

These Are My People: Music Teacher Instructional Practice and School Connectedness

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School Connectedness

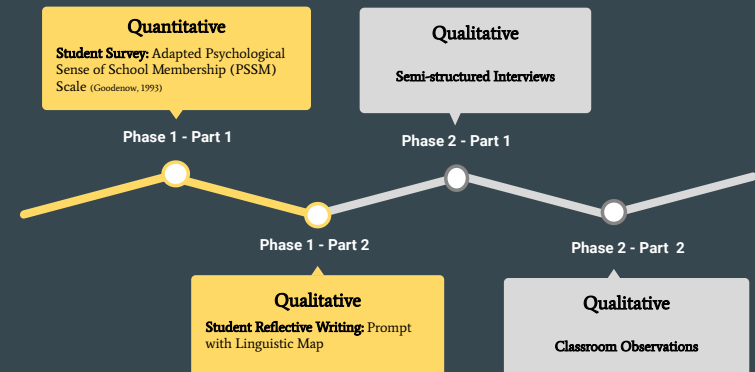
The extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school environment.

Goodenow, C. (1993). The psychological sense of school membership among adolescents: Scale development and educational correlates. *Psychology in the schools*, 30 (1), 79-90.

Research Objectives:

- Establish evidence that students experience connectedness in their music ensemble
- Examine music learning through the existing body of “school connectedness” educational research, therefore creating additional avenues in arts advocacy
- Examine how teachers use or can use instructional practices to build a sense of belonging and inclusion their classrooms
- Provide suggestions for how to improve instructional practice

Mixed Methods Study



Methodology

Student Surveys

- 190 student responses
- 86% participation across five school sites

Student Reflective Writings

- All 190 survey responses choose to participate in the reflective writing

Teacher Interviews

- All five teachers requested to be interviewed

Classroom Observations

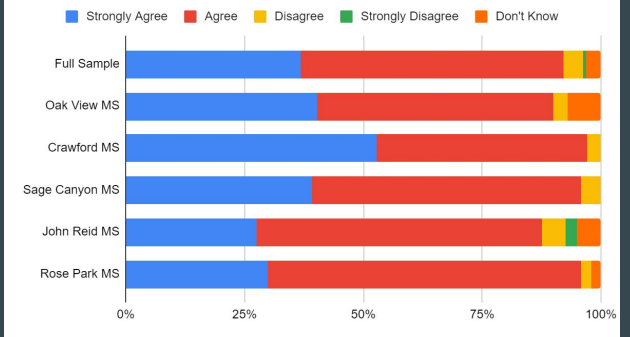
- From the five sites, three sites were chosen for further observation and observed three times.

Student Survey Results

Adapted *Psychological Sense of School Membership Survey*

Goodenow, G. (1993). The psychological sense of school membership among adolescents: Scale development and educational correlates. *Psychology in the schools*, 30 (1), 79-90.

I feel like a real part of this orchestra.



Sum Connectedness Scores

Findings

- Scores over 45 are considered having positive connectedness levels
- All sites reported positive connectedness levels
- Three sites indicated a need for more study

Mean and Standard Deviations of Connectedness Score

Sample	n	Mean	Min	Max	Standard Deviation
All Sites	190	70.17	34.00	90.00	11.27
Oak View MS	44	69.61	34.00	90.00	12.98
Crawford MS	36	74.08	41.00	90.00	10.88
Sage Canyon MS	23	73.48	57.00	86.00	8.42
John Reid MS	40	67.75	46.00	90.00	11.12
Rose Park MS	47	68.15	41.00	87.00	10.43

Qualitative Data

Student Reflective Writing

- Student responses were remarkably similar among schools
- Themes of friendship, changes in mood, self-confidence, pride, learning through challenges, community and collaboration.

Students were asked to complete this sentence:

“When I play my instrument with other students, I feel...”

- “Confident in myself”
- “Happy and relaxed”
- “Like I can do great things”
- “Proud of myself for being able to play in an orchestra”

Relaxation and happiness were cited 114 times throughout 190 responses

Student Responses

"I love listening to music, but the idea of me being able to play it still blows my mind."

"When I play viola, I feel like I have a hidden superpower."

"When I play my instrument, I feel happy because I feel like a part of something bigger than me. I feel like a piece of the puzzle that can become something amazing."

"How do I feel? I feel like a part of something. I love hearing every section - Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello Bass - come together. And, when I hear my section taken out, I learn how crucial my part is, and I love feeling needed."

"When I play I feel amazing, it's something hard to describe, the only thing I can do is have a big goofy grin on my face."

Teacher Responses

"I haven't been around these people...I've been sitting in an office...this reminds me that the fundamental reason my life has changed to become a teacher was because I was missing *my people*."

"The honest reason I am able to have a great life is because these kids sign up for music. They are the reason I'm here. The easiest way to put it, and I don't want to get long-winded on you -- we are colleagues. I am them. I have sat where they are sitting, it seems like not so long ago. We are connected in that way...There's no other vocation for me in life. *These are my people.*"

Findings

Finding #1

The student surveys reported positive levels of connectedness to their experience in middle school orchestra.

Finding #2

Student reflective writings, along with observation data, report positive socialization between peers and teachers.

Finding #3

Music teachers use instructional practices to build connectedness through de-emphasizing competition, strengthening a student's sense of relational value, and self-efficacy.

Findings

Finding #4

Students reflective writings indicated that students feel a positive change of mental or emotional state during music instruction.

Finding #5

The building of a collective identity within the music class. (Teacher and student)

What does this all mean?

Recommendation #1

Music educators should implement instructional strategies that de-emphasize competition. The concept of "healthy competition" is an outdated and contradictory term.

Recommendation #2

Music teachers should use instructional strategies that encourage students to think of their collective identity and individual contribution to the music class

Recommendation #3

Music teachers can create and encourage an environment that supports positive peer to peer feedback. This study found that there may be a lack of peer feedback in music rehearsal.

What does this all mean?

Recommendation #4

Music teachers should eliminate testing procedures that cause embarrassment and produce negative social pressures

Recommendation #5

Music teachers should be authentic in the classroom, using humor and striving for personal connection with students

Recommendation #6

Music teachers can use the classroom to maintain a physical place on campus for music students to feel connectedness

Reflective Writing Sample

Directions: Finish the following sentences. Feel free to add additional sentences to clarify your point. Your writing will not be shared with teachers, school officials, or other students. All information will be kept confidential.

1. When I play my instrument with other students, I feel

2. I choose to participate in orchestra because

3. Does being a member of your school orchestra make your experience in middle school better, worse or has no impact? Why do you think that is?

Directions: Look at the word list below. Circle any word(s) you feel represents your experience in your school orchestra.

Creativity	Exciting	Enjoyable	Dull
Friends	Fun	Stress	Be myself
Team	Anxiety	Relaxing	Commitment