the sight reading. This time frame differs from state to state, but is generally between three and five minutes. In cases where two different times are noted, that indicates there are two different segments to the study period. In Mississippi, North Carolina, New Mexico, and Texas, the timing changes based on the difficulty/length of the piece. The data presented in Appendix G is the known timing information for the study period leading
up to the performance of the sight-reading evaluation piece.

During the second study period, it is customary in all states that the director had time to go over the piece with the students. Director commentary and teaching techniques are allowed during the study periods prior to the actual sight reading of the piece. Typically, during the study periods, or after the initial study period, there is a second section of time that allows directors to talk, clap, count, sing, or use other techniques that will assist the students in their performance of the sight-reading piece. Information on what directors can do during that study time is displayed in Appendix G.

Throughout the second study period, during which director instruction also occurs, students are often encouraged to be actively engaged in the process. Student participation during the study period prior to sight reading the piece is most often allowed and encouraged. In all the states, students are permitted to be actively involved in the study period by talking, singing, clapping, asking questions, etc. Appendix G contains information about which states permit student participation during one or more of the study periods leading up to the performance of the sight-reading piece.

Prior to the performance of the sight-reading piece, a warm-up time is allowed. A warm-up for an instrumental ensemble can be anything from one note to a lengthy warm-up. Since the bands had just finished playing their prepared pieces, a full warm up was not necessary; however, acclimating to the room with a few notes was very helpful. In all known settings, the ensemble is permitted to play some warm-up notes or exercises prior to the performance of the sight-reading piece. Specific state information is shown in Appendix G.

There is a lack of consistency as to whether directors are allowed to coach their students during the actual performance of the sight-reading piece. In some states such as Ohio, Michigan,
Mississippi, and Maryland, directors are permitted to comment as much as they would like to
during the performance of the sight-reading piece. In many of the other states, the directors are
allowed to speak to start the piece, or to call out rehearsal marks as needed, but are
not permitted to assist in any other verbal manner. Appendix G is a list of the states and what
type of director commentary is permitted during the performance of the sight-reading piece.

All the above data have been collected from websites and documents provided by the
individual states that were examined. Initial attempts to gather information included examining
websites associated with the NAfME state affiliate, state band associations, state music
organizations, or state activities associations and searching for links of handbooks, or
adjudication manuals. If the website did not provide a clear answer concerning the questions,
chairpersons of the event received an email containing the basic tenants of the research and the
questions.

Over the course of several months, details were gathered from each state in accordance to
what was presented in their handbook or adjudication materials. Specific details that were
examined in each state were: 1) the hosting organization of the sight-reading adjudication, 2) the
name of the event, 3) the placement of the sight-reading component, 4) the time allotted to study
the sight-reading music, 5) what is allowed by the director during the study time, 6) the student
participation allowed during study time, 7) the warm-up allowed during sight-reading
performance, and 8) the director comments allowed during sight-reading performance.

Interview Results

This portion of Chapter 5 contains summaries of each individual interview. At the end of
each quantitative survey, participants were invited to contact the researcher if they would be
willing to participate in a follow-up interview. Email contact was made from the participant to
The researcher to express interest and willingness to participate in the interview.

The researcher selected the six participants in order of response and location within the United States. The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) is broken into six regions; Eastern, North Central, Northwestern, Southern, Southwest, and Western. The states included in each region are listed in Figure 2. As this is a nationwide study, assuring representation from each of the NAfME regions was of utmost importance to the study.

Securing one participant from each region was achieved, covering a large geographic area, and therefore increasing the generalizability of this study. Geographic regional data for each participant can be found in Table 16. The following section will introduce each interview participant and present their viewpoint on sight reading based on the interview questions.

Table 16
Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>NAfME Region</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>North Central Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Southern Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Eastern Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>Northwest Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Western Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholas</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>Southwest Region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The contents of these six interviews are based on their telephone conversations with the researcher. Interview notes included timing of the questions and answers, and colloquial interactions. The average time for all interviews was 31 minutes. The length of time spent discussing each topic varied from person to person. Each participant spent between seven and eight minutes talking about his or her personal background including education and teaching experience. At the end of the interview, each participant was given the opportunity to share other information that they thought I might find pertinent to the study. No participants offered any
more information. Through all the interviews every attempt was made to maintain a relaxed and engaged conversation with each of the participants. I did not stop them from talking about a topic or answering a specific question. I did, however, attempt to keep them on the appropriate topic through general conversational methods.

Audio files were transcribed by the researcher, and supplemented with additional notes taken by the researcher during the actual interview. The transcription of approximately three and a half hours of recorded interview material started approximately one month after the initial interviews began. The transcription process continued for three months. In order to check data, every participant was given the opportunity to read and review the transcription for accuracy. As interview transcripts were completed, they were forwarded to each participant for review and editing suggestions. This member-checking component of the research continued until each participant responded, approximately two weeks after they were sent to the participant.

_Participant Introduction_

The participants voluntarily contacted me via email after they completed the survey if they were willing to participate in the interview portion of the study. We will meet each participant with a brief background introduction, and we will delve further into the remainder of their responses later in the chapter. To be consistent I described each participant with the same background elements. Participants were asked to classify their school as urban, suburban, or rural based on the general population around their district. We will get to know them more as the questions unfold within this chapter.
James: The Confident West Coaster

James is a high school band director in the North Central Region of NAfME. He has been teaching band students for 17 years. His career started with only middle school students, grades 5-8, but for the past 14 years has been with high school students, grades 9-12. The positions he has held were in multiple states, and have been in both rural and urban settings. James’ initial feeling about his own ability to sight read was not good, however with practice, he feels much more comfortable about it. Confidence in teaching sight reading is a strong suit for him, as he feels that he can relate to those students who lack confidence in their own abilities.

Our interview conversation took place on September 12, 2015. The conversation lasted a total of 33 minutes. The largest portion of time was spent on the factors that make James encouraged and discouraged about the sight-reading adjudication process.

Elizabeth: The Music Teacher with Aspirations

Elizabeth is a high school band director in the Southern Region of NAfME. She has been teaching band students in grades 5-12 for 17 years in a variety of school districts including rural, semi-urban, and currently teaches in an urban school district. Participating in large group sight-reading adjudication has been a facet of each school district in which she has worked. Elizabeth feels confident in her own sight-reading abilities as a musician, but feels that her only manner of teaching sight reading to her students is by practicing. She is unsure about her abilities to assist her students in the sight-reading process of adjudication.

Our interview conversation took place on October 6, 2015. The conversation lasted a total of 39 minutes. The largest portion of time was spent discussing her best and worst experiences in sight-reading assessment.
Dennis: The Experienced One Who Loves His Job

Dennis is a high school band director in the Eastern Region of NAfME. He has been teaching band students in grades 5-12 for 28 years in a variety of school districts including rural, urban, and currently teaches in an upper middle class suburban school district. Having the majority of his teaching in the high school setting, Dennis has much experience in taking students to sight-reading adjudication. Dennis does not recall being taught to sight read himself, and does not feel overly confident about his own sight-reading ability, but feels very confident in his ability to teach sight reading to his students.

Our interview conversation took place on September 19, 2015. The conversation lasted a total of 28 minutes. The largest portion of time was spent discussing why he feels that sight reading in music education is an important facet of his rehearsal.

Angela: The New Teacher Trying to Do It All

Angela is a high school band director in the Northwest Region of NAfME. She has been teaching band students for four years. Thus far, her career has existed in only one small rural school where she teaches all of the instrumental music students grades 5-12. Angela’s initial feeling about her own ability to sight read was positive, however, she has concerns about leading her ensembles though the sight reading in an adjudicated setting. Confidence in teaching sight reading is a bit of a mystery as she is still new to her role as a band director and learning what may or may not work.

Our interview conversation took place on November 3, 2015. The conversation lasted a total of 28 minutes. The largest portion of time was spent discussing her background and gathering information about her school.
Charles: Done it All and Ready to Retire

Charles is a high school band director in the Western Region of NAfME. He has been teaching band students for 29 years. His career started in a small, rural school district where he was the only instrumental director grades 6-12. After the first 10 years, Charles moved to a larger suburban school where his primary responsibility is the high school band program. He has much experience with sight reading in an adjudicated setting and is comfortable and confident training his students to sight read well.

Our interview conversation took place on November 21, 2015. The conversation lasted a total of 36 minutes. The largest portion of time was spent discussing the details about the sight-reading process.

Nicholas: The Teacher Who Endures Sight Reading

Nicholas is a high school band director in the Southwest Region of NAfME. He has been teaching band students for 12 years. He teaches music grades 5-12 in a rural school district. Nicholas’ feelings about his sight-reading abilities are good. He is confident in his training as a musician and can relate to his students when it comes to reading music. When it comes to leading his students through the adjudicated sight-reading process, he has concerns related to lack of available resources to learn how to help his students.

Our interview conversation took place on October 3, 2015. The conversation lasted a total of 31 minutes. The largest piece of time was spent discussing what makes him discouraged about the process of sight-reading adjudication.

Presentation of the Qualitative Data

Data collection included a recorded telephone interview. Each participant was asked for his or her consent to participate and be recorded in the first few minutes of the telephone
conversation. This interview utilized a semi-structured interview format (see Appendix F) and was recorded using the *Rev Record* application for smart phones for purposes of transcription.

This section presents interpretations of the interview data collected during the course of this research project and an analysis of the codes of interview data, and offers findings from the data analysis. For this analysis, every interview was reviewed based on the topical areas of the interviews and the individual questions. All of the information in the six interviews was arranged into main categories that correspond with the components of Activity Theory, and are listed in Figure 11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Background: Subject component of Activity Theory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Background: Subject component of Activity Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions Associated with Sight-Reading Process: Activity component of Activity Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sight-Reading Procedures: Rules component of Activity Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director Preparedness: Tools component of Activity Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight-Reading Experiences: Activity component of Activity Theory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 11: Interview Categories*

Next, we will examine each of the interview questions along with participant responses. The following questions were used as guide points for the interview topics with each participant. Topical areas are listed first, followed by the individual interview questions.

*Teacher Background*

The topic teacher background was initiated to explore different facets of each participant’s situation. Teacher background corresponds with the subject component of Activity Theory. The initial question asked about their length of teaching, which grade levels they have taught, and most specifically in what area(s) they had most of their experience. The second
question addressed in what type of school district they were teaching, and which grade levels were serviced in their school. The third question of this topic centered on the history of their own personal education. Finally, participants were asked to discuss confidence, or lack thereof, in their own sight-reading ability.

James

James has been teaching in the public schools for 17 years. He taught middle school band, grades 5-8, for three years at the beginning of his teaching career in a West Coast state, and has since moved to the Midwest. After moving, James continued his teaching high school band in addition to the middle school bands, and has continued to work with students in grades 5-12.

Teaching in the rural, West Coast school district presented challenges to the three band directors in the district. The students did not have a lot of access to private lessons or guest clinicians because of the remote location of the school. In that specific setting, the bands did participate in a large group festival, but there was not a sight-reading component attached to the performance or evaluation. In his current, more urban, teaching situation, they are surrounded by a lot of colleges and universities. This location has provided access to numerous resources including clinicians, lessons, and concerts. James expressed his frustration with some of his students for not taking more advantage of those resources.

James holds an undergraduate and graduate degrees in tuba performance, and continued performing with his tuba in the United States military bands. He then decided to complete coursework necessary to student teach and acquire his teaching license. Although James felt proud and enthusiastic about the circumstances he was in, he also expressed concern about the quality of the education program that he went through. “Instrumental pedagogy courses were not
good, and I didn’t have to take all of them, so my instrument training was very poor. When I got my job, I had to learn right on the spot” (James, individual interview, September 12, 2015). The individual learning and collaboration with the other directors in the district has led him to feel that he is more self-taught than educated in a system of higher education.

James was initially asked to reflect on his own personal sight-reading ability, and responded with the following statement, “I feel awful, it is the biggest stumbling block that I have”. James worked hard at sight reading with his applied teachers as he claims to never have felt good about it. Frustrated that he could not process the information fast enough to sight read well, he knew that he needed to be a stronger sight reader to be a member of the military bands. He then focused much of his energy on that part of his musicianship. As a band director, sight reading has become much more second nature to him. James feels confident in reading a band score with his ensemble in front of him, but still feels insecure about sight reading on his instrument.

**Elizabeth**

Elizabeth is in her 17th year of public school music teaching. She has taught in grades 5-12 throughout her career, in all three of the districts in which she has been a teacher. She has taught in school districts that teachers would refer to as urban, semi-urban, and rural.

In each of the settings, her primary teaching responsibilities were with high school students, and incorporated middle school students as well. In some situations, she has been able to teach her students for eight years. “I enjoy watching the students grow from the time they first take their instruments out of the cases to the moment that they graduate from high school” (Elizabeth, individual interview, October 6, 2015). She has earned both an undergraduate and
graduate degree in music education from different universities, and is now taking courses toward an administrator’s license.

Elizabeth has always felt confident in her own sight-reading abilities. As an undergraduate student, her applied teacher focused on sight-reading music. Time was spent weekly on reading new etudes or duets during her lesson time. She attributes that focus to the confidence in her personal sight-reading as an instrumental musician. Throughout her time as a band director, she has become more and more comfortable with sight-reading scores while her band is playing. “As a new teacher, I could only read one line of the score at a time, but with more experience, more ease has come in reading the score as a whole”.

Dennis

Dennis has been a public-school band director for 28 years. Every year as a teacher he has been able to have contact with the middle school students in the program, but the past 18 years have been mainly high school teaching responsibilities. During that time is when he gained the majority of his large ensemble sight-reading experience.

He has taught in a variety of school districts, starting in a rural district, then an urban district and now in a suburban school district. “I teach in a very academic focused, upper-middle class, 9-12 building” (Dennis, individual interview, September 19, 2015). About 90% of the students go to college in some form. There is a small number of students who go into the military, but all are college-bound eventually. Dennis believes that some of the strong academics can be attributed to the stable family situations with a tremendous amount of parent involvement.

Dennis earned his bachelor’s degree in music education, and about 10 years after that he earned his master’s degree in music education. He has decided to continue with course work as is necessary to keep his teaching certificate. Dennis has continued to play his instrument in some
local bands, but claims that performance is not one of his strengths. He also acts as a judge for
the music educators’ association as an extension of what we do in our daily jobs. “I consider my
judging a service to my profession and a continuation of my own education” (Dennis, individual
interview, September 19, 2015).

Dennis reflected on his applied lessons where he was given music and told to bring it
back prepared and ready for the next lesson. “I do not remember being taught to sight read”
(Dennis, individual interview, September 19, 2015) was his initial thought when asked about his
own sight-reading ability. Dennis remembers practicing the sight-reading procedures in his high
school band rehearsals, pretending that they were doing it as actual sight-reading adjudication.
“My director would say, ‘ok, pass music back in’, and we would just move on. He did not
provide tips or helpful hints to sight read better, we just went through the process”.

In reflection about time spent in college, Dennis does not remember focusing on sight
reading in the ensemble setting there at all. He felt that because the band directors were not
educational directors, but performance directors, that this had an impact on why this was not
addressed. “We were not taught to sight read in our ensembles because they were performance-
based, and not focused on education” (Dennis, individual interview, September 19, 2015). In
retrospect, Dennis feels like those college ensemble rehearsals were missed opportunities to
focus on learning to sight read. He feels as if both performance and education majors need to
know how to sight read, and that those settings would have been perfect chances to discuss not
only how to individually sight read, but for the directors to talk about how to teach sight-reading
skills.
Angela

Angela has been teaching band in the public schools for four years. As a new teacher in a small, rural school district, she teaches all band classes in the entire district, grades 5-12. She enjoys her teaching situation in that she has sole control of the education of her students from the time they are beginning through the time they graduate. She realizes that she has not been teaching long enough to see that come to fruition at this point, but she is anxious for that time to come.

She earned her degree in music education from a local university with a small music education program. She feels confident in the skills that she gained from her classes at the university, but knows there is a lot more to learn. She admittedly feels overwhelmed with the many aspects of her job, and feels like sight reading is low on the priority list of educational tasks to achieve.

As a student musician in high school and college, she felt confident in her abilities to sight read music. In reflection, she does not remember specifically learning to sight read, however. “As a strong musician, I think I just felt that I knew how to read music, so I was not overly concerned about it. The band director would pass out a new piece and we would just play it” (Angela, individual interview, November 5, 2015).

Charles

Charles has been a high school band director for 29 years in a variety of school districts. He spent the first several years as the only band director in a small, rural school district. When he moved on from that district, he went to a larger, suburban school where his primary responsibility is the high school band program. Charles earned his undergraduate degree in music education with an additional emphasis on trumpet performance. He has earned his graduate
Charles enjoys playing his instrument and makes a point to keep up with the performance atmosphere as much as his time allows.

Throughout his high school and college experiences as a student, Charles does not recollect sight reading being taught. “I am sure that it was addressed at some point, but just as a matter of process, not as a concept we needed to know to become a teacher” (Charles, individual interview, November 21, 2015). During his applied lesson time, they would often linger on and do some sight reading at the end of a lesson or after a major performance was complete, however to Charles, it was not a skill that was taught, but more of a practice that only got better with experience.

Nicholas

Nicholas has been a band director in the public schools for 12 years. He is the only music teacher in his small school district that has only about 300 students. It is a very rural district. Nicholas earned his bachelor’s degree in music education from a small college in the area where he teaches.

Nicholas expressed his confidence in his own playing abilities. “As a young teacher, I am still learning about methods to teach my students to sight read. I hope over time, that part will get easier” (Nicholas, individual interview, October 3, 2015). He reflected on his own performance experience and knew that he was a decent sight reader, but was not sure how he reached that point. He was confident that it was not just one specific system that helped him learn, but also more of a practice system that kept him going. He mentioned that there were several technique books that he would read out of on almost a daily basis that helped him. “My college band director also taught some of the music education classes, so we incorporated educational
teaching techniques into both our classes, and our rehearsals” (Nicholas, individual interview, October 3, 2015).

Program Background

The second interview topic included details about background of the band program in the school. Program background corresponds with the subject component of Activity Theory. Within this area of discussion, the first question addressed the frequency with which programs participated in adjudicated events. This was written in the hopes of discussion about how often the different ensembles within the school participate in performance assessments. Next, the questions geared the conversation toward the school’s purpose of participation in these adjudicated events. Participant directors were asked what dictated their choice to participate in the events.

James

James participates regularly in adjudicated events with the ensembles in his school. It is not mandated by his school, but was established long before he was the band director there. With previous band directors only a few of the ensembles at the school would participate in the events, but now they all attend. “In the past 13 years, we have taken every concert band, every year, regardless of if they are ready or not. It is just an expectation. Students are expected to participate in solo and ensemble events as well” (James, individual interview, September 12, 2015).

Elizabeth

Elizabeth stated that it was a standard that their school ensembles participate every year. This tradition had clearly been established for many years in this school district. It was not mandated by the administration, but treated as more like an honor for the school to be able to
perform at the state festivals. “Ensembles at our school have been participating in these state-run performance evaluations since the early 1960s, now it is commonplace. No one discusses that it is an option, it is just fact” (Elizabeth, individual interview, October 16, 2015).

_Dennis_

Dennis attends state large group evaluations with his groups on a regular, yearly basis. He commented that it was not a regular tradition until he became the band director there. “It makes me a better teacher. We do not go after a rating, but it gives us a nice goal of something to work through in the winter months” (Dennis, individual interview, September 19, 2015). He further commented that sight reading is a required component of the adjudication process in his state. He reflected that this part of the evaluation is not one of his favorites, but he considers it a challenge for him and his students.

_Angela_

Angela has participated with her students in large group adjudication for two years. The high school band has been so small that the previous directors did not feel that it was in the best interest of the students to participate in these types of events. “I think we need to make it a priority and at least try to go. It gives our students something specific to work for, and they feel good about it” (Angela, individual interview, November 5, 2015). The school is supportive of her decision to push the students in this direction, and has been proud of their experiences at these events thus far.

_Charles_

Charles participates in large group adjudication with his students on a yearly basis. He feels that it helps to motivate his students and continues to push them to be their best. It is not necessarily an expectation of the school district, but he likes to encourage participation. “The
students take preparation for this event more seriously than putting together music for the spring concert. It is nice to see them truly work for something specific. Our administrators treat it as the music version of state testing” (Charles, individual interview, November 21, 2015).

**Nicholas**

Nicholas says that large group adjudication is a new concept in their school district. “We are in such a small school that our circumstances do not always allow us to participate, but any year that we can reasonably do so, I will” (Nicholas, individual interview, October 3, 2015). He believes that going to these events is a good goal for these students to be able to present what they have been learning and to be evaluated on it. According to Nicholas, the school district truly views attendance at these evaluations as an honor for their small school. The parents, teachers and administrators provide much support for their students in preparation for these events.

**Details About the Sight-Reading Process**

The third interview topic was that of the sight-reading process. Sight-reading process corresponds with the rules component of Activity Theory. Participants were asked to talk about their energy and anxiety while amid adjudicated sight reading. The logistical procedures were then addressed, along with the question of what differences in the process they would like to see.

**James**

When asked about feelings and emotions associated with the sight-reading process, James admitted that he felt primarily anxious and nervous. During rehearsal, he spends a lot of time addressing how to just keep moving through the piece regardless of how well they feel that they are doing. “Honestly, I am just afraid that the kids will stop playing. During sight reading, they need to just keep going no matter what. I am just afraid they will stop” (James, individual interview, September 12, 2015). Each year James feels anxious about the procedural aspects of
the sight-reading room and spends time referring to the rulebook prior to their participation in
the event.

He does not feel that there is anything that should be different about the process. The
time frame that is given to study and talk to the kids is adequate, no less is acceptable, but no
more is needed. James conveyed his primary thoughts on the purpose of sight reading are to be
able to sit down quickly and read through a piece of music. He is trying to get his students to a
point where they can just read, not stumble through the music in front of them. “One does not
practice reading a passage out of a book before you read it, you just do it. Music should be the
same way. Read it right off the bat, that is the goal”.

*Elizabeth*

Elizabeth conveyed that her emotions were primarily of anxiety. She stressed that she
was worried her students would not play well. With the uncertainty of what if the piece will be
easy or hard, she is consistently worried that her students will not play the right things. She
specifically thinks about her younger students, as they do not have the experience that the older
students have, and may not be able to make it through the piece without being too afraid to keep
going.

““The process itself makes the students and the teachers feel very uncomfortable. There is
so much tension in the room, and I wish it were less stressful” (Elizabeth, individual interview,
October 6, 2015). This was the statement made when Elizabeth was asked about the sight-
reading procedures. She emphasized the fact that she was not sure what the correct answer was,
but she was hopeful that over time she would feel calmer about the sight-reading evaluation.

*Dennis*
Dennis does not believe that his emotions specifically pertain to sight reading itself. He made the comment that he comes into the sight-reading room very pumped and on edge, but that is a direct reflection on having just performed the three prepared pieces, not of the sight-reading environment. He stated that he has trouble transitioning himself and his students from the excitement of the prepared performance to the solemnity of the sight-reading room. “You have to get them in the room quietly, in rows, and bring their heart rates down. It is a downer because you need your faculties to now sit and play a piece that we have never seen before” (Dennis, individual interview, September 19, 2015).

As a generalization, Dennis believes that he is making the most of the preparation time prior to the performance of the sight-reading piece. In his situation, he is allowed four minutes of individual study time, and four minutes of director instruction time. Dennis has used that time to try to make the students as comfortable with the music as they can be in that short amount of time.

He shared the feeling of being uncomfortable that he had to sight read the score along with the students. “I would be able to prepare my students more adequately if I knew what type of piece we were preparing for. It is the luck of the draw, we never know what kind of music we are going to get” (Dennis, individual interview, September 19, 2015). He expressed great concern over the fact that he never knows ahead of time if the music that is coming will match his ensemble or not. Lastly, he commented that there may be a better way to do the sight-reading process, but he is unsure what that would be.

Angela

Angela conveyed her anxiety about the entire adjudication system, not simply the sight-reading portion. She believes that as she becomes more experienced, she will have an easier time
feeling comfortable. “At this point, we are attending these events, and pushing the students to be great. That is our achievement”. (Angela, individual interview, November 5, 2015).

As a new teacher, Angela stated that she was still working out the process of practicing sight reading in her classroom. She knows that there are things that she needs to teach the students, and is working to adjust her curriculum to accommodate the needs of her students as she sees fit. In the many areas of the program that she feels she needs to work on, sight reading, although important, is not one that she worries about on a regular basis. “We have so far to go, in so many ways, I am working on things one day at a time, and trying to adjust our perspective in the big picture”.

Angela knows that she has anxiety about the process of sight reading simply because her students do not always read music very well. “We are still working on learning to play our instruments well, so if we go into sight reading and they do not just freak out and stop, then that is great”. She is sure that with time, she will start to feel more confident, but for the moment, she has a great deal of anxiety about almost every aspect of her job.

Charles

Charles expressed anxiety about the process of sight reading with his students. He knows that his students need to be able to count, play with good technique, read key signatures, and do everything that they just did on their prepared pieces in a very short amount of time. “It is awkward to go from the enthusiasm of the performance stage to the melancholy silence of sight reading. It is hard to get them to refocus. They are so relieved and ready to relax, but are not allowed to do so” (Charles, individual interview, November 21, 2015).

Charles mentioned that he has a system that he teaches to his students regarding procedures, and he sticks to that routine regardless of what the music in front of them looks like.
He likes to make sure that the process of sight reading with his students is the same so they can feel some sort of consistency. He is always unsure of what types of piece will be put in front of his students, and how well they will be able to sight read it, so he believes that maintaining consistency is some manner is important, even if it is only in the preparation to read whatever the piece may be. “My anxiety truly comes from not knowing what type of music is coming, and not knowing if our preparation was what it should be to tackle the task ahead”.

*Nicholas*

Nicholas tries to approach the sight-reading portion of the performance evaluation rationally, but often gets nervous. “We consider sight reading a challenge because it does not always go well” (Nicholas, individual interview, October 3, 2015). This fear of the performance not going well is what makes him nervous about it. He states that it is more a matter of not having control over the situation. He feels that he prepares his students as much as he can prior to the evaluation, but in that moment, there is not much he can do to assist. Once they start playing the piece, he is not allowed to help them in any way, so he feels a sense of helplessness. Nicholas feels that the procedures themselves are adequate for what is needed. The thought of the sight-reading process being different than it is seemed to be an odd question for him. He responded in a somewhat surprised manner as if he had never thought about the possibilities of it being different at all. He conveyed his feelings of the importance of sight reading, but also felt it was difficult for his students to feel prepared to be successful doing it.

*Sight-Reading Emotions*

The fourth interview topic dealt with the emotions of the adjudicated sight-reading process. Sight-reading emotions correspond with the activity component of Activity Theory. Participants were asked if they felt energetic about the process itself, and what about it made
them feel that way. Conversely, directors were also provided the opportunity to address their discouragement in the sight-reading process along with reasons they felt that way.

James

James knows that he feared sight reading so much as a performing musician that he feels it is hard to be energetic about the process for his students. “I do not feel energetic about the sight-reading process” (James, individual interview, September 12, 2015). He makes every attempt to make practice sight reading a part of their daily rehearsal, but also states that sometimes it is difficult. “When we pass out a new piece so of music, we try to do the process, even if it is music for the holiday concert, we take every chance we can get to practice the process” (James, individual interview, September 12, 2015).

Elizabeth

Elizabeth feels that the sight-reading process is important, but makes the statement that the sight-reading room feels so awkward and uncomfortable that it is almost impossible to feel excited about it. “I do not feel excited or enthusiastic about sight-reading evaluation” (Elizabeth, individual interview, October 6, 2015). She believes that the process of sight reading is an important one for her students to know, but is not sure that it is one that needs to be evaluated. “I always want my students to play well, and it makes me nervous that I have not trained them well enough to do so” (Elizabeth, individual interview, October 6, 2015).

Dennis

Dennis has concerns that his ensembles will not be able to put all the parts together to achieve what is necessary to have a quality experience in the room. “There is nothing that makes me excited about the sight-reading process” (Dennis, individual interview, September 19, 2015). He feels that the task of playing an average level piece, with some musicality, playing the right
notes, with good articulation, without ever having seen the piece, is a difficult task to ask of high school students. “There can be a moment of excitement when I realize that they know their instruments and I see it all clicking together at once. That does not happen often” (Dennis, individual interview, September 19, 2015).

Angela

Angela has concerns that her students do not yet have the basic musical knowledge to sight read well, and that is a big task to tackle in her time at school. “Most of the sight-reading process is overwhelming” (Angela, individual interview, November 5, 2015). She practices the procedural aspects of adjudicated sight reading in her rehearsal time but does not stress the topic. She wants to make sure that the students are comfortable with what will be asked of them, but does not want to scare them.

Charles

Charles has concerns that sight-reading adjudication will not always be a good experience for his students. “The sight-reading process with my students is not exciting” (Charles, individual interview, November 21, 2015). He expressed frustration at the thought that the style of the piece, the ability levels of his students, and the level of difficulty of the music usually do not line up, making it a cumbersome task for students to feel good about. “I try to set my students up for success, but it is hard to be energetic about something so unknown”.

Nicholas

Although he understands the need for order and procedure in such an event, Nicholas feels that his students are not energetic about the process because it is so strict. “We take all of the excitement out of sight reading by the solemn process that we require in adjudication”
Nicholas, individual interview, October 3, 2015). He has consistent concerns that his students feel stressed about their level of performance preventing them truly achieving at their highest level in each sight-reading adjudication setting. “I feel if they were able to just relax a little more, they would be able to play better. Always encourage them to relax and have fun before a concert, but sight-reading adjudication is not like that” (Nicholas, individual interview, October 3, 2015).

**Director Preparation and Objectives**

The fifth topic in the interview was aimed at the individual teacher’s preparation in sight reading and their own objectives for participation in the adjudicated sight-reading experience. Director preparation corresponds with the tools component of Activity Theory. Participants were asked to discuss their feelings of preparedness when it comes to guiding their students through the sight-reading process during both rehearsal and adjudication. Participants were then asked to respond to the following prompt.

*The universal goal of sight reading is to improve independent student musicianship; please talk about the other goals you have for sight reading in your classroom.*

**James**

James believes that he is prepared and able to teach sight reading to his students. “Even though I am never sure of what the kids are going to do, I feel confident” (James, individual interview, September 12, 2015). James believes that one of the key factors in feeling prepared is to act as if you are prepared even if you are not. He reminds his students their presentation to the sight-reading judge is just as important as how they play the piece. He teaches his students to be confident in their body language and communication with the judge throughout the time they are in the room. “If the judge thinks that the kids mean business, they will automatically think that they are going to play well, regardless of what actually comes out of their instruments”.

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James believes that an additional goal of sight reading is assistance in decisions on programming for a concert. He feels that sight reading a piece is a good indicator of appropriateness for the ensemble. If the ensemble can sight read it well, then James says that it is probably the right difficulty level and helps to determine the long-term success rate.

*Elizabeth*

Elizabeth does not feel prepared to take her students through the sight-reading process. She feels that she does a good job in rehearsals, but the factors of the unknown in the actual evaluation are what make her feel unprepared. She believes that most of the challenge in sight reading comes down to a true understanding of reading rhythms, therefore, she tries to make sure that her students have a lot of practice in rhythm reading.

Elizabeth expressed her goals for sight reading very concisely and simply. “Goals of sight reading in my classroom are to become better musicians, to process information faster, and to keep moving forward” (Elizabeth, individual interview, October 6, 2015). She feels strongly that sight reading is an important ability for her students to have because it makes so many of the aspects of learning the music easier.

*Dennis*

Dennis stated that he feels unprepared to take his students through the process in sight-reading evaluation because he has not seen the piece before. However, he does feel prepared to teach his students sight reading in his normal rehearsal situations. He believes that he does a good job of exposing his students to different types of pieces that allow them to have a wide knowledge base, therefore when it comes to sight reading, they have a lot of previous knowledge from which to make good musical decisions. Dennis added that he spends time working through
the procedural aspects of sight reading during classroom rehearsal time, and feels that the students are ready for the things that come their way in regard to sight-reading procedures.

In addition to improving individual musicianship, his goals for sight reading include learning about new pieces that he may be able to use for performance with his middle school students. He knows the ability level of his middle school students is lower than that of his high school students, so if they are in a position that the high school group can sight read a piece fairly well, it is probably about the right amount of challenging material for the middle school students.

Angela

Angela does not feel comfortable preparing her students for the process of adjudicated sight reading in rehearsal or performance. Over time, through the course of the year, they will use exercises to enhance their general knowledge. She uses melodic, excerpts, chorales, rhythm exercises, and a variety of other sources to work on basic musicianship skills, but has not associated them with the development of sight-reading skills.

Angela believes in the educational goal of promoting independent student musicianship. She knows that students who can play independently of one another will be better sight readers, and has a great desire for her students to have that ability. Conversely, she states that if the students can sight read well, they will ultimately be better independent musicians. She likes to encourage them to be better individual musicians by asking them to play by themselves or in small groups. “If the students can play well as independent musicians, then their contribution to the whole will be much more successful” (Angela, individual interview, November 5, 2015).

Charles

Charles feels comfortable preparing his students for the process of adjudicated sight reading both in rehearsal and in performance. In preparation for the adjudication, he and his
ensembles sight read once or twice a week for several months. They have sight-reading folders that are put together at the beginning of the year, making it easier for him to pass out and collect each of the pieces that are used for sight-reading practice. “It is just something that is a part of our daily work each week, therefore it becomes a habit and is not cumbersome for us to do during rehearsal” (Charles, individual interview, November 21, 2015).

Charles believes that the main educational goal of sight reading is to promote individual musicianship in each of his students. He believes that each of his students needs to be an independent musician and that is difficult to teach. He has great concern as they all start playing things together, because some of the students rely so heavily on the thoughts of the others that they do not always portray the confidence to truly function independently of one another.

Nicholas

Nicholas feels confident in his own abilities as a sight reader, and therefore his ability to teach sight reading in rehearsals. He states that he relies on his own judgment and training to help his students, feeling that when he shares his own experiences and tips to read well, that helps them devise their own methods of being able to read music well. Much of his frustration comes from a lack of direction in leading his ensemble through the evaluation process. He has shared great concern for the seeming lack of resources available to help him in his own development. “These are not things that we talked about in college, and it is hard to find anyone that will give us examples of the ‘best practices’ in sight reading, so I feel like I have to gain knowledge through experience” (Nicholas, individual interview, October 3, 2015).

Nicholas thinks that sight reading is a process that is necessary to become a good musician. He likes to remind his students that much of the reality for professional musicians revolves around their abilities to sight read. He conveys his experiences as a player, not having
the opportunity to rehearse music a lot, just sitting down to perform it for a concert. He shares that expectation with his students, and tries to tie in the real-world expectations.

Experiences

The sixth topic in the interview focused on the adjudicated sight-reading experience. Experiences correspond to the activity component of Activity Theory. Directors were asked to discuss their best and worst experiences in adjudicated sight reading along with the details that made them such. The next set of questions centered on a discussion of educational goals that have been developed for the ensemble and how they did or did not align with the sight-reading experience, and if they felt that sight reading was truly important for their developing young musicians. The final question within this topic asked what makes the sight-reading experience, as it is, a good one for their students. If participants felt that it was not a good experience, they were asked to address what could possibly be changed to create a better one.

James

There have been years that James feels the scenarios all just fit together, and there are years when they do not. “I would say it is hard to pick just the best and worst experiences, it really just depends on the year”. He states that it is a “wild feeling,” not knowing if everything will come together in the right moment or not. To both the benefit and detriment of the sight-reading process, James believes that the adjudicators and music selection have much to do with the experience. Both of those areas are so unpredictable. He feels that sometimes there is an adjudicator that is very nice, welcoming, helpful, and supportive, and then the next year, the adjudicator might be very cold, harsh, and almost negative to the students. “Many of my better years have been when the music was a little easier. That allows us to truly focus on the musicality part of our performance” (James, individual interview, September 12, 2015).
Sight reading does align with the educational goals that James has developed for his classroom for the educational component, not the musical component. James carries frustration with the music choice because it is often pieces that are written for educational purposes, instead of the more standard wind band literature that he likes to work on with his ensembles. He does not believe that sight-reading educational literature is truly giving them the tools to be able to play the regular wind band repertoire that is required in ensemble. Ultimately, James does believe that the sight-reading process is a good one for him and his students, he just wishes there was more consistency from year to year in the expectations of the adjudicators and what they are listening for.

Elizabeth reflected on her best sight-reading experience as one when all the facets lined up at the right time. She expressed excitement about the way her students played, the support and positive feedback that the judge provided, and the excitement that the students showed when they felt like they could succeed. Negative experiences did not stand out in her head, but it was noted that most of the experiences were average, not good or bad, just average. “There is nothing special about it, it is just another part of what we have to do. Although it is necessary to learn to sight read, I am not sure the experience of sight-reading adjudication is a special one”.

Elizabeth feels that sight reading aligns with her educational goals. She places great importance on reading music in her classroom, everything from the basics of notes and rhythms to musical phrases. The evaluation of sight reading is an important validation for the students in terms of the necessity to learn these skills. “The simple fact that there is an adjudication procedure for sight reading validates my desire to make it important for the students”.

Elizabeth
Dennis

Dennis claims that there is not a best or a worst sight-reading experience, however reflected on one particularly great year and one particularly bad year. Regarding the great year, stating that it was just fun. He felt that the adjudicator was so welcoming and encouraging to the students that it calmed their nerves, and they were able to just perform well. “The judge was like a grandpa, and made the kids feel really good about what they were doing. It was not even about how they played, but that they were even trying” (Dennis, individual interview, September 19, 2015). The worst year, he claims, was his fault. It was a situation where the group had just come off the performance stage and had not played very well, so everyone was already on edge, and then to make matters worse, he missed some tempo changes while conducting in the sight-reading piece, so that made the whole experience go downhill.

Sight reading aligns with the educational goals of his classroom in the fact that some of the goals are to attend and participate in adjudicated events. He is not sure if the sight-reading component itself aligns with his philosophy, however it does make him feel encouraged that there are times his students can put all of the knowledge they have about their instruments to good use. “The process itself is just there. It is what it is, I have never considered it being something different” (Dennis, individual interview, September 19, 2015). He believes it is nice to see the students being able to synthesize all of the things they have learned into the reading of one piece of music.

Dennis believes that the process should be changed to offer additional time for preparation. Not just simply silent preparation, but he suggests that it would be helpful if they were able to rehearse as they wanted or needed to for a period of 10 minutes. He believes that students and directors can look at it all they want, and even go over lines or specific passages,
but sometimes everyone just needs to hear it once to be able to make the adjustments that are needed. “Even in real world, professional sight-reading performance situations, most musicians have an opportunity to play the music a little, even if it is by themselves. We should be able to do the same”.

Angela

Angela was able to reflect on her two years of experience in sight reading. Both years she claimed to feel fairly successful in sight reading, but admits that the standards for the actual musical part of the performance were low. She states that both years the music was playable and the adjudicator did the best they could to make it a pleasant and encouraging experience for the students. “We are just getting used to going to any sort of adjudication. If we can get in and out without there being a total mess, that is what we want” (Angela, individual interview, November 5, 2015).

Sight-reading adjudication does align with the educational goals in her classroom. She has a great desire for her students to succeed as individual musicians, and being able to sight read music is a key part of that goal. The entire process of adjudication, and therefore assessment in sight reading as well, helps her hold her students to a higher standard, with a reason. “It is nice to say that there is an expectation that is not just mine. The students can learn to respect and work toward that performance goal” (Angela, individual interview, November 5, 2015).

Charles

Charles does not believe that he has had a best or worst experience in sight-reading adjudication. Through reflection of his years, there are points that he remembered specific situations, but nothing to indicate extremely positive or negative experiences; one year the trumpets played really well, one year the flute soloist messed up, one year the judge was very
boring, one year it was very early in the morning. He feels if his students can enter the room, perform to the best of their ability and leave feeling like they made it through the piece then that is a successful year in sight reading.

Charles commented that he has trained the students to the best of his ability not to be diligent sight readers, necessarily, but to be good musicians. “Yes, assessment in sight reading aligns with my educational goals for my students, or I would not allow them to participate” (Charles, individual interview, November 21, 2015). He starts at the beginning of their instrumental career, making sure they understand the basics of musicianship — notes, rhythms, dynamics, and all of the other aspects. Then it is expected that they will continue to grow in those areas as they mature as musicians. He believes that reading music and being a good sight reader are just a part of the natural training that happens for student musicians.

When asked to reflect on thoughts about the actual sight-reading process, Charles stated that he has often been frustrated with some aspects, but had never thought about the possibility of changing things. He had often searched for a way that would indicate more clarity from the judges about what they were listening for. “It would be helpful if we were trained on what the judges were actually listening for, that would make me feel more comfortable”.

Nicholas

Nicholas was assertive in his statements about the negativity in regard to the sight-reading experiences. “Most of the standout memories of sight-reading adjudication are the really bad ones” (Nicholas, individual interview, October 3, 2015). Although he can admit that most of them were average or not very memorable, the ones he felt were bad upset him. In three of those instances, he places the blame of the poor sight reading on his students’ inability to keep going and make good musical decisions in the moment. He was frustrated with their lack of engaged
thinking in those particular moments that led to mistakes in counting rests, acknowledging new key signatures, and just playing confidently. “Sometimes, their brains are just not turned on when we try to sight read”.

**Additional Information**

Finally, directors were given an opportunity to share anything else that they thought would be pertinent to me about the sight-reading experience. Interview conversations evolved into anecdotal stories, or thoughts the participants found particularly relevant. Many of these statements offered the opportunity for a new insight into individual situations for a particular director and their ensemble.

*James*

James shared that he feels the current structure is good and balanced, but he would like to see more creativity in what type of music is selected for sight reading. He acknowledged that the task of finding music that bands have not yet played would be difficult, however he feels that the style of music in the sight-reading room does not align with the style of music that is expected on stage. He believes in the educational goals of sight reading, but does not believe that the current music choice is helping their musicianship.

*Elizabeth*

Elizabeth did not have additional comments. She did reiterate that sight reading in practice validates what she believes to be important. She wishes that there was a different way to evaluate it, one in which the students and teachers were more able to feel good about the experience, instead of feeling average about their achievements.
Dennis

Dennis added a few final comments to the end of his interview. He reflects that the process has always been the same, and started to ask himself why it was this way and who has determined that this was the process in which sight reading needed to be done. He finds frustration in the fact that directors do not truly know what the adjudicators are listening for, or what they expect to hear from an ensemble. As an adjudicator himself, he finds concern with the lack of consistency in expectation from one judge to the next.

Angela

Angela did not have many additional comments. She stated that she was still so new in the process that simply doing this interview allowed her to think about things she had not thought about before. She believes that she needs to put more focus on the sight-reading aspect of what she is teaching her students.

Charles

Charles believes in the necessity of large group assessment in sight reading. He expressed his thoughts that sight reading is a true indicator of an individual musician’s understanding and knowledge. He finds a bit of frustration not with the process, but in the fact that he is not sure that the manner in which his students sight read in that setting is indicative of their true ability level. “The setting is so sterile that it is hard to know if they are truly reading at their best” (Charles, individual interview, November 21, 2015).

Nicholas

Nicholas would like to think about the possibilities of trying some new things in sight reading, but did not have specific ideas. According to him, the process is just what it is. Others have decided the best way to sight read for assessment, and he just does what he is supposed to
do. His final comment included requests for more professional development in training his band in sight reading.

Emerging Themes

Through the analysis of qualitative data, several themes were developed. Emerging themes were determined after the interviews were coded. Codes were grouped into like categories to develop the themes. Importance was derived from the amount of time spent discussing a topic, as well as the frequency of the coded material that became a theme.

Five emerging themes were developed through the analysis of the qualitative interview transcriptions. Those themes are: personal sight-reading comfort level, anxiety about the sight-reading process, discontent with current sight-reading evaluation structures, lack of training to teach sight reading, and sight-reading objectives in the classroom.

The emerging themes were topics that continued to have a presence throughout the interviews with each participant. Based on the conversation with each person, their passion about the emerging themes was evident. These themes were then compared to the quantitative data presented in Chapter 4. The emerging theme, lack of training to teach sight reading was discarded as a Central Theme of the Study due to a lack of connection between qualitative and quantitative material. The remaining four themes became the Central Themes of the Study because their importance became evident from the data in both the qualitative and qualitative phases of this study.

Applying Qualitative Data to the Research Questions

With the qualitative data in mind, I will move toward addressing the research questions. Research questions one and four are the questions that will be answered by the qualitative data. Given the data as presented throughout Chapter 5, answers to two of the four research questions
have been provided in the coming section. Answers to questions two and three have been addressed in Chapter 4.

Question One: *What procedures are common to high school band sight-reading events in the United States?*

When analyzing the procedures that are common to high school band sight-reading events in the United States it is important to understand which factors were evaluated when looking for commonalities. Analysis of the data looked for a few specific pieces of information on each state. Categories included: 1) what is the organization that sponsors the sight-reading evaluation, 2) what is the name of the event that incorporates sight-reading evaluation, 3) does the sight-reading portion of the event occur before or after the performance of the prepared pieces, 4) how much, if any, study time is allotted for analysis of the sight-reading piece by both the director and the students, 5) what type of instruction is permitted by the director during the study time(s), 6) are the students permitted to be actively involved in the study process by means of talking, playing, clapping or other methods, 7) what, if any, is the specified warm up allowed in the sight-reading room, 8) what commentary is allowed by the director once performance of the sight-reading piece has started, 9) is there time allowed for follow-up commentary by the adjudicator.

Organizations that sponsor the events differs from state to state. In some cases, it is the state Music Educators Association, in others the Band Masters/Directors Association, and in some the High School Activities Association. Each state organization provides their own procedural information, in the form of a rulebook, handbook, or additional sight-reading guidelines. Even though each state offers different documentation, much of the content in the factors being compared from state to state is the same.
There are some aspects of the sight-reading procedures that are identical among all states that incorporate sight reading into their performance evaluation. First, the sight-reading component of the adjudicated event occurs after the presentation of the prepared pieces in all cases. Additionally, in all states, bands are permitted to play a minimum of one chord or tuning note prior to their sight-reading performance. Finally, during the initial study period, in all cases, students are permitted to be engaged with clapping, counting, or other means of individual study, if the students are not playing their instruments.

Length of study time prior to the sight-reading performance is one area that differs from state to state. Although each state permits a study period, the length of that time frame varies from 2-11 minutes, depending on factors including difficulty of the piece and number of pieces to be sight read. The study time is often divided into two different sections, one for study of the piece by both the director and the students, and the next for director instruction to the students.

The other area that shows the most difference among the states is what the director is permitted to do or say during the performance of the piece. The answer to that question has many variations. Some are not permitted to talk to the students at all during the performance, however, a few of the states allow the director to call out the rehearsal markings to ensure all of the students are in the same place at the same time. In Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, the directors are permitted to say as much to the students as they wish throughout the entire piece. This includes singing rhythms, calling out rehearsal marks, reminding them of dynamics, articulations, or other markings, and road map symbols.

When comparing the procedural aspects of sight-reading assessment across the country the similarities and differences among the states are clear. Several areas within this topic have
been analyzed. Although there are a few significant differences as discussed, there is also much commonality in the procedural aspects of the sight-reading process across the country.

Question Four: *What experiences of sight-reading evaluation influence participant views in high school band settings?*

The mere fact that performance assessment in sight reading exists creates the largest impact on the role of sight reading in the high school band setting. Although band directors can unanimously agree that sight reading should be taught to their students, the experience of sight-reading adjudication itself often provides the driving force behind the amount of presence in the classroom. Experiences, positive or negative, in sight-reading assessment have created considerable expectation when it comes to not only teaching sight reading, but the product of a sight-reading performance.

The inclusion of sight reading in the performance assessments is admittedly one of the reasons that band directors focus on sight reading in their classrooms. This is not to say that directors do not find sight reading important in its own right, but just to note that the importance to adequately educate their students in the process becomes greater when they know that they will be publically assessed. Although directors agree that sight reading should have a vital role in the education that takes place in their classroom, they admittedly comment that sight reading takes a more prominent role in the rehearsal in the weeks leading up to the performance assessment.

Participants in this study have expressed both positive and negative thoughts regarding their sight-reading assessment experiences. All interviewed directors explained their feelings of anxiety and nervousness. When asked about the reason for those feelings, most often the directors recalled situations of insecurity about their students’ performance. Directors relayed an
experience in which they felt unsure about their students’ ability to perform the music at the level of difficulty expected, or a situation when they had weaker players one year, and were unsure about their capability to perform. Directors also reflected on their positive sight-reading experiences in terms of their students’ outstanding performances. During a few of the interviews, participants were elated to share experiences in which their students performed even better than expected. Most of the positive experiences had to do specifically with the performance of the students, and not the process itself.

The feelings of the directors and their perception of the feelings of their students concurred with one another. Sight reading was a more enjoyable experience in rehearsal than during the assessment time. Throughout the interviews, the experiences in the sight-reading room that involved the procedure or adjudication itself were seldom discussed. Most directors see the process as a standard that is not able to be changed, therefore address the experience from the perspective of the quality of their students’ performance.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have provided narrative and visual testaments of the sight-reading procedural aspects in each state that participates in large group sight reading. It is evident that many of the states share characteristics in sight reading, such as placement in the adjudicated process, and desire for the students to be actively engaged in the study time. Some of the procedural aspects also differ from one state to the next. Preparatory study time and directors’ communication during the performance are a few.

A primary piece of information to note is the difference in which state organization is the one to host the assessment events. Activities are sponsored in some states by the state music educators association, in other states by the school band and orchestra association, in a few states
by the state bandmasters association, and in some instances by the secondary schools activities association. This inconsistency from state to state made initial inquiry into state procedural aspects somewhat challenging.

Additionally, while completing web searches for sight-reading procedural information, it became apparent that the events including sight-reading assessment are not all titled the same throughout the country. Even though the names of the event are different, they are all essentially the same type of event. Some of the common event names are: Festival, Performance Assessment, Adjudication, and Band Evaluation.

Many commonalities exist in the sight-reading procedures in all of the states. All states have the sight-reading portion of the assessment after the prepared performance portion. Although the time frame varies, but averages six to eight minutes, there is an allotted time to study the sight-reading piece prior to the performance of that piece. During the study period students are not required to be silent, but are permitted to talk quietly, clap, count, and use other methods to study the piece, provided they do not play their instruments. In every instance, the ensemble is permitted to play a short warm up prior to the performance of the sight-reading piece.

The largest variation from state to state in sight-reading procedures has to do with director commentary during the performance of the sight-reading piece. Variations in what was permitted by the directors were vast. Some states do not allow any talking by the director, while others only allow the director to call out rehearsal markings. In some situations, the director is permitted to talk as much as they want to, including singing rhythms, or reminding the students of whatever is needed at each individual moment.

In the second half of this chapter, I have presented qualitative data from the interviews
that were conducted on sight-reading experiences. A summarized documentation for each interview participant in the study has been provided, presenting the background, and responses to each of the interview topics in a narrative form. James has a lot of teaching experience, and feels confident in his ability to teach sight reading. Elizabeth is in the middle of her career and is still unsure about the process of sight reading. Dennis is concerned that his own sight-reading inadequacies will bleed over into his students. Angela is a new teacher and feels that sight reading is important, but it is not currently high on her priority list. Charles has been teaching for a long time and feels very comfortable with the sight-reading process. Nicholas has concerns about his ability to find professional development in the area of sight reading when he needs it.

Through a comparison of the interview material, I was able to succinctly reveal the most poignant pieces of data. Each participant was from a different region of NAfME. The six interview participants all held at least one degree in music education, all were from different states, and had a variety of teaching experience.

Specific to the area of the sight-reading adjudication process, all six of the participants said that they felt anxious or nervous about the sight-reading assessment. The anxiety came from not knowing what to expect for the technical and musical requirements of the piece, not knowing how their students would perform in the moment, and the solemnity of the room itself. None of them felt excited about the sight-reading adjudication process itself. During the discussion about their comfort level of teaching sight reading, it was clear that half of the participants felt very confident in their abilities to teach their students to sight read. The other three directors did not feel comfortable in their abilities to teach sight reading to their students. Their degree of confidence was not related to their number of years of experience.

The final portion of the interview covered thoughts about their sight-reading experiences,
their belief in sight-reading education, as well as additional commentary that may be useful in the future. The one area that all six participants agreed was that teaching sight reading is an important aspect in the music education of children. In addition to the universal goal of improving individual student musicianship, each participant had their own curricular reasons for wanting to teach sight reading in their classrooms. Programming purposes, promoting independent student musicianship, and encouraging students to learn faster were listed as a few of the goals of the sight-reading process.

The concluding chapter of this study contains an overview of the research questions, methodology, design, an analysis of quantitative data, and an analysis of qualitative data. Mixing of the quantitative and qualitative data occurs in the form of a discussion that blends items from the survey and interviews together. The latter portion of Chapter 6 also includes implications for the profession because of the findings, and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter will merge the results from the quantitative and qualitative components of the study in order to paint a more complete portrait of sight-reading procedures, practices, attitudes, and experiences in the United States. Within the mixed methods paradigm, the Sequential Explanatory Design (SED) is a particularly well-known and straightforward choice of the mixed methods designs. It is characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative, data herein generated by the survey, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data, herein generated from the interviews. Priority is typically given to the quantitative data, and the two methods are integrated during the interpretation phase of the study. SED is a clear design, and the steps of implementation fall into clear, separate stages. For the purposes of this study, stages have included a survey phase, followed by the interview phase.

Chapter Overview

The following study overview will include a review of the purpose and questions, and will then continue with a discussion of the methodological implications of the mixed methods approach utilized in this study. Following this section, I will discuss the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods findings from Chapters 4 and 5, and will draw conclusions from these data in order to provide implications for the music education profession. This discussion of results will be aligned with the four research questions. Following this discussion, I will offer suggestions for further research.

Review of Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the state of sight reading in band performance
evaluations and classrooms across the nation. This study in sight reading sought to identify baseline knowledge, which explored the traditions and procedures, attitudes of directors, and event experiences in high school large group band performance evaluations. Musicians generally agree that the ability to read music at sight is an essential skill for the instrumental performer (Elliott, 1982b).

Sight reading has become a standard evaluative device in the school band program in many states. One of the ways the value of sight reading is shown is by its inclusion at state-sponsored ensemble contests (Hayward & Gromko, 2009). From the large group performance ensemble perspective, there is a similarity in requirement of sight reading and sight singing in states across the nation. The number of states that require this type of assessment is almost equal between choral and instrumental groups. Ensemble sight reading is required of school bands participating in music contests in 24 states (Paul, 2010), while 25 states require choral sight singing (Norris, 2004). Ratings for ensemble sight-reading achievement, both instrumental and choral, are often assigned and factor into the evaluative device for the school band or choir program.

In large ensemble band rehearsals, sight reading has become a traditional part of rehearsals, and is more focused during the months and weeks leading up to the large group adjudicated events. Instruction of sight reading in many classrooms consists of merely running through the process that is implemented in the adjudication room. Students are expected to improve achievement in this area based on repetition of exercises as opposed to learned practices and techniques.

Pedagogues and researchers regard sight-reading ability as an important component of a complete instrumental music education; however, results of the study by Paul (2010) suggest that sight-reading assessment at large group band contests throughout the country may not reflect
these opinions. Previous research, specifically that of Paul (2010) which provides a general survey of the sight-reading requirements at festivals in each state, leads to a number of open-ended thoughts for future research. The purpose of this study was to expand on previous research, generate data that will assist in the understanding of adjudicated sight reading from a national perspective, and pave the way for future studies in this area, as suggested later in this chapter.

This study specifically focused on large ensemble band sight reading in both the rehearsal and adjudicated performance rooms. Four research questions were developed, and used to assist in addressing the purpose of the study:

1. What procedures are common to high school band sight-reading events in the United States?
2. How do high school directors prepare themselves and their bands for sight-reading evaluation?
3. What are band director attitudes toward sight-reading evaluation, and how do they influence instructional practices?
4. What experiences of sight-reading evaluation influence participant views in high school band settings?

Investigation of the questions occurred in a variety of formats. The composition of my inquiry included individual investigation, survey, and interview. The structure of this study included an Internet search pertaining to question number one above. Following the initial investigation, a mixture of a survey to provide quantitative data and an interview to provide qualitative data occurred for the examination of the remaining questions. Utilizing multiple data sources and analysis strategies provided the comprehensive approach needed for complete exploration of the topics relevant to the research questions.
Review of Methodology

In this SED mixed methods design, both quantitative and qualitative data are collected separately on the same phenomenon, and, following analysis, are converged through comparison and contrast of the results. Such an approach serves to validate, confirm, or compare the results of the two different methods in order to obtain valid and well-substantiated conclusions about a single phenomenon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Both the qualitative and quantitative components are given equal status under this design framework, as each is valued for its means of describing the topic at hand. This design was selected to shed light on the state of sight reading throughout the nation from multiple angles in a comprehensive manner.

To gain national perspective, reaching a large number of band directors from a wide geographical area is imperative to the purposes of this study. The quantitative portion of the method fulfilled this requirement. Following up with select participants for a more thorough, in-depth look at their attitudes about sight reading was also an essential goal of this research. The rich, narrative details that came from this form of inquiry were essential to our perception of the participant’s feelings about the adjudicated sight-reading experience. Qualitative data from interviews provided a more detailed understanding of the experiences of individual band directors.

Initially, I explored adjudicated sight-reading practices in each of the states that offer sight reading as a part of their assessment. Research was done to determine which of the state organizations sponsor the sight-reading event. Procedures, protocols, and regulations from each event have been addressed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of how sight-reading adjudication occurs in each state. Analysis occurred by looking for similarities and differences among the procedures in each of the states.
A large portion of the survey addressed director preparation to teach sight reading in their classrooms, and how those directors train their students for sight reading adjudication. Analysis of data looked for commonalities in the process of sight reading, as well as areas of accomplishment and concern with regard to director training. Quantitative data were collected and subsequently analyzed using descriptive statistics. This question intended to look for commonalities and differences in band director attitudes about sight-reading adjudication among all of the states, and between individual states.

The final segment in this study was the qualitative phase. During the interviews, participants were questioned about their experiences in the sight-reading adjudication room, how they felt about the experiences, and how they perceived their students felt about the experiences. The rich description of these experiences has helped to provide insight into the perceived benefits and challenges of this type of evaluation, in addition to ways that the adjudication might be improved.

One of the purposes of mixed methods study, specifically the SED, is to combine the qualitative and quantitative data in the findings of the study. Although both data types were collected separately, it is important to remember that the combination of the data types is one of the core principals of mixed method methodology, and provides the most comprehensive look at the information. The central themes of the study, as well as the implications, and final statements, have been developed with both data types in mind.

Central Themes of the Study

Through analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data, central themes of the study came to the fore, which are in the coming paragraphs. The goal of this study was to provide
baseline knowledge about the state of sight reading in the United States. As shown through the review of literature, information regarding this type of large group, instrumental sight reading has not existed. This study now adds clarity to the basic information found in previous studies about instrumental sight reading.

In-depth details of both the quantitative and qualitative data were provided in the previous chapters. Now we will examine each of the major themes that have come from the collective data that was presented in this study. Therefore, there were four major themes: Sight-Reading Comfort Level, Anxiety about the Sight-Reading Evaluation Process, Sight Reading in the Classroom, and Discontent with the Current Sight-Reading Evaluation Structure.

Sight-Reading Comfort Level

Participants in this study collectively feel that they are comfortable with their own abilities as a sight-reading musician. Sight reading on their individual instruments has been something that they have learned to do over time. Participants were able to acknowledge that learning to sight read on their instrument was something that is highly situational. They each have been put in situations in which they were required to be able to sight read. Many of those occasions occurred during their undergraduate study; through their applied lessons, or professional performances as a musician.

The data indicate that there is a disconnect and inconsistency between an individual’s sight-reading ability and their comfort level to teach sight reading to their students. Some of the participants believe that they are more comfortable teaching sight reading to their students because of their own ease in sight reading as a musician. However, many of the other participants do not feel prepared or comfortable teaching sight reading even though they feel good about their own abilities as a sight-reading musician.
Through the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, participants have a mixture of feelings when it comes to teaching sight reading to their students, especially when it is associated with the sight-reading performance evaluations. Participants feel that there is a lack of training in teaching sight reading, they would appreciate more professional development, and opportunities throughout their pre-service teacher training programs to become more confident in their abilities to teach sight reading. Although all participants agree on the need for more education in this area, when asked directly if they are comfortable teaching sight reading, answers were mixed throughout the data.

Anxiety About the Sight-Reading Evaluation Process

Analysis of the data in both phases of the study revealed that all participants have anxiety about the sight-reading evaluation process. Their own insecurities in teaching sight reading to their students, especially during the time of the sight-reading evaluation created the majority of the anxiety for participants. Participants explained that there is a general lack of understanding about what was expected from the sight-reading evaluation process. Although anxious feelings are somewhat commonly associated with musical performances, the participants revealed that the anxiety they felt associated with sight-reading evaluation is more than normal. Anxiety, in this case, is derived from being unsure about how the students will perform, what the music will be like that they are given to sight read, and not completely understanding the expectations of the adjudicators.

The directors want to do their best for their students, and those that feel ill-prepared to teach sight reading come into the evaluation setting feeling extremely nervous, scared, and anxious. Many participants expressed anxiety about their inadequacies of teaching sight reading in their day-to-day classrooms. Additionally, the majority of the anxiety about sight reading
stems from the feeling unsure about how to teach their students while in the evaluation room, during the minutes that they have to address the ensemble.

_Sight Reading in the Classroom_

Through analysis, a few aspects of the sight-reading process in the classroom came to forefront of the topic. Teaching sight reading in the classroom is not portrayed in one specific manner. Although all participants in the study feel that teaching sight reading is a priority in their class, the process of teaching sight reading to students looks different in each classroom throughout the country. Various materials are used to teach the concept; rhythm studies, method books, and teacher made materials are a few. There is much consensus in the frequency and length of time spent teaching the concept, especially in the weeks leading up to the sight-reading performance evaluation. Teachers spend frequent, but short amounts of time sight reading during rehearsals.

Reasons for teaching sight reading were varied, but consistent among participants. Participants agreed that there are many reasons to teach sight reading, not simply because the band will be evaluated in this area. Students need to learn to sight read to become independent musicians, and perform music on their own without constantly needing instruction from a teacher. Many of the directors expressed that one of their reasons for sight reading new music was an effort to learn new pieces for the younger students to perform. This is a way to hear music, and understand the potential concerns of the piece before giving it to the less experienced musicians in either high school or middle school.

_Discontent with Current Sight-Reading Evaluation Structure_

Discontent with the sight-reading process in their state was a common thread throughout participant responses in both phases of the study. Many commons responses to questions about
the process revealed that participants would like to see some different procedures put into place, but there were not any solid thoughts on what that might look like if it was different. Specific discontent with the process centered around the time frame to study the piece, lack of understanding about what exactly was being evaluated, and the stale environment in which the sight-reading often takes place.

The environment is often a product of the severity of the evaluation, the demeanor of the adjudicator, and the comfort of the ensemble performing. Participants shared concerns that the adjudicators did not make their students feel confident and at ease in the process, and provided a lack of valuable feedback to the students. As described in the opening statements of this study, the environment in the sight-reading room often has a very unsettling nature from the moment one enters; due to the unpredictability of what will happen.

Connecting the Dots of the Study

The importance of sight reading in the nationwide music curriculum and within the schools had been evidenced on multiple occasions. Music education researchers have suggested that assessments provided at large group adjudicated festivals can affect the emphasis on sight-reading instruction in the music education curricula as well as influence the achievement standards in specific music reading skills (Demorest, 2001). With so much supporting evidence on the importance of sight reading, there is a lack of clarity as to why evaluation in this area does not exist in more of the country. Literacy is a component of musical independence, which can contribute to life-long learning in music, one of the primary goals of music education (Labuta & Smith, 1997). Presence, or absence, of assessment affects the amount of instructional time devoted to the practice of sight reading in the classroom. Absence of assessment and lack of provision of instructional time given to sight reading go hand in hand (Johnson, 1987).
Therefore, it is notable that so few middle and high school band festivals across the United States require evaluation in sight reading, a skill which most teachers and researchers consider an essential skill for musicians at any level.

Looking through the lens of Activity Theory, sight-reading assessment at large group festivals only provides a brief snapshot of an ensemble’s progress in that area of musical development. If sight reading evaluation in these venues can positively influence attitudes toward instructional practices are correct, it would prove beneficial for middle school and high school directors to continue dialog on the merits of requiring sight reading at local and state festivals. Discussions among band directors and state leaders, based on the importance of including sight-reading evaluation in their festival, would serve as a platform from which to continue development of classroom learning standards that align with the national music standards.

Nationwide trends in sight reading show the importance of including sight reading in a day-to-day classroom. Many states across the nation include sight reading in several areas of music education, including performance assessments. We in the music education profession must understand that there are areas that need to be addressed to move forward with meaningful instruction in sight reading, and training of teachers who are providing that instruction.

*Implications for Practitioners*

Findings of this study are appropriate for practitioners at all levels of experience. These implications directly connect with one of the central themes of the study – Sight Reading in the Classroom. Beginning teachers can use this information to decide how to organize a portion of their curricula based on nationwide trends in sight-reading education. Likewise, practitioners with more experience will be able to reflect on their current practices in teaching sight reading,
and compare them with the national tendencies. This type of reflection can help make future decisions regarding the amount of rehearsal time and methods that are used to teach sight reading to their students.

The scope of this study included data from high school band directors, about high school band situations and experiences. There is, however, some data that has been collected about sight reading in the middle school band setting as well. Paul (2010) included data based on information that he collected about middle school sight-reading requirements throughout the country. Results from this study revealed that 21 states evaluate their middle school bands in the area of sight reading. Although this is a lower number of states that require sight reading in middle school than in high school, the number of states that have middle school performance evaluations is worth considering. Middle school band directors truly start the foundation of sight reading education and training for band students. Habits that are created for students in the middle school band setting often continue into the high school setting. All sight-reading skills should be started with beginning sight readers. In addition to instruction about musical content, musicians should be taught procedural skills. The instruction and application of sight-reading strategies should be viewed as a long-term undertaking. The skill of sight reading well is one that can and should be cultivated from the beginning of any student’s musical study. Additionally, building this skill is one that requires constant practice and assessment to maintain the intended importance given to sight reading.

This instruction and practice in sight reading will provide security and confidence to beginners as they are taught to follow a known procedure even though the melodic and rhythmic content is unknown. Students will be more confident when looking at new material, both individually and as a larger ensemble. As sight-reading preparation behaviors are encouraged,
individual students will feel more confident and will ultimately positively impact the sight-reading abilities of the entire ensemble.

Practitioners can work with each other among the grade levels to create common goals in teaching sight reading to students. Creating a solid curriculum for students to succeed in both individual and large group sight reading can begin at a very young age. The success of a student in music often starts when the student is very young. Sight reading is not different in this aspect, however in my experience, sight reading at the middle school level is not a focus of the curriculum. Practitioners at the middle school level need to be mindful of their impact on sight-reading techniques for the students who are in front of them daily. In many common rehearsal settings, there are often opportunities to discuss the importance. Likewise, practitioners of high school students need to be mindful of what has already been taught to the middle school students, as well as what can be learned from the experiences that the middle school students have already had. This type of spiral curriculum has been common in the music education classrooms in many areas of the curriculum. Sight reading can and should be taught in the same manner.

Results from this study indicate that high school band directors do not rely on one sole method or technique for teaching sight reading. Most directors create their sight-reading curriculum from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, method books, melodic exercises, rhythmic exercises, and pieces for full band. Indicators show that teachers need to be willing to create their own materials to educate their students and practice sight reading. Directors who are looking for materials that are already created will likely not find anything that is as comprehensive as what is needed.
Participant survey results have shown several suggestions for method books, however, participants also indicated that they felt the need to supplement these method books with other materials as well. Although there are some sight-reading method books published and available for purchase, directors have expressed concern about the cost for another method book to be used in their classroom, as well as the design and functionality of the books currently on the market. Directors expressed concern that simply reading sight-reading exercises from a method book would not ensure that their students are able to sight read. Development of their own sight-reading materials for their own ensembles allows them to tailor the instructional materials to the needs of their students, instead of using a prescribed method.

Teaching sight reading is accepted and recommended as a part of instrumental music instruction. This and previous research shows mixed reports on the amount of time that directors are devoting to sight-reading instruction with their students. Additionally, there are mixed opinions about whether the practice of sight reading is about reading the music or if it is about the procedure of sight-reading assessment.

Most directors have agreed that the time that they spend sight reading in their classroom is a combination of both practice and procedure. Based on this research, band directors have been known to spend three to five days per week working in the area of sight reading, although most directors feel that a daily routine is the better system to truly advance the skills of their students. A director’s ability to create a systematic, daily routine comprised of a combination of several techniques is the best option for the rehearsal classroom.

Techniques and materials should include, at minimum, rhythm exercises, melodic exercises, short excerpts, and full-length pieces written for band. Current and desired skill level must also be considered in the preparation of all materials. Henry (1999) noted that teachers lack
time and resources for regular, ongoing assessment of music reading skills. With the concerns of limited preparation time, as well as general knowledge and experience, band directors may feel that they are not prepared to compile such extensive materials for sight reading in their school. These concerns can often lead teachers to rely on using one method to practice sight reading, not getting a broad-spectrum education for the students.

**Implications for the Profession**

In this section I will discuss the implications that the results of this study provide for the music education profession as a whole. Starting with the national standard requirements, sight reading is included at every grade level, state and local performance requirements, as well as individual assessments within the rehearsal. Within the United States, state Department of Education’s provides educational based standards, many of which incorporate sight reading as an important part of the day-to-day music curriculum, which they have adopted from the National Standards in Arts Education.

The publication of the national standards for music education affirmed the importance of developing musically literate students in the American music classrooms. In particular, the fifth content standard includes specific sight-reading objectives for students, grades five and above, who participate in choral or instrumental ensembles. The importance of sight reading has been demonstrated at a state, district, and local level with its inclusion at the adjudicated festivals in many states. On an individual level, many high school band directors include sight reading as a traditional part of band auditions, seat assignment tests, and chair challenges.

To meet the goal of producing independent learners, attention must be given to the instructional strategies designed for individual sight readers as well as group participants. Directors must feel comfortable sight reading, both as individual musicians on their own
instruments and as practitioner’s sight reading a score. Evidence taken from this study shows that musicians spend a lot of time sight reading, however there is no indication that this sight reading is meant for the actual practice of sight reading. Directors have commented that situations they have been a part of that have included sight reading are situational, and not for the purposes of actual sight reading.

Regarding one of the central themes of this study – Comfort Level in Sight Reading - most band directors in this study feel that their most influential sight-reading training occurred during their time as a high school musician, as part of the large ensemble in which they played. Although this is a valuable part of the music education, there are concerns associated with it as well. The concern is simply that once a student leaves high school and moves on to further education in music, they do not believe that they continue to receive education in sight reading. Throughout this study, it has been acknowledged that pre-service music teachers do sight read quite a bit by the nature of what they are asked to do as a part of their applied lessons on college ensembles. Significantly absent, however, was the opportunity to learn to teach sight reading through all of those situations.

Based on the data gathered in this study, students who are working in a doctoral degree program have indicated that sight reading is not being addressed in any manner. Similarly, the vast majority of students enrolled in a master’s program in music do not believe that sight reading is addressed in any part of their curriculum. Much of the curriculum that exists in advanced degree programs in music education does not require students to perform as musicians on their instruments. Sight reading, therefore, is not a part of their education as a student musician. However, a different concern comes about when thinking of the non-performance based courses. Participants in this study have noted the lack of sight-reading topics in
undergraduate courses such as instrumental methods, or a class in rehearsal techniques. In those types of courses there are often opportunities to learn and practice instructional strategies and foundations of rehearsal settings, however participants in this study have commented that this opportunity was lacking in their undergraduate music education curriculum. There is a lack of practical education as it relates to teaching students to sight read.

Additionally, through survey responses, evidence supports the statement that performance-based courses in the undergraduate music education curriculum do not encourage education in sight reading. Instrumental conducting and rehearsal methods courses often devote far less time to sight-reading instruction than to effective rehearsal techniques that prepare pieces for performance. Therefore, many band directors’ knowledge of how to teach sight reading is derived from their own personal experience, both as participants in ensemble sight reading and as leaders learning by trial and error. Kuehne (2007) showed lack of influence in sight reading when it came to collegiate music education professors. Results of her study indicate that music education professors are not covering the teaching of sight reading at all, or more likely that there is so much to cover in a few semesters that teaching about sight reading is limited. There is not an indication that undergraduate students in music education have the opportunity to learn techniques or practice teaching others to sight read on an individual or ensemble-based level.

High school band directors feel that their college band directors are not necessarily advocates of regular, ensemble sight-reading practice. A few of the discussions that resulted from the interviews displayed almost eye-opening moments of the participants regarding an undergraduate student’s participation in their college ensemble. Many of the participants indicated that there might have been missed opportunities for sight-reading education within
their college ensembles. There were not indicators that they had the chance to truly practice the
procedural aspects while playing as a member of the ensemble.

Although college ensembles sight read a lot when looking at new pieces to play, it is not
typical that a sight-reading procedure is used, or that any of the students in the ensemble are
given the opportunity to practice sight-reading instruction with the ensemble when those
instances arise. Since most of the college band directors are not seen as advocates of sight
reading, students have interpreted that the needs of performance ensemble learning to play the
piece have been placed at a higher level of importance than that of continuing to learn how to
sight read or teach sight reading.

Those directors who felt most confident as teachers of sight reading were those who felt
the best as sight readers themselves. As confident sight readers, these directors felt that they
could communicate their thought process to their students. They were able to give helpful
information about their own knowledge in rhythm reading, melodic phrasing, or even a simple
step-by-step process.

Most of the participants who felt most confident as sight-reading musicians were those
who spent a great deal of time sight reading in their applied lessons. Sight-reading experiences in
applied lesson settings often were not a type of formal reading, but were typically reading duets,
playing solos together with the instructor, or another sort of relaxed music reading activity.
Exercises were not meant to improve sight reading necessarily, but were activities of the lessons
that were structured by the professor. These types of activities have made the students feel more
comfortable as sight readers, and then in turn, they have become more confident as band
directors in their own abilities to teach sight reading.
All results from this study indicate that practicing teachers need and want more professional development in the area of sight reading, specifically in techniques for teaching sight reading in the classroom and coaching the students through a sight-reading adjudication setting. More consistency in how the assessments are used can be related to band directors feeling competent when they are teaching sight reading. Teachers, at times, have felt inadequate in their instruction when teaching sight reading simply because they have a lack of experience and understanding as to how the assessments in sight reading will occur. Statements have been made by directors that there is not a strong presence of sight reading in graduate school courses, in professional development conferences, journals or magazines, or even in small, local, educational sessions. The profession needs to add opportunities for band directors to learn about sight-reading techniques. Many suggestions were made by the participants of this study that would require additional offerings of sight reading education in a variety of settings. Indicated most were those that would be a part of the professional conferences. These types of offerings might include anything from clinics on how to teach sight reading to teachers actually practicing adjudication coaching with an audience or evaluators to provide suggestions on their coaching commentary. All of the information derived from the results of this study show that additional training in sight reading in any aspect would be beneficial and appreciated by directors.

Implications for Professional Organizations

The findings of this study might help guide decisions made by national and state organizations regarding the role of sight reading within the national curriculum and in their adjudicated events. The following implications pertain directly to the central to the themes of this study – Anxiety About the Sight-Reading Process, and Discontent with the Current Sight-Reading Evaluation Structure. The importance of sight reading in these states has been made
clear by the priority it has been given in the performance evaluation of bands. It is unclear, however, as to why sight reading has been given this importance. The priority and importance of sight reading is obvious, however, there has not been a reason or rationale given as to why sight reading, and the corresponding assessment, is important. Results and implications of this study should be examined by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), the state music education associations, and other organizations that sponsor sight-reading events.

Large group festival adjudication, when organized effectively, can serve as an important and informative component of not only the band directors’ assessment plans, but also their music reading curricula. For directors who choose to attend festivals with their students, assessment in sight reading increases the likelihood that some form of instruction in this area is taking place in the classroom, therefore creating a rationale for directors to attend these types of assessments with their students. The requirement of sight-reading assessment clearly impacts the inclusion of sight-reading instruction in the classroom. This assists practitioners in the development of their rationale for teaching sight reading in the classroom. Although there is background about why sight reading is taught in the classroom, it is hard to see the purpose as to why it is included in so many festivals and assessments.

Development of a rationale for why state organizations have decided to include sight reading in their performance evaluation process may open a lot of new possibilities. While it is ultimately the responsibility of the state organizations to develop a rationale that will serve the needs of their own students, some reasons might include: inclusion of all students in the music reading process, differentiates evaluation of the individual based on their own ability level, and the assessment of a students’ ability to read music without an extended period of preparation. Students would understand why it is necessary to be proficient in this skill if there was a
presented rationale for its inclusion. Directors who already have their own reasons for including sight reading in their curriculum, which is not solely based the need to teach is for the state performance evaluations, would have a better perspective about the manner in which sight reading needs to be taught, and where the focus should be placed as their lesson plans are being developed. Adjudicators of sight-reading performance would be able to maintain more consistency in their evaluations based on specific performance goals in relation to the rationale for teaching sight reading. State organizations should use their purposes and rationales for including sight reading as the foundation for teacher training, adjudicator training, professional development, and state standards. Background, rationale, and performance expectations should be clearly outlined in a format that is readily available to teachers, students, and adjudicators.

Through all of the findings of this study, one noticeably absent statement was that of excitement about the adjudicated process of sight-reading assessment. All participants have replaced a feeling of excitement with feelings of anxiety and nervousness. Although directors mostly felt that the procedural aspects of the sight-reading evaluation were adequate; when asked if there was anything that should be changed, enthusiastically energetic statements were given about the possibility of being able to do things differently. Directors were enthusiastic when given the chance to possibly think outside the box and recreate a different process in which to sight read. Brainstorming should be done by the state organizations to look for a different way to execute the process of sight-reading evaluation. Although there may not be a more effective way to accomplish the task, it is worth looking at if it will help directors and students feel more enthusiastic about the sight-reading process. Several ideas about potential changes to the process came up throughout the study, and are addressed in the next section.
Suggestions for Further Research

Within a rich, complex, and understudied field such as band sight reading, numerous and varied arenas warrant further exploration. This section will discuss several specific avenues that emerge as natural extensions of the current study. In addition, several studies have been completed in the area of vocal sight singing, which, if replicated in the area of band sight reading, would furnish beneficial results to band directors, students, and the music education profession.

Replication of Studies

Norris (2004) completed a nationwide overview of sight singing requirements in large group choral festivals. That study, replicated by Paul (2010), examined the requirements of large group band festivals throughout the United States. It would be beneficial to replicate that study again because some states have already changed their practices. An updated account of the current requirements would be helpful specifically to those looking to do nationwide research in this area. Additionally, an updated list of sight-reading requirements throughout the county would continue to serve as a yardstick of the perceived importance of sight reading.

Demorest (2004) conducted a nationwide study examining choral sight singing practices. The study was done with a survey that asked choral directors who were active sight singing teachers to identify how much time they spent teaching sight singing, the methods or materials they prefer and how they assess student progress. Results indicated some significant differences based on whether or not sight singing was a part of contest preparation, preferred rhythm reading systems, and varied approaches to assessment. The area of intrigue in this study by Demorest is that of individual student assessment in sight singing. This particular dissertation does not address student assessment in instrumental sight reading. Replication of this study could garner
results to assist band directors in the organization of their curriculum, teaching strategies, and assessment needs.

Yarbrough, Orman, and Neil (2007) looked at time usage by choral directors prior to sight-reading adjudication. This study analyzed what topics directors address in the study time and instructional time leading into sight-reading adjudication performance. Although Ferguson (2012) completed a small-scale version of the study, a larger scale study would provide a more comprehensive look at how directors spend their instructional time. This study could also be beneficial when done in several of the states that use sight reading as a means of large group evaluation.

This current study is completely based on information gathered from high school band directors about their situations in high school band settings. Through this document, discussion of sight-reading evaluation at the middle school level has not been very prevalent. There are many states that do evaluate sight reading as a part of their large group performance evaluations for middle school students. A replication of this current study, with a focus on middle school practices and experiences, would potentially garner an even broader insight into the foundations of teaching sight reading to students in a younger age group.

New Studies

First, based on discussion items within individual interviews, research comparing teachers’ sight-reading ability as a performer themselves with their comfort level while teaching sight reading to their students would be intriguing. Several of the interview participants made a connection between their own abilities and their comfort level of teaching sight reading to their students. Connection between the two areas would further substantiate the need to teach sight
reading skills within the teacher education programs.

Sight reading at a younger age level was discussed in the earlier parts of this chapter. There are many questions surrounding sight-reading curriculum and instruction at the middle school level. What do middle school directors feel is important for their teaching of sight reading? Do those directors agree that students should start the practice of sight reading early? How does assessment, or lack of, in sight reading, impact its importance in the classroom structure of a middle school rehearsal room?

Meyers (2011) suggested several benefits to participation in solo and ensemble activities. One of the areas that was not addressed is the benefit of solo and ensemble participation on sight-reading ability or music reading independence. Several of the interview participants made statements about their program’s active involvement in solo and ensemble events. It is unclear if there is a correlation between successful sight-reading ability and participation in solo and ensemble events.

Additionally, several comments throughout this study from both the surveys and interviews led to questions about the music teacher training programs. Several times topics arose concerning the lack of emphasis placed on sight reading both from the individual and ensemble perspective. Questions regarding the role of sight reading and the college band director came up several times. Undergraduate music education programs would benefit from research designed to understand what college band directors feel their role in teaching sight reading is for the students. Whose responsibility is it to teach the undergraduate students to sight read? When does a pre-service music teacher learn to teach other students to sight read? Is sight reading not covered in an undergraduate music education course or not covered effectively? Are these the reasons that some teachers feel unprepared to teach sight reading? Do pre-service music teachers have the
opportunity to practice sight-reading techniques with a large performance ensemble?

Finally, are musicians that are trained more in the jazz genre better sight readers than those trained mostly in the classical genre? Throughout this study, participants continued to ask if training in different ensembles or genres would positively affect their sight-reading abilities. Jazz musicians seemed to believe that their training in improvisation would lead them to be more effective sight readers. This begs the question; do jazz musicians make better sight readers?

Conclusions of the Study

Through the lens of Activity Theory, this study has examined state of sight reading in the United States, with an emphasis on the procedures, preparation, attitudes and experiences with regard to band sight reading. Sight reading has become a primary focus of music education in many areas of this country. Despite the foundation from which the importance of sight reading has been built, discrepancies in practice, philosophy, and procedure are present. These discrepancies have had a large impact on what is currently taking place in the classroom and in assessment, and fundamentally impact the musical and educational experiences of our students.

Practice

The practice of teaching students to sight read is important, and it must be maintained from year to year, month to month, and day to day. Students and teachers alike need to invest in the process of learning to be good sight readers. As band directors, we insist that our students take a methodical approach to sight reading. Our students practice sight reading in our rehearsals, and hone their individual skills in sight-reading music.

Likewise, teachers, need to be aggressively invested in our own practice of teaching sight-reading skills to our students. Continuing our own search for knowledge in ways to help our students learn, and methods by which to teach them are important aspects of our own growth.
and development as teachers. Our own attention to our preparation as educators, to teach the students in front of us, is of great concern. This preparation can positively or negatively impact our attitudes toward sight reading in rehearsal and during assessment, and ultimately impact the musical and educational experiences of our students. Ensuring a solid curricular foundation in our classroom is an essential piece to providing a well-rounded music education that includes sight reading.

**Philosophy**

We, as practitioners in music education, must understand the philosophical viewpoints for why sight reading has been given such a prominent place in the expectations of a performing ensemble. Results of this study show that individual teachers have their own philosophies for the inclusion of sight-reading instruction. In efforts to create a more grounded foundation of sight reading in the classroom, it will be necessary to understand the bigger philosophical underpinnings of sight reading held by national and state organizations.

When an ensemble is participating in a sight-reading evaluation, it would be helpful for the director and the students to know why they are sight reading, what is being assessed during the evaluation, and what is the overall goal of sight-reading adjudication. The development of an overarching philosophical standpoint for the inclusion of sight reading would potentially create answers to these questions. Philosophical standards should be set as a foundation from which to build an educational rationale for teaching sight reading in the classroom. Rationales need to be available and communicated with practitioners to aid in their preparation, attitude, and instruction of sight reading, with the ultimate goal of creating more meaningful musical and educational experience through sight reading.
**Procedure**

It is a necessity at this point in time to look at the policies that have been created surrounding sight-reading assessment. Through the process of completing this study, several thoughts have come to the forefront as ideas for adjustments to the procedural aspects of sight reading. Each idea may have positive and/or negative implications, but is unknown until an attempt is made to find a way to assess sight reading that enthusiastically encourages students and directors to feel that they have been part of an exciting, educational experience. In all of the idea suggestions listed in this section, trials would need to be brainstormed, completed, and effects analyzed to make an informed decision prior to proceeding with a full change.

Placement of the sight-reading portion of the assessment was one of the first thoughts for a minor change in the process. In all states, sight reading occurs after the performance of the prepared pieces. What if sight reading occurred first, and the prepared pieces were second? Other than logistical concerns, there may be a benefit to starting with the sight-reading portion. During the interviews, part of the discussion on this idea was wondering if sight reading first would get the students to perform at a higher level as they were fresh, and not mentally tired from the other portion of the assessment. Most of the ensembles look forward to the performance of their prepared pieces the most; if they still had that to look forward to after the sight-reading component, students may stay engaged in the overall assessment process more effectively.

Regardless of where the sight-reading portion falls within the process, there was mention of the ensemble being able to complete the sight reading in the same location that the prepared performance occurs. Directors shared much concern about the decreased level of student engagement that occurs when the ensemble is moved from the first performance stage to a different place, often a rehearsal room, for the sight-reading portion. Teachers felt that their
students sometimes relaxed and disengaged during that transition time, which often caused a lack of focus throughout the sight-reading assessment.

How much influence does the individual band director have on the sight-reading success of the ensemble during evaluation? If the goal of sight reading adjudication is to assess an ensemble’s ability to read music, and inherent musicianship of the group, then the ensemble’s band director would not need to participate as the conductor of that sight-reading performance. What if one guest conductor, not the school band director, was the person who guided each band through the sight-reading assessment process? Each band would get the same information from the same person during the preparatory study periods, and not be impacted by the potential insecurities or differences of the individual band directors. Although this may create a bit of unfamiliarity for the students in the ensemble, the assessment of the group’s sight-reading performance could exist without the help or hindrance of the band director.

The goal of the sight-reading piece should be to be able to perform it at the quality of the other prepared pieces. For this reason, the sight-reading piece is typically several grade levels less in difficulty. Typically, the prepared performance includes three pieces prepared by the group during their rehearsals several months prior to the assessment. What if groups had an extended warm-up and sight-reading study time frame prior to their performance, and were expected to perform the sight-reading piece as a fourth piece during their onstage performance? Comments throughout this study have eluded to the fact that silent study, and the performance of the sight-reading piece, is not necessarily a realistic version of sight reading in the professional world of a musician. Many times, professional musicians have a little bit of time in which they can practice the piece on their own or with an ensemble prior to the performance. Perhaps giving each ensemble a little time to read and rehearse the sight-reading piece during their warm up
Final Thoughts

The area of sight reading will continue to be an important one in the field of instrumental music education. As outlined in the research questions, I worked to provide some perspective on sight-reading procedures, preparation, attitude and experiences across the United States. A large group of high school band directors from 30 states throughout the country participated in the Sight-Reading Instruction Training Attitude Survey (SRITAS). Additionally, six band directors participated in an interview. Collectively, the survey and interview participants contributed to the findings of this study.

Sight-reading assessment procedural information was collected from each state. An analysis of the procedures revealed much commonality in the sight-reading procedure among all of the states. Placement of the assessment, allowance of study time, student and director participation during study time, and pre-performance warm-up were all areas common to sight-reading assessment in each state. Commentary by the director during the performance of the sight-reading piece was the main area of difference among the states. The procedures in some states dictate that directors are permitted to verbally communicate with the students during the performance, however others do not allow any verbal communication by the director to the students. More research needs to be done to determine if this difference has an impact on the success of sight reading by the bands.

The SRITAS was developed to collect data in several areas of sight reading including: director background, program background, reasons to teach sight reading, director preparation and training, previous sight-reading experiences, sight-reading rehearsal and evaluation, and
attitude. According to data presented in this study, band directors want to be more prepared for teaching sight reading. Throughout the study preparation has been addressed in two different ways, one having to do with whether a director feels prepared to teach sight reading, and the second is how directors prepare their students to sight read. Analysis of the data revealed band directors agree that sight reading needs to be taught in the music education classroom, but the reasons for instruction in this area differ greatly among participants. Generally, directors do not feel as if they are well-trained or prepared to teach sight reading to their students. Most participants expressed confidence in their own abilities to sight read as a performing musician, but lack confidence when it comes to instruction.

Attitudes toward sight reading, and the sight-reading evaluation process were investigated through the survey portion of this study. Director attitudes toward sight reading vary greatly among directors based on their individual experiences. Teacher and student experiences in sight-reading assessment must have a strong foundation in educational and musical concepts, and are related to the band director’s attitude about the process.

Topics regarding participant experiences were included in the interview portion of this study. Band directors had the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and feelings about their experiences in sight-reading assessment. All participants feel that teaching sight reading is an important part of their students’ music education. Their comfort level in teaching sight reading varies greatly, as does their reason for teaching sight reading to their students. Participants shared their experiences, both positive and negative, of sight-reading assessment, and were able to communicate thoughts and ideas for improvement of the evaluation in sight reading.

As music education continues to evolve, aspects of sight-reading instruction, director training, and assessment experiences need to be evaluated and addressed. Sight reading is a vital
and consistent part of music education, and will continue to evolve. The music education profession must look toward the future to encourage sight-reading assessment grounded in strong educational and musical experiences.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPLICATION

IRB Approval


The Kent State University Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved your Application for Approval to Use Human Research Participants as Level I/Exempt from Annual review research. Your research project involves minimal risk to human subjects and meets the criteria for the following category of exemption under federal regulations:

- Exemption 2: Educational Tests, Surveys, Interviews, and Public Behavior Observation

This application was approved on April 16, 2014.
***Submission of annual review reports is not required for Level I/Exempt projects.

If any modifications are made in research design, methodology, or procedures that increase the risks to subjects or includes activities that do not fall within the approved exemption category, those modifications must be submitted to and approved by the IRB before implementation.

Please contact an IRB discipline specific reviewer or the Office of Research Compliance to discuss the changes and whether a new application must be submitted. http://www.kent.edu/research/researchsafetyandcompliance/irb/index.cfm

Kent State University has a Federal Wide Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP); FWA Number 00001853.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at Researchcompliance@kent.edu or by phone at 330-672-2704 or 330.672.8058.

Respectfully,
Kent State University Office of Research Compliance
224 Cartwright Hall | fax 330.672.2658

Kevin McCreary | Research Compliance Coordinator | 330.672.8058 | kmccrea1@kent.edu
Paulette Washko | Manager, Research Compliance | 330.672.2704 | Pwashko@kent.edu

For links to obtain general information, access forms, and complete required training, visit our website at www.kent.edu/research.

APPENDIX B

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SURVEY CONSENT FORM

HIGH SCHOOL BAND SIGHT READING IN THE UNITED STATES:
PROCEDURES, PREPARATION, ATTITUDE, AND EXPERIENCES

Welcome to “High School Band Sight Reading,” a web-based survey that examines procedures, preparation, attitude and experiences of sight reading. Before taking part in this study, please read the consent form below and click on the “I Agree” button at the bottom of the page if you understand the statements and freely consent to participate in the study.

Consent Form

This study involves a web-based survey designed to evaluate large group sight reading practices across the United States. The study is being conducted by Katherine Ferguson, PhD Student at Kent State University, and it has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. No deception is involved, and the study involves no more than minimal risk to participants (i.e., the level of risk encountered in daily life).

Participation in the study typically takes 30 minutes and is strictly anonymous. Participants will answer a series of survey questions about sight reading procedure, preparation, attitude and experiences.

All responses are treated as confidential, and in no case will responses from individual participants be identified. Rather, all data will be pooled and published in aggregate form only. Participants should be aware, however, that the experiment is not being run from a “secure” https server of the kind typically used to handle credit card transactions, so there is a small possibility that responses could be viewed by unauthorized third parties (e.g., computer hackers).

Many individuals find participation in this study enjoyable, and no adverse reactions have been reported thus far. Participation is voluntary, refusal to take part in the study involves no penalty or loss of benefits to which participants are otherwise entitled, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled.

If participants have further questions about this study or their rights, or if they wish to lodge a complaint or concern, they may contact the principal investigator, Dr. Craig Nest, at (330) 672-4803; or the Kent State University Institutional Review Board, at (330) 672-2704.

If you are 18 years of age or older, understand the statements above, and freely consent to participate in the study, click on the “I Agree” button to begin the experiment.

I Agree  I Do Not Agree
APPENDIX C

AUDIO CONSENT FORM

AUDIOTAPE/VIDEO CONSENT FORM

HIGH SCHOOL BAND SIGHT READING IN THE UNITED STATES: PROCEDURES, PREPARATION, ATTITUDE, AND EXPERIENCES

Dr. Craig Reint, Asst. Professor of Music Education
Katherine Ferguson, PhD Candidate

I agree to participate in an audio-taped/video taped interview about sight reading as part of this project and for the purposes of data analysis. I agree that Katherine Ferguson may audio-tape/video tape this interview. The date, time and place of the interview will be mutually agreed upon. This form may be completed using a digital signature, in the form of consent via email.

_________________________  ______________________
Signature                  Date

I have been told that I have the right to listen to the recording of the interview before it is used. I have decided that I:

_____ want to listen to the recording          _____ do not want to listen to the recording

Sign now below if you do not want to listen to the recording. If you want to listen to the recording, you will be asked to sign after listening to them.

Katherine Ferguson may / may not (circle one) use the audio-tapes/video tapes made of me. The original tapes or copies may be used for:

_____ this research project  _____ publication  _____ presentation at professional meetings

_________________________  ______________________
Signature                  Date

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APPENDIX D

SIGHT-READING SURVEY

Screen Shot 1

High School Band Sight Reading in the United States:
Procedures, Preparation, Attitude, and Experiences
Kate Ferguson, PhD Candidate
Kent State University (OH)

Welcome to "High School Band Sight Reading," a web-based survey that examines procedures, preparation, attitude and experiences of sight reading. The Sight Reading Instruction, Training, Attitude Survey (SRITAS) has been created to ask you questions about the group you take to sight reading adjudication. Sight reading adjudication can also be known by different names such as contest, festival, assessment, or other names. Before taking part in this study, please read the consent form below and click on the "I Agree" button at the bottom of the page if you understand the statements and freely consent to participate in the study.

Consent Form
This study involves a web-based survey designed to evaluate large group sight reading practices across the United States. The study is being conducted by Katherine Ferguson, PhD Student at Kent State University, and it has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. No deception is involved, and the study involves no more than minimal risk to participants (i.e., the level of risk encountered in daily life).

Participation in the study typically takes 15 minutes and is strictly anonymous. Participants will answer a series of survey questions about sight reading procedure, preparation, attitude and experiences.

All responses are anonymous, and in no case will responses from individual participants be identified. Rather, all data will be pooled and published in aggregate form only. Participants should be aware, however, that the experiment is not being run from a "secure" https server of the kind typically used to handle credit card transactions, so there is a small possibility that responses could be viewed by unauthorized third parties (e.g., computer hackers).

Many individuals find participation in this study enjoyable, and no adverse reactions have been reported thus far. Participation is voluntary, refusal to take part in the study involves no penalty or loss of benefits to which participants are otherwise entitled, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled.

If participants have further questions about this study or their rights, or if they wish to lodge a complaint or concern, they may contact the Mrs. Kate Ferguson (330) 573-7250, Dr. Craig Rosta, at (330) 672-4803; or the Kent State University Institutional Review Board, at (330) 672-2704.

Throughout the survey you can take breaks, or come back to answer questions at a different time. You can continue the survey for up to one week after you begin. If you choose to start but not complete the survey, the answers to the completed portion will be recorded, but nothing else.

If you are 18 years of age or older, understand the statements above, and freely consent to participate in this study, click on the "I Agree" button to begin the experiment.

I Agree To Participate in this Study

I Do Not Agree To Participate in this Study
**Director Background Information**

**In which state do you currently teach?**

- [ ]

**What is your highest degree earned?**

- Bachelor Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD or DMA

**How many years have you been teaching organized INSTRUMENTAL music in an ensemble setting (at any level)?**

- [ ]

**Have you taught high school band?**

- Yes
- No
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you have taught high school band, how many years of teaching have you completed?</td>
<td>$ $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many years have you taught high school band at your current school? If this is your first year, please enter 1.</td>
<td>$ $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you participated in large group adjudicated sight reading with one or more of your bands? (in your current or previous teaching assignments)</td>
<td>Yes: ☐  No: ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School and Program Background Information

**How many students attend your high school?**

- [ ]

**What grade level(s) of students attend your high school? (Choose all that apply)**

- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]

**How many high school concert bands do you rehearse on a regular basis?**

- [ ]

**What is the total number of students in your high school band(s)?**

- [ ]

**How often does the group that participates in sight reading adjudication rehearse?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Once Per Week</th>
<th>2-3 Times Per Week</th>
<th>5 Days Per Week</th>
<th>More than 5 Days Per Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How long is that average rehearsal?

- [ ] less than 30 minutes
- [ ] 30-60 minutes
- [ ] more than 60 minutes

Do you take your high school band(s) to at least one band contest during the school year?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Do any of these contests include instrumental sight reading?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Do you teach sight reading to ALL of your high school bands?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

How often do you teach sight reading to the group that you take to sight reading adjudication?

- [ ] Never
- [ ] Less than Once a Month
- [ ] Once a Month
- [ ] 2-3 Times a Month
- [ ] Once a Week
- [ ] 2-3 Times a Week
- [ ] Daily
- [ ] Other, please explain.
Sight Reading Rehearsal Instruction

When you teach sight reading, approximately how much time do you spend in each rehearsal teaching sight reading?

Do you use a published method or book to assist in sight reading instruction?

Yes □ No □

Do you consider rhythm exercises a part of sight reading instruction?

Yes □ No □

Do you use unison melodic excerpts to teach sight reading?

Yes □ No □

Do you use full pieces for band to teach sight reading?

Yes □ No □
### Reason/Need to Teach Sight Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason/Need</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band directors should teach sight reading to high school band students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school band students should learn to sight read</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because they have to go to sight reading contest.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School band directors should teach sight reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because of the NAME National Standards.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School band directors should teach sight reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because their state and/or school district requires it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If state and/or district events require sight reading,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high school band directors should teach sight reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Director Preparation and Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation and Training</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel well prepared to teach sight reading in a high school band rehearsal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel very positive about my own ability to sight read.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think I could make sight reading instruction exciting for my students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel qualified to teach sight reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight reading is difficult to teach.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is easy to find professional development to assist in my growth as a teacher of sight reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight reading instruction is a focus at events such as conferences/clinics/meetings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I feel uncomfortable about my abilities to teach a specific topic,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek out professional development opportunities.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Previous Sight Reading Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As an undergraduate music student, I spent much time sight reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My collegiate band did not spend any time practicing sight reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My college band director was a strong advocate for regular sight reading practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight reading instruction was addressed in my master's degree program.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight reading instruction was addressed in my doctoral degree program.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a high school band student, I had good sight reading training in band.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sight Reading Rehearsal and Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My students enjoy sight reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think district contest should include a sight reading component as part of the final rating.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not have time to teach sight reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think my students do not like spending time practicing sight reading in rehearsal.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My band would not be successful at contest if there were a sight reading component.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that the time I spend teaching sight reading in rehearsal is well worth it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel that there is much need for teaching sight reading in rehearsal.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My band would learn music much faster if I spent more time teaching sight reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My band would not learn music any faster if I spent more time teaching sight reading.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My band meets too seldom to include sight reading instruction in the rehearsal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would spend less time on sight reading if it were not required at district band contest.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight reading activities are an important part of the musical development of my students.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sight reading activities are beneficial for both high and low achieving students.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sight reading activities help increase the performance confidence of my students.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sight reading helps to motivate my students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sight reading activities are an excellent way for students to show their musical knowledge.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sight reading at contest/festival does not motivate my students to want to participate.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students enjoy sight reading while in the rehearsal setting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students enjoy sight reading as a part of a contest/festival.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My students are afraid to sight read.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My students demonstrate sight reading as a large ensemble at concerts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in contest/festival is beneficial for my students because of the sight reading component.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in contest/festival might be beneficial for my students if the sight reading component was not included.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments received at sight reading adjudication are beneficial to my students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The format of our local/district/state sight reading adjudication is conducive to the success of my students.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am pleased with the format/procedures and operation of the sight reading adjudication.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjudicators at our sight reading adjudication are knowledgeable, positive, and helpful.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I generally have a positive attitude toward sight reading as a part of the rehearsal.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I generally have a positive attitude toward the sight reading adjudication in which we participate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do you and your students feel when leaving the sight reading adjudication room?

How does sight reading enhance or detract from your adjudicated event experience?

Follow Up Study

I would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview regarding sight reading adjudication.

Yes

No
I am writing to ask your help in completing a research project being conducted as a part of my PhD studies in music education at Kent State University. The purpose of the study is to learn more about sight-reading procedures, preparation, attitude and experiences throughout the United States. You have been asked to participate because of your expertise in this field.

The link provided will take you to a survey that has been designed to answer my research questions and fulfill the purpose of this study. This study will specifically focus on large ensemble, band sight reading in both the rehearsal and adjudicated performance room. Four research questions have been developed and will be examined throughout this study, and assist in addressing the purpose of the study.

1. What procedures are common to high school band sight reading events in the United States;

2. How do high school directors prepare themselves and their bands for sight reading adjudication, and what are some ways their preparation can be improved;

3. What are band director attitudes toward adjudicated sight reading, and how do those attitudes impact instructional practices;

4. What experiences of adjudicated sight reading impact participant (student and teacher) views of their role in high school band settings;

Investigation of the previous questions will occur in a variety of formats. The survey is designed to assist in answering questions 2 and 3. Following the initial investigation, a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods will occur for the examination of the remaining questions.

Would you please take a few minutes of your time to assist me in refining the survey? Please complete the questionnaire as if you were participating in the study. Your answers are not of interest at this point but your suggestions for improving the survey instrument are important.

Consider the following questions as you are providing feedback:
- Are instructions for completing the survey clearly written?
- Are questions easy to understand?
- Do you understand how to indicate your responses?
- Are the response choices mutually exclusive?
- Are the response choices exhaustive?
- Do you understand what to do with the completed survey?
- Do you understand when to return the completed questionnaire?
- Do you feel that your privacy had been respected and protected?
- Do you have any suggestions regarding the addition or deletion of questions, clarification of instructions, or improvements in questionnaire format?

Your feedback and comments can be written in the form of an email to fergusonkate@me.com when you have had a chance to look at the survey. Please reply no later than a specified date. Your assistance and participation are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Katherine Ferguson
Doctoral Candidate
Kent State University
APPENDIX F
SURVEY DEVELOPMENT TABLE

The following table is a record of how the quantitative survey was developed. No new material was used in this survey; questions were taken from other surveys and studies that pertain to the purposes of the current study. The reference studies are listed along the left-hand side, and all of the questions with their categories are noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Director Background</th>
<th>Program Background</th>
<th>Rehearsal Instruction</th>
<th>Reasons to Teach SR</th>
<th>Director Preparation</th>
<th>Director Attitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>A Description of Melody Reading in the Select High School Choirs of Texas (May, 1993)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14, 15, 18, 19, 20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sight Singing Materials Survey (Demorest, 2001)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17, 18, 19, 20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sight Singing Instructional Practices in Florida Middle School Choral Programs (Kuehne, 2007)</em></td>
<td>1, 3, 4</td>
<td>5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13</td>
<td>14, 15, 16</td>
<td>17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sight Singing Questionnaire (von Kampen, 2003)</em></td>
<td>2, 4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10, 16</td>
<td>29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Attitudes of HS Band Directors toward Solo and Ensemble Activities in the United States (Meyers, 2011)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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APPENDIX G

STATE SIGHT READING DATA

The following tables are lists of the states that use sight-reading evaluation. Along with the state name, the criteria that was collected from each state is also listed. Data were gathered by the researcher on individual state websites.

State Sight-Reading Hosting Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Hosting Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>Alabama Bandmasters Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Arizona Band and Orchestra Directors Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Arkansas School Band and Orchestra Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Colorado High School Activities Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Does not sight read in large group evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Florida Bandmasters Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Georgia Music Educators Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>Idaho High School Activities Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Does not sight read in large group evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Kentucky Music Educators Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Louisiana Music Educators Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Maryland Music Educators Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Does not sight read in large group evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>Mississippi Bandmasters Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>Missouri High School Activities Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>Montana High School Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>New Hampshire Music Educators Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>New Mexico Music Educators Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Does not sight read in large group evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>North Carolina Bandmasters Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Ohio Music Education Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Pennsylvania Music Education Association</td>
</tr>
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<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>South Carolina Band Directors Association</td>
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<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>Tennessee School Band and Orchestra Association</td>
</tr>
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<td>Texas</td>
<td>University Interscholastic League</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>Does not sight read in large group evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Name of Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>Music Performance Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Festival</td>
</tr>
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<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Music Performance Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Does not sight read in large group evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Music Performance Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Performance Evaluations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>Large Group Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Does not sight read in large group evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Performance Assessment</td>
</tr>
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<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Large Group Festival</td>
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<td>Maryland</td>
<td>State Festival</td>
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<td>Festival</td>
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<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Festival</td>
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<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>Band Evaluation</td>
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<td>Missouri</td>
<td>Music Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>District Music Festival</td>
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<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>Large Group Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>Large Group Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Does not sight read in large group evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>Music Performance Adjudication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Large Group Adjudicated Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Music Performance Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>Concert Performance Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Music Reading Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>Does not sight read in large group evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>Concert Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Before/After Performance</td>
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<td>Connecticut</td>
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<td>Illinois</td>
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Warm-up Permitted Prior to Sight-Reading Performance

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<td>State</td>
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These are the 30 state organizations that provided information, handbook, online sources, or additional artifacts. These are also included in the reference list.

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<td>California Band and Orchestra Association</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Sight-reading procedures</td>
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<td>Kentucky Music Educators Association</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>KMEA festival rules, band</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kMEA.org">http://www.kMEA.org</a></td>
<td>(April 14, 2014)</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Mexico Music Educators Association</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>District handbook</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nmmea.org">http://www.nmmea.org</a></td>
<td>(December 19, 2015)</td>
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<td>Hosting a band or orchestra music performance assessment</td>
<td>PMEA Adjudication Handbook.</td>
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APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The following topics were used for the qualitative interview phase of this study. Questions were developed to flow in a natural progression, and may not be in the order as listed. All of the topic areas listed were covered with each of the interview participants, but were given the opportunity to flow as the conversation evolved.

1. Teacher Background
   a. Length of teaching – In what areas, grade levels, etc
   b. Type of school district - Urban, rural, etc.? What grade levels are housed at your school?
   c. Personal education – What degrees have you earned? What was your major?
   d. Do you feel comfortable with your own personal sight reading skills as a musician?

2. Program Background
   a. Frequency at adjudicated events
   b. Purpose in adjudication participation – School mandated? Director determined? Cultural tradition?

3. Details about the sight reading process
   a. When you are engaged in the adjudicated sight reading process, what feelings or emotions do you typically have? (put in qualifying words) energized part or an anxiety part? What about the process makes you feel that way?
   b. Are there specific procedures within the sight reading process that you would prefer to be different?

4. What practices make you excited about the sight reading process?
   a. Do you feel energetic about the sight reading process, if so, what about the process makes you feel that way?

5. What practices that make you discouraged about the process?
   a. Do you feel discouraged about the sight reading process, if so, what about the process makes you feel that way?
   b. What challenges do you find rewarding or discouraging?

6. Do you feel prepared to take your students through the sight reading process both in rehearsal and in adjudication (choosing music, providing education, etc)?

7. Aside from the universal goal of improving independent student musicianship, do you have additional objectives for teaching sight reading from classroom to contest?

8. Tell me about what you consider your best and why?
   a. Worst adjudicated sight reading experience.

9. Do you feel like the adjudicated sight reading experience is important for developing young musicians in your program and why or why not?
   a. Does the adjudicated sight reading experience align with the educational goals you have developed for your ensemble?

10. What makes this the experience, as it is, a good one for you and your students?
    a. If it is not, do you have thoughts about what might make it a better experience?
11. Is there anything else you would like to share about the sight reading experience that we have not already discussed?
REFERENCES


