WORKING WITH ADULT LEARNERS:

COLLEGIATE MUSIC EDUCATION STUDENTS AND NEW HORIZONS

by

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GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a professional improvement project submitted by

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This project has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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The culminating project for the MM Degree in Music Education is the Professional Improvement Project (PIP). The PIP provides students an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to engage in a project of sufficient depth and scope to have meaningful implications for their own practice. It may also have implications for the wider music education profession.

The PIP document requires the following elements:

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SECTION I – BRIEF INTRODUCTION  (1-2 pages)

SECTION II – PAPER ON RELEVANT TOPIC  (10-16 pages, not including sources)

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Section I: Introduction

Collegiate music educations students are prepared in many ways to become effective music educators. Much of the emphasis in undergraduate pre-service music education programs is on instruction and experiences with young, school aged students. However, with growing interest in music learning in the adult community, music education professionals may have the opportunity in their careers to work with adult music learners. Involvement with adult music learners during college years can prepare music education students to teach an older demographic of students while at the same time refining skills that also can be used with the younger, school aged students.

In this professional improvement project, I describe the extent of participation of college music education students in a beginning adult music program (New Horizons) as a laboratory experience in their pre-service teacher training. While I have collected information from various New Horizons groups that involve college music education students in their programs, the primary focus of my project is the BYU New Horizons Orchestra in which I participated for two years. My goal in this project is to illuminate the possibilities that the New Horizons environment can offer as a supplementary tool in the pre-service teacher training of college music education students.

In section II, I present a paper on effective teaching strategies for adult music learners. I describe how these strategies can aid music educators in providing the best possible music learning experience for adult learners.

In sections III and IV, the project is presented. In Section III, I briefly describe the background and my reasons for pursuing the project, how it will aid me in my professional
development, an outline of the project, and the steps I took to create it. Section IV contains the project itself.

Section V contains my reflections on the process of completing my professional improvement project. It includes implications for my personal growth and current practice as a teacher, improvements I can make in my future practice, and recommendations for the profession as a result of my project.
Section II: Adult Learners and Music Education

For many years research in music education largely has focused on the typical public school student population, ages 5-18. However, because of an aging population that is increasingly interested in continuing education, there is a need for research in adult music education. The International Society for Music Education points out that there is a difference in music education for children and adults that should be addressed (Solbu, 1987). Music education researchers, Olseng and Burley (1987), express that adults too should be given the opportunity to study music, even with no previous experience. This opportunity for adults to study music can be provided by informed music educators who have been trained in the area of adult music education. Teaching adult music learners requires knowledge of the adult learning psyche along with specific musical strategies and rehearsal skills that have been found to engage adults in music learning. Knowledge in the following areas of adult music education will guide the music educator in providing a successful music learning experience for his or her students: (1) Motivation, (2) Life Experience, (3) Teacher/Student Interaction, (4) Rehearsal Structure, (5) Rapport, (6) Physical and Mental Capabilities, (7) Rehearsal and Instructional Strategies.

Motivation

The first step in teaching adult music students is to understand and take into account their motivations and goals in beginning or continuing with a music education. As an assistant director for an adult beginning orchestra—the BYU Provo New Horizons Orchestra (NHO)—I encountered several adult learners who joined the orchestra because they had always wanted to play a stringed instrument but lacked the opportunity during their youth. Many of the other members of the orchestra played string instruments in their younger school years but had to put their music on hold due to family and career responsibilities. Upon learning of the opportunity
that this beginning orchestra provided, these adult learners were eager to begin making music again. Olseng and Burley (1987) describe what they believe many of these adults are seeking when starting to learn music again, stating that “music can provide an opportunity [for adult learners] for rich aesthetic involvement, self expression, and a deep sense of personal satisfaction and fulfillment” (p. 27).

Now in the adult period of their lives, these music students have motivations and goals compatible with their level of maturity. For example, as an adult music learner, there is an increased desire for relevant learning (Myers, 1989). Adults are eager and ready to learn precisely what they need in order to accomplish their goal of expressing themselves and finding satisfaction and success in performing music. However, Olseng and Burley (1987) are careful to point out that, in general, adult learners’ success is defined by life satisfaction and eagerness to learn, not by rapid progress and winning competitions as may more often be the case with younger students. To enhance the process of helping adult music learners find satisfaction through music, Rohwer (2005) suggests that adult educators “soften the ‘musical training’ model that we commonly see in schools, and, instead, encourage a ‘musical journey’ model where adults are invested in forging musical paths that lead toward meaningful destinations” (p. 44). In a separate article, Burley (1987) points out that many programs for younger students focus on high musical standards rather than the “intrinsic value of making music for the sheer enjoyment of making music” (p. 33). Roy Ernst (1992), an Eastman School of Music professor who started the New Horizons movement of adult beginner groups, agrees that adult learners are “motivated almost entirely by the intrinsic value of creating music” (p. 33).

Another strong motivation for adults to participate in music learning is the social aspect of ensembles—the opportunity to make music with others. Coffman (2006) conducted
interviews with adult participants of a thriving community music program facilitated by the University of Tasmania. When participants were asked what it was like being a musician, Coffman found a theme of emotional responses that highlighted the importance of making sounds with others. “For some individuals, the enveloping, aggregate sound of the ensemble resulted in positive responses” (p. 17). Coffman mentions that many adults find music making a social activity and an environment in which a strong sense of community can be felt.

Tsugawa (2009) confirms Coffman’s findings that group music making is a primary motivator of participation for adult learners as well as an opportunity for social interaction. He also presents another compelling motivation of adult learners’ desire to participate in music in the sense of identity it can provide:

Changes in role and identity may affect an adult’s quest for meaning as well as motivation to engage in learning. [Participants] attribute much of their ability to cope with changing adult roles and identity challenges to their participation in a New Horizons ensemble. (Tsugawa, 2009, p. 137)

As suggested by these music education authors, motivation for the adult music learner focuses on a sense of identity, personal fulfillment, meaningful music destinations, and social interactions. Teachers of adult music students can be more effective if they structure their teaching based on these research findings of their participants’ motivations.

Life Experience

Another vital part of providing effective music instruction for adult learners is honoring their previous music and life experience. Friedman (1992) presents a summary of research on meeting the needs of adult learners. She states: “the influence of past experience is critical and, indeed, the determining factor for adults when they attempt to grasp new information” (p. 36).
Friedman later advocates designing learning to relate to past experience because adults may find more meaning in new material that relates to previously gained knowledge and skills. Tsugawa (2009) found that “teachers who recognize and respect the experiences and accomplishments of older adults, regardless of their musical accomplishments, are effective teachers and foster a commitment and dedication to lifelong musical learning and participation among senior adult musicians” (p. 184). Rohwer (2005) provides an example of a practical rehearsal strategy that honors adults’ previous music experience by suggesting the use of recognizable tunes for the age group—such as jazz, swing, marches, light classical, and patriotic—thus building on music with which the adult learners have a strong connection.

Adult music learners’ previous life and music experience should also be considered in finding strategies to effectively reach learners from all backgrounds. Myers (1989) points out that adults have a need to draw on broad previous experience to devise solutions to new problems. He argues that each adult learner comes to rehearsal with previous experiences and learning strategies already in place which each can use to make his or her music learning effective. However, music educators must allow time to incorporate an adult’s new musical knowledge into their existing cognitive structures. Additionally, Myers suggests that individual needs should be met within the context of group settings due to varying backgrounds and learning styles of adults. Some adults may come from learning backgrounds where they learn best from drill and repetition while other adults may come from backgrounds where problem solving and guided learning fit better with their learning styles. Knowing the learning styles, life experiences, and backgrounds of all the group members will help the adult music educator provide musical instruction that reaches each member of the group.
Teacher/Student Interaction

Another crucial aspect of teaching adult music learners is the way in which the teacher interacts with learners. One important aspect of interacting with adult learners is the way in which the teacher provides feedback. Providing honest feedback in a positive way is crucial because the self perceived level of achievement with adults may be lower than real achievement (Myers, 1989). When adult learners have accomplished a musical task it is important to give them positive feedback and encouragement. Myers expresses that it is important that adult learners are engaged but not intimidated and that positive feedback is used as reinforcement. Along with providing positive feedback, it is crucial that teachers recognize the importance of helping their adult students maintain their sense of independence (Friedman, 1992). In Friedman’s summary of research on meeting the needs of adult learners, she states that “students’ self-image is more likely to be preserved if they feel the instructor genuinely believes that they are intelligent, capable of learning, and motivated to learn” (p. 39).

Rehearsal Structure

Along with the way a teacher interacts with adult learners, the way a teacher delivers content and structures rehearsals must be adapted for adult learners. While older adult learners may benefit from the structure of sequential approaches, these learners may also appreciate a more open ended application of skills and knowledge to musical problems (Myers, 1989). In providing this broad instructional approach, Solbu (1987) also suggests that adults may respond well to a leader who is not overly structured. Rohwer (2005) similarly expresses that adults appreciate leaders who deliver content in a relaxed manner with humor, although clear and consistent protocol is still needed. Friedman (1992) points out that adult learners maintain high expectations of their teachers and may be more likely than younger students to challenge
practices and assumptions that seem unreasonable. In order to help adults understand procedures used by the teacher, expectations should be discussed early in the learning process. Teachers should also make an effort to discover student needs and incorporate those into the structure of rehearsal (Friedman, 1992). Coffman (2006) suggests a “learner-perspective [that] views the adult as a mutual partner or the primary designer of his or her learning” (p. 7-8). An effective adult music educator can use these research suggestions to structure rehearsals that are relaxed, yet well designed with a focus on the adult learners’ needs.

**Rapport**

Another equally important aspect of interacting with adult learners as a teacher is establishing a genuine rapport. In a study where she surveyed several adult music educators, Rowher (2005) highlights a director who states, “We’re equals; I’m not teaching them, I’m just showing them something new” (p. 41-42). This director successfully portrays the need to connect with adults without being condescending. Another director from this same study adds that it is important to find the “perfect balance between being a strong, informed and competent leader and being a person who seeks and values the opinions of the adults with whom I am working” (p. 43). Adult learners need someone whom they can respect as well as someone who is eager to return their respect. While I was working with the BYU Provo New Horizons Orchestra for adult beginners, I had the opportunity to observe two teachers who had been with the group for several years. These teachers had successfully established a genuine, respectful rapport with the adult learners. The learners from the orchestra commented to me on how much they enjoyed working with both of the teachers. When one of the teachers retired, the outpouring of kindness and gratitude for that teacher made it evident that he had genuinely connected with
the adult learners. After all, as yet another director points out “they need to like you as a person to keep coming back” (Rowher, 2005, p. 43).

**Physical and Mental Capabilities**

Another fundamental aspect of effectively teaching adult learners is taking into account their physical and mental abilities. It is important to note that researchers “have both asserted that the fundamental process involved in acquiring musical skills and understanding remain constant regardless of the chronological age of the learner” (Myers, 1989, p. 138). This statement is meaningful because it shows that all learners have the ability to gain musical skills and that a person’s advanced age should not be looked upon as a deterrent to learning music. To further elaborate this point, another study done by Gibbons showed no evidence of diminished musical ability associated with and in non-institutionalized and institutionalized individuals sixty-five and older (Myers, 1989). Even though adults possess the musical ability to succeed in their endeavors, some adults will experience anxiety over learning new things (Solbu, 1987). In Friedman’s (1992) summary of research on meeting the needs of adult learners, one study concerning anxiety as an obstacle to learning showed that age was the greatest predictor of anxiety. Freidman further explains that anxiety with adults learners can come from a variety of situations, including “fear of failure, uncertainty concerning the ability to learn or keep pace, and doubts about the adequacy of earlier learning” (p. 37). Adults have enough life experience that they have encountered many examples of successful musicians and orchestras. When they compare their own experiences against these, as Friedman mentions, they may feel inadequacy and a sense of failure. Addressing this distressing mental situation in adult learning with positive, honest feedback as mentioned earlier is one strategy that may reduce anxiety and show adults that they are capable of successfully acquiring musical skills.
Although the ability to acquire musical skills for adult learners is not hindered by age, there are a few age-related physical aspects of music education that should be considered for optimal adult learning. One of these physical aspects that may present a challenge is poor vision. Friedman (1992) found that “a 50-year-old requires twice as much illumination as he/she did at age 20” (p. 35-36). This can be easily addressed by allowing each adult learner to use his or her own stand, enlarging music, or using stand lights (Rowher, 2005). Another common challenge may come with diminished hearing. Rowher also suggests that the teacher can remedy this by using louder and slower speech patterns. As I worked with the BYU Provo NHO, vocal projection was something the adult learners in the orchestra appreciated. When undergraduate students would come to work with the group, speaking louder was often a teaching strategy that demanded immediate attention. Many of the adult learners were insistent that the students speak louder. In relation to diminished hearing and musical learning, Myers (1989) points out that “there is evidence to suggest that older adults with marked hearing loss may still attain achievement on aurally-based music learning tasks” (p. 142). Friedman’s (1992) summary of literature on adult learning also found that “changes in vision and hearing that occur with aging present no major barriers to adult learners” (p. 35). Although attaining achievement on music learning tasks may require a little more effort for older adults with diminished hearing than those with perfect hearing, it is important for educators to realize that this is not a significant deterrent to the music learning of their adult students. It is critical to accommodate the physical needs of adult learners without calling undue attention to the problem (Myers, 1989). It may be embarrassing for adult learners to need extra accommodations, so directors should be extremely conscientious regarding the adult learners’ potential sensitivity when implementing accommodations.
Rehearsal and Instructional Strategies

An additional component of effectively teaching adult music learners is using the most productive learning and rehearsal strategies for adults. In Rohwer’s (2005) study of adult music educators, eighty percent of the directors use a method book to introduce major musical elements. In this study, the most commonly cited method books were *Standard of Excellence* and *Essential Elements*. However, the director should select a method book that addresses the needs of his or her group. When working with NHO, I found that using a method book was particularly helpful with the adults who were learning for the first time. The sequential approach in the method book *String Explorer* (Dabczynski, Meyer, Phillips, 2002) was efficacious in providing the adult learners with the necessary structure and background required to successfully play the repertoire that the other, more advanced adult learners were playing. Another effective teaching approach comes from Ernst (1992) in the model that was used with the first New Horizons group. Ernst began a program where adult beginners were instructed in a four week “prenotational phase” that included “singing and rhythmic movement, good performance fundamentals of the instruments, playing by ear, improvising, and creating original songs” (p. 31). He also points out that in his first program notation was then introduced with songs familiar to the adult learners. Next, the participants advanced quickly through an elementary method book.

Other instructional strategies that work well with adult learners include clapping, counting, modeling, and singing (Rohwer, 2005). One of the directors in Rohwer’s study pointed out that singing with adults is much easier, whereas younger students are more likely to get silly. Teachers of adult music students also found that adults have a greater immediate understanding of concepts such as tone quality, intonation, and balance than their younger
counterparts. Rowher also found that music educators who work with adults should not hesitate to introduce these topics early in the music learning process. Yet another helpful rehearsal tip from Rohwer’s study suggests avoiding too much sight reading. Rowher adds that when the group does sight read—the director may want to select easy sight reading material. Some adults may get frustrated having so much music placed in front of them that they do not have the chance to master the concepts. Overly difficult sight reading may also discourage adults and make it hard for them to feel like they are making progress. Friedman’s (1992) summary on meeting the needs of adult learners suggests that an instructor “begin a course with material with which students are familiar and using activities that carry little risk or that and that insure success” (p. 40). Another helpful rehearsal strategy with adult learners may be to use music theory only as it applies to the passage of music (Rohwer, 2005). Many adults may not be interested in the advanced, theoretical or even historical aspects of music, but will be interested in basic theory and history that applies directly to what they are learning. A final music learning aid for adults is to offer suggestions for practice strategies (Myers, 1989). Adult music learners may not know how to break down a difficult passage of music in order to make at-home practicing effective. Providing adult learners with specific practicing strategies will help them become more independent music learners and will provide them encouragement for successfully mastering difficult passages in their home practicing.

Conclusion

With the array of knowledge available regarding the teaching of adult music learners, it seems vital to include these concepts in undergraduate music teacher training programs. Pre-service music educators should have opportunities to teach adult learners so that such students will be prepared to teach all music learners. Olseng and Burley (1987) point out that teacher
training has been lacking in adult education for music. Rohwer (2005) also points out that teacher educators should address the needs of adult learners. Additionally, Olseng and Burley (1987) advocate that “if adult education were included in teacher training, the music teacher would feel more competent and therefore also more positive to give adults a ‘second chance’” (p. 29). Tsugawa (2009) provides an important viewpoint on music teacher education from Cindy Bell, an associate professor of music from Hofstra University who has done important research with community choirs. After observing a conductor working with adult singers in a community college she realized that the conservatory training this student received did not prepare him sufficiently to work with adult learners. Bell also concluded that “music teacher educators . . . are so busy preparing for a K-12 curricula that we practically ignore the artistic market of millions of graduates from our public schools who should continue singing and making music” (Tsugawa, 2009, pg. 186). Ernst (1992) also suggests that “retired music educators can participate as teachers, and music education departments should encourage students to gain part of their field experience in these programs” (pg. 34). In any pre-service music education program, including adult music education would prepare students to teach all music learners, not just school aged students.

In my own music teacher training, having the opportunity to teach adult learners in the New Horizons Orchestra not only prepared me to be a better teacher for younger, school aged students, but prepared me to be a more skilled music educator overall. One particularly noteworthy aspect of teaching New Horizons was that I could teach and experiment with different instructional strategies without being interrupted by behavior problems from the students. This allowed me to analyze and refine my delivery of valuable musical skills. The honest, well-informed feedback and questions from the adult learners aided my teacher training
as well. The NHO participants were able to give criticism in a mature and helpful manner, and based on their comments, I was able to reflect on what I was doing and what I could do to improve. Another aspect of working with NHO that encouraged me to be a better music educator was the sincere appreciation for learning music from the adult learners. There were countless instances when the NHO members would sincerely thank me for what I had taught them during rehearsal. Receiving this sincere gratitude for the music instruction I provided to the adult learners increased my motivation to continue learning so I could offer the best possible music instruction. The gratitude from the NHO participants made being a music educator a fulfilling experience which has inspired me to continue as a music educator.

In conclusion, knowing and being able to implement the most effective strategies for teaching adult learners benefits both adult music learners and those who participate in teaching them. With an understanding of the motivations and goals of adult learners, educators are able to offer a music program that is tailored to adult learners’ interests. Honoring adults’ previous life and music experience enables the director to build on the wealth of skill that is already present in adult learners in order to offer optimal music learning. How the teacher interacts with the adults during rehearsal is a vital component to connecting with adult learners. Balancing the appropriate amount of feedback, encouragement, rapport, content delivery, professionalism, and humor creates the ideal environment for adult music learning. Correctly addressing the physical and mental capabilities of adult learners also adds to an effective learning environment. The ability to focus on effective music learning strategies that address practicing, sight reading, theory, and repertoire for adult learners is also crucial for adult music learning.

With access to these effective strategies for teaching adult learners, training pre-service and current music educators must become a priority in secondary education so that teachers can
offer the growing population of adult learners the best music learning experience possible. Finally, effectively teaching adult music learners will provide music educators with a fulfilling career experience that will help them become more skilled and motivated in their profession.
References


Section III: Description of the Project

When I began my master’s degree three years ago, I had the privilege of being introduced to the New Horizons Orchestra at Brigham Young University. During my masters program, I worked with the BYU New Horizons Orchestra (NHO) as an assistant conductor, small group leader, sectional leader, orchestra participant, and as an individual lesson instructor. In all of these capacities I gained and refined many valuable music teaching skills which I have used in my current practice as a 5th-12th grade orchestra teacher in the Safford Arizona Unified School District.

One outstanding part of NHO that I observed in my two years experience was the inclusion of undergraduate music education students. At BYU, instrumental music education students have the opportunity to conduct, teach, and play a secondary string instrument in the New Horizons Orchestra as part of a required class for their educational program. During and after my time with New Horizons I have reflected on this unique program and how it supplements pre-service music educators’ learning experiences. It is from these reflections that I decided to describe and present this program for my professional improvement project.

This project has helped me in terms of my professional improvement in a number of ways. First, I have become acquainted with the literature on effective teacher training in music education programs. Acquiring this information on effective teacher training has given me ideas to refine and improve my own teaching. I have also had the opportunity to learn from the literature dealing with effective teaching strategies in adult music education. This knowledge will aid me in being able to provide effective music instruction to adults throughout my entire career. Many of these strategies also apply to providing effective instruction for younger students. Additionally, at some point in my career I may have the opportunity to start a New
Horizons program and include college age students of my own as part of the program. Of equal importance, as part of my professional improvement, I hope to share with the profession the unique supplementary component of including college music education students in adult music instruction as part of their pre-service teacher education. The inclusion of a program like this could have great benefits to our profession.

In order to complete my project, I successfully:

1. Conducted a literature review of the following elements:
   - A brief history of the New Horizons movement.
   - The components critical to effective pre-service teacher training in music education.

2. Collected and analyzed information from various New Horizons groups throughout the country.

3. Defined and described commonalities among the current New Horizons student teaching models.

4. Collected data yielded by the BYU New Horizons Orchestra teacher preparation model including student observation forms, semester reflections, and interviews with college students who participated in the New Horizons program.

5. Analyzed information collected from college undergraduates participating in the BYU New Horizons Orchestra.

6. Categorized data collected from the college participants and compared them with the components of effective pre-service teacher training and the responses from student interviews.

This information is presented in its entirety in Section IV.
Section IV: The Project

Introduction to New Horizons

Since this project focuses on undergraduate students’ involvement in the New Horizons program, a brief introductory background will be helpful in understanding the history and structure of New Horizons programs in general. Ernst, a professor of music education at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, began the first New Horizons Band in January of 1991. The goal of this New Horizons band was to provide adults—aged fifty and older—an opportunity to learn to play an instrument for the first time, or to continue playing an instrument previously learned. It is interesting to note that eight graduate students from the Eastman School of Music were selected to teach in the first New Horizons Band. These graduate students attended seminars on adult learning and then developed a methodology to teach the first group. This first New Horizons band was supported by the Eastman School of Music, the School of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Rochester, and a two-year grant from the National Association of Music Merchants (Ernst and Emmons, 1992).

With the success of this first band, the New Horizons program has grown to include 192 bands, orchestras, and choruses, with more being planned. The New Horizons program is now celebrating its 20th anniversary and has expanded into an international association which includes more than 8,000 members in groups in the United States, Canada and others that have already started or are in the planning stages in Ireland, Australia, Iceland, South Africa, and the Netherlands. Many of these groups are supported and sponsored by senior citizen centers, music stores, and community music schools and institutes (NHIMA, 2011). However, for this project I contained my focus to groups similar to the first New Horizons Band that are sponsored by colleges or universities.
College Student Involvement in New Horizons across the United States

Collegiate student involvement in New Horizons provides a unique laboratory setting for music education students to develop and refine their teaching skills. Since this program has been a unique supplementary tool in pre-service teacher education at BYU, I will first describe how the program is structured at BYU and then I will describe how other colleges and universities in the U.S. have integrated college music education students into their New Horizons programs. I will also include a summary of comments from New Horizons directors on the benefits of including college students in New Horizons.

As stated previously, the college group that is the primary focus of my project is the BYU Provo New Horizons Orchestra. My two year involvement as an assistant conductor, sectional leader, small group instructor, and a one-on-one lesson teacher provided me with valuable insight into the structure and organization of this program.

College student involvement in the BYU Provo NHO is a requirement of the two semester String Workshop Class in which all undergraduate, instrumental music education majors enroll (for three, hour-long class periods per week) as part of their program of study. For two periods per week, students receive class instruction in a campus classroom that includes learning how to play a secondary stringed instrument as well as effective string teaching strategies. Also, for one period weekly during the String Workshop Class, undergraduate students participate off-campus in the BYU Provo NHO as either a student conductor, small group teacher, or an orchestra participant on a secondary instrument. Selected graduate students—such as myself—also participate in New Horizons as assistant conductors, small group teachers, and as one-on-one teachers. Graduate students also fulfill various administrative roles.
They do not participate as part of a class requirement and are usually paid a stipend generated from NHO participants’ tuition fees.

Based on my experience with the organizational structure of the BYU Provo NHO, I asked directors at several other universities and colleges with student involvement in NHO three questions to learn how college students at their institutions participate in New Horizons. I found email contact information for a number of directors from the groups listed on the New Horizons International Association website that had a university or college indicated as their sponsor. Each director was asked the following questions:

1. In what capacity do undergraduate or graduate students participate in your New Horizons group, and how many participate?

2. Is student participation in New Horizons included as part of a university or college course?

3. In a few, brief sentences would you mind sharing your thoughts on how undergraduate and/or graduate student participation with New Horizons prepares students for music education careers?

From the twenty valid email addresses that were used, I received a response from six New Horizons directors that involve university students in their New Horizons groups. The responses came from the University of Northern Iowa, the University of Iowa, the University of Alabama, the Eastman School of Music, the University of Dayton, and the University of Miami.

Undergraduate and graduate students participate in New Horizons in varied capacities at each of these universities. The most common teaching capacity for university students is as an instructor for sectional rehearsals (as directors from four of the universities reported). Three universities use undergraduate or graduate students as large ensemble directors. Another
common student capacity is that of a participant or performer in the New Horizons group, usually on the student’s major instrument. Other student capacities include assistant teacher, private lesson instructor, and small chamber group coach.

Of the six universities that responded, only one of the New Horizons groups, the University of Dayton, includes students as part of a university course. The University of Dayton students participate in New Horizons as part of an Instrumental Music Methods and a Jazz Pedagogy class. For each of these classes, students participate in New Horizons once a week for ten weeks. At some of the other universities, students participate in New Horizons as part of the community music school. The New Horizons Band at the University of Iowa uses school facilities free of charge and in turn gives scholarship money to the school of music for instrumental music education students. Additionally, many of the New Horizon student capacities at the universities are paid positions.

Almost all of the New Horizon’s directors commented on the valuable teaching experience that university students gain from participating with New Horizons. One of the universities does not have a teaching methods class for music education string majors, so teaching in New Horizons provides the only opportunity for that institution’s undergraduate students to practice teaching groups of string players. Two of the university New Horizons directors commented on how much the students enjoyed establishing relationships with the New Horizons members. Another director noted that university students gain the opportunity to observe and learn from a very experienced music educator as they attend rehearsals. Another director added that she has noticed a positive difference in student confidence as they approached student teaching. A director from a well established program states: “I’ve had over 100 students
involved over the past 16 years and they have loved working with the program. Many assert that it is the highlight of their pre-professional training.”

From the positive responses of these directors it is evident that university student involvement in the New Horizons program, although different at each university, is a valuable part of pre-service teacher education. Each of these universities is taking advantage of the unique educational opportunity that student involvement in the New Horizons program offers. Clearly, there is great potential educational value in implementing programs similar to those described above at many more universities and colleges.

**Perceived Benefits from BYU-Provo NHO College Participants**

During BYU students’ ongoing participation with the New Horizons Orchestra and as part of their Music 375 String Workshop course, each participating undergraduate BYU student is asked to complete a New Horizons Orchestra Teaching/Participation Reflection form subsequent to their weekly visits to the orchestra rehearsals. On this form, students indicate whether they were participating in the role of teacher, or just as a player in the orchestra along with the regular adult members of the group. The form then prompts them to provide a short description of the activities they observed (such as concepts taught, strategies used, etc). The last part of this form includes a section where students include a self assessment of their own participation, an assessment of other students’ participation (emphasizing assessment of those in teaching roles), as well as a section where students can reflect on any other pertinent observations they have made. At the end of the semester, students are asked to write a composite, summary reflection of their experiences with New Horizons based on the responses entered on their weekly participation forms.
These forms and reflections were rich with data that expressed the musical learning and teaching experiences from the perspective of the college students during their involvement with the NHO. In order to effectively present these data, I analyzed eighty-one student responses, including both the daily participation forms and the end-of-semester reflections using techniques typically associated with qualitative research designs. On each page of student work, I first annotated themes that emerged. Next, I coded the themes. I then recorded individual page numbers of the themes and their reoccurrences. Finally, I categorized the themes into eight main categories (see appendix B). These reflected the musical learnings that the students perceived contributed to their preparation for future teaching. The students expressed musical learnings in eight categories as follows:

1. Teaching Specific Music Concepts and Skills
2. Rehearsal Strategies and Techniques
3. Conducting Experience
4. Observing and Evaluating Other Teachers
5. Confidence with an Ensemble
6. Valuable Experience with a Secondary Instrument
7. Interaction with NHO Members
8. Opportunity to Self Assess

After determining the eight categories of students’ perceived musical learnings, I conducted interviews with seven college students who participated in the NHO as part of their teacher training. In these interviews I gave each former undergraduate or graduate student participant a list of the eight categories to review (this list included further detail and descriptions of each category—see appendix C). I then asked the following questions to determine and
confirm if the eight categories of musical learning that emerged from my data analysis were truly representative of college students’ learning experience with the NHO:

1. After reading over the eight categories of musical learning and teaching experiences, do these categories represent what you learned at New Horizons Orchestra?
2. Is there a learning category that should be added?
3. Is there a category that you feel does not represent your musical learning or teaching experiences while participating with the BYU Provo NHO?

I also asked two additional questions in the interviews to gain further information applicable to this study:

4. If you currently hold a teaching position, did your participation with BYU Provo NHO help prepare you for your job? If so, how?
5. Are there any improvements that you would suggest based on your experience with the BYU Provo NHO?

**Category 1: teaching specific music concepts and skills.** Student responses categorized under teaching specific music concepts and skills included a variety of important musical elements. These included: the teaching of specific technical music aspects such as intonation, dynamics, musicality, the opportunity to experiment with teaching, building from prior knowledge, scaffolding, and the importance of individual attention.

In Grant and Drafall’s article that reviews and compares teacher effectiveness research, they include an study from Porter and Brophy (1988) which states that one element of effective teaching is that teachers are “knowledgeable in content and teaching strategies” (1991, p. 33). A major part of content learning in music deals with the acquisition of those skills necessary to effectively perform the technical aspects of music such as intonation and dynamics. Gaining
insight into how to teach these concepts and technical aspects of music to a group such as NHO is a valuable experience in students’ pre-service teacher training.

One of the student teachers demonstrates his experience in learning how teach intonation:

I noticed that intonation [of the ensemble] was very poor, but I didn’t feel prepared enough to go off of my lesson plan to fix it then. So for the second lesson, I prepared, learned fingerings for cello and bass, and spent time with individual sections trying to get the left hand up to speed with the right. I’m glad I decided to work on it, because it really needed it.

Another student provides insight on how she learned to better teach dynamics:

When playing dynamics, sometimes it is helpful to compare the different dynamic levels to a scale from one to ten. This allows students to recognize what [it] feels like to play at level “ten” versus playing at level “one.”

In the interviews I conducted, all of the participants confirmed that their involvement with the New Horizons Orchestra prepared them in the area of teaching specific music concepts and skills. One of the students interviewed related how he applies teaching specific musical skills learned from NHO in his band rehearsals:

I remember one teaching strategy that [the NHO director] used . . . he was teaching just a dynamic technique and it was easy with string instruments. And he said, “Ok, we’re standing up and we’re getting louder,” and they sat down and they got softer. And it was just a very visual thing that connected what they were doing with how they were supposed to play. And I’ve definitely used similar techniques. I think I’ve just taken that leap and tried to apply it in different ways where I use some aspect of this physical motion to teach dynamics . . . . And so . . . I’ve seen a lot of teaching techniques . . . at New Horizons Orchestra [that] kind of mold my own techniques [with my] band.

One of the students I interviewed who participated in the New Horizons Orchestra while an undergraduate and then taught at a middle school for a year before returning to graduate school explained how NHO prepared her to teach music concepts and skills to students with special needs:

I was able to work with a [NHO] participant who suffers from really bad rheumatoid arthritis. So it’s debilitating, to say the least, I mean, her hands are not cello hands. Her
first year was the year that I was there, and so [the NHO director] would often send us alone to work together. And I know that that isn’t always the, can’t always be applied to a public school situation. I can’t work with each individual student all the time. But working with her, and trying to learn how to adapt and find ways that help her be successful, I felt like helped me in my teaching later. In my experience as a public school teacher I had a student who struggled visually. He was blind in one eye and partially blind in the other. He had severe learning handicaps or disabilities and so we would often have to create ways for him to adapt and still be successful. Because I believe that everyone should be able to participate in music. But having experiences like that, where a lot of the participants, though they’re older in age, they still struggle, they still have things that are hard for them to overcome. It was just a really great opportunity and experience learning how to problem solve based on participants’ natural impediments.

Another student I interviewed commented on how the NHO environment allows students to focus primarily on teaching music concepts and skills without being distracted by other concerns that may be present while teaching school aged students.

Music [education] ... teaches rules very much to kind of manage the social situations, and then a specific aspect of that is classroom management. And in New Horizons, you don’t [have to manage social situations], they essentially take care of their social needs. And certainly, the classroom management as well. And so it means you can focus on just the technique of teaching.

**Category 2: rehearsal strategies and techniques.** Responses from undergraduate music education students categorized under rehearsal strategies and techniques reveal a myriad of valuable teaching tools. The strategies and techniques that students gained from observing or participating as a teacher with the NHO include: learning how to run a rehearsal, error detection in technique, problem solving, the value of modeling, keeping students of all levels engaged, giving specific feedback, pacing, voice projection while giving instructions, and repertoire selection.

Margaret Schmidt (1998) conducted a study, “Defining ‘Good’ Music Teaching: Four Student Teachers’ Beliefs and Practices.” This study includes a useful section illustrating the importance of learning rehearsal strategies and techniques that will be successful with secondary ensembles during university students’ pre-service teacher education. Schmidt found that the
methods courses the four student teacher subjects had taken previous to student teaching “had not provided a comparable repertoire of instructional strategies for ensemble rehearsals at the secondary level, and the student teachers resorted to the models of music instruction they knew best: their studio teachers and the conductors of the university performing groups” (p. 31). Schmidt later points out that a student teaching supervisor suggested that the models of music instruction derived from studio teachers and university conductors “might not be appropriate or motivating for young students” (p. 32).

With this in mind, participants report that the rehearsal strategies and techniques that they acquire while teaching or observing NHO provide solid instructional strategies that are successful with beginning adult students as well as younger students. Learning these strategies before student teaching in the public schools bolsters their pre-service teacher training and solves the problem Schmidt encountered in her study of student teachers.

In the BYU undergraduate student responses, the most frequently mentioned rehearsal strategy that is successful for both adult beginners and younger students was that of modeling. One student comments:

Not only was I able to hear what the specific instrument should sound like, I was able to see many models of correct playing. Modeling was also helpful as I learned how to play with correct balance and intonation.

Another student provides a strong rationale for modeling based on her experiences with NHO:

Before playing a piece, the director should begin by explaining and practicing new techniques with the students. This could include simple exercises on an open string for spiccato, legato, crescendos, using more bow and more. The director should explain how to do certain techniques and demonstrate it on an instrument, rather than just talking vaguely about it.
An additional rehearsal strategy BYU undergraduate students learned from their participation with the NHO is the importance of keeping students of varying playing abilities engaged and learning:

The New Horizons Orchestra includes many students of different performance levels. It is important to be able to teach at all these levels by giving them options to choose from, and to keep their attention. One should start the lesson simple, with an exercise that they can all do and then build up from there. For example, the director could create or assign different playing options for each grade or playing level. The students could also alternate between an “accompaniment” part, and a “melody” part of a piece of music.

To provide a specific example of engaging students of all levels, a student recorded in her weekly New Horizons Orchestra Teaching/Participation Reflection form: “gave those who may find it easy extra things to do (vibrato).”

Another student commented on her rehearsal techniques that she learned over a period of time and how she plans to apply that in a school setting:

I was able to conduct an arrangement of Mahler’s First Symphony at New Horizons for three weeks in a row! It was a great experience. Since I was conducting the same piece every week for three weeks, I felt like I was actually in a school setting where I had a group of “kids” that were preparing a piece for a concert. It’s difficult when it’s just once a week to reinforce the ideas you had taught before, and I’m sure I’ll face that if I have an ensemble that only meets once a week for some reason. I’ve really got to drill a certain idea and remind them of it so it sticks, otherwise I’m wasting my time teaching.

In the interviews I conducted, all of the former student participants confirmed that the “rehearsal strategies and techniques” category was representative of their learning in NHO. One interview subject shared how her participation in NHO helped her learn the valuable strategy of selecting appropriate repertoire in order to successfully run a rehearsal:

I feel like it helped me tremendously in terms of learning how to assess or learning how to evaluate where the standard of playing was and what is a feasible challenge, or what kind of music could be feasible for those students. In hearing the New Horizons I became very aware of things that they struggled with and as I got to listen and participate and see other people conducting, I got to say, ok, so maybe as an orchestra, we don't do this so well, or we don't do this so well. But even despite those weaknesses, we were able to achieve really great things and with not a lot of practice. And so, in my own experience, I
felt like, ok, well these are similar problems, but I know they were overcome, and I know that we can reach further. It kind of gave me a tool of measurement, in terms of what kind of music to choose, or how high can I set expectations. Because that's really hard to know if you're a new teacher. You're like, well I don't know what you can do. And so I felt like, it provided me with a measurement because I got to see that process so many times. [There] is so much repertoire, even in one semester. So I feel like that was really beneficial. It also expanded my education or my knowledge of repertoire and pieces to use, because they're close to the same level, especially junior high, where I was teaching, that it really expanded my knowledge of what was out there and different possibilities.

**Category 3: conducting experience.** In 1970, the MENC Commission on Teacher Education led a massive project which included the goal to develop “precise recommendations for the preparation of music educators” (p. 35). In this project, the task force determined that one of the music competencies that a well prepared music educator must possess is the ability to conduct. The Commission (1970) determined that a music educator “must demonstrate conducting techniques that will enable them to elicit from ensembles musical performances appropriate to the compositions being performed” (p. 40). With this necessary competency in mind, the “conducting experience” category was another frequently mentioned skill area in which BYU undergraduate students developed and gained valuable experience while participating with NHO.

As part of their BYU/NHO experience, undergraduate students receive one-to-three 10-minute opportunities each semester to lead the ensemble in rehearsal. Each is assigned a specific piece or section of repertoire to prepare and rehearse. Teacher comments are received immediately, and each teaching experience is video-taped. Students are required to view the recording and submit a written reflection on their conducting experience. Emphasis is placed on their teaching – planning, communication, teaching strategies – as opposed to conducting technique. Once students have viewed their video, they are asked to submit a reflection. In one of these video reflections a student shares what she learned from her conducting experience.
This student seems more concerned about how she “looked” with her conducting technique rather than how effective her instruction was. However, her reflection on conducting technique is thoughtful:

I think some parts went well, but I could really improve on a lot of things, especially my conducting skills. I noticed that when I try to conduct dynamics, I crouch a bit to show “piano” where I should just make smaller motions with my hands. Also, my wrists are not as firm as I think they should be. I noticed that they seem to flop around a bit, and it is excess movement. Another conducting fault I showed was the use of both my hands. [The NHO Director] had mentioned to me that using the “mirror-image” hands appears bigger, and so they play louder. I could practice conducting better with one hand.

Another student points out the value of this “real life” conducting experience compared to the experiences that she receives in her other university courses:

Even though I only conducted the New Horizons Orchestra once, I still learned so much about my conducting. In Practicum, conducting to music majors is easy because even if you mess up, they still usually have an idea of how to play the piece correctly. But conducting for a whole group of non-majors reveals many things. For example, I know I could improve with the fluidity and style and making those aspects match the piece better.

Yet another student adds a similar testament to the value of conducting in NHO:

There were also great benefits to the actual conducting of the group: I was able to be monitored closely and critiqued directly and immediately while conducting so that I could better my technique. I was in the conducting class this semester too and doing just that class isn’t near enough practice or experience needed before going in front of a large group. Conducting New Horizons has helped me dive right into the feeling of being in front of a large ensemble and directing everything they do.

When I interviewed past undergraduate student participants and asked them if conducting represented one of their musical learning experiences in NHO three of the seven participants said that it did not. The explanation for this non-response further details how the BYU NHO program is structured. Due to time constraints, when there are a large number of BYU students enrolled in String Workshop not every student has the opportunity to conduct. First priority is given to string majors since conducting a string orchestra directly relates to their
teaching area. Also, most of the string majors already have experience playing a secondary string instrument in a group, so band students are given more time playing a secondary instrument in the NHO rehearsals. However, if time permits, band students are given the opportunity to conduct. The three interviewees all happened to be in a large String Workshop class, so they did not get actual conducting experience with the NHO.

Although one of the participants I interviewed did not get the opportunity to conduct NHO, he was still able to gather valuable conducting insight:

I didn’t get the opportunity to run the rehearsal. [The NHO director] had several of the students run the rehearsals but those were the string emphasis majors, focusing on teaching string instruments. I did, however, get plenty of experience watching them. And so, in that experience of watching them teach, and watching them conduct, [the NHO director] showed them a few techniques on conducting and extra teaching techniques and so I still felt like I got the whole spectrum even though I had less experience myself in front [of the group].

Now the procedure and structure of the conducting portion of the BYU NHO has been revised so all students—regardless of their status as a string emphasis or band emphasis—have the opportunity to conduct and reflect on their experience.

Category 4: observing and evaluating other teachers. Throughout the course of BYU undergraduate students’ experience with New Horizons they are constantly observing and evaluating other teachers. Some of the teachers they have the opportunity to observe are experienced music educators who teach at BYU, or they may observe a professional educator with many years of teaching experience who has retired from his or her full time teaching position, or a graduate student who has had teaching experience. Students in the program also observe and evaluate each other. Students observe their peers as they put into practice what they have learned in String Workshop and then form an evaluation to determine if their teaching
techniques were successful. One of the BYU students describes her experience observing her peers:

Throughout this semester I did not have the opportunity to teach. Because I was just a performer, I was able to observe my peers teach, noting their certain styles and techniques. Each person was very different and approached the orchestra in various ways. There were many things that I would have done differently as well as many things I would have literally copied because the teaching tool was so effective.

Another student describes his experiences observing an experienced music educator:

I also found it beneficial to watch [the NHO director] teach the orchestra on the few occasions that all of our time wasn’t taken by student teachers. It helped me to see a seasoned teacher in front of the group. I observed him incorporate the very techniques [from String Workshop] that he was asking students to implement along with others such as intent monitoring, specific feedback, chunking, and disguised repetition.

Along with observing good models of teaching, BYU students were able to evaluate and assess the teaching of their peers. The following are a few examples from the assessments of two students:

Needed more explanation on intonation besides just violins explaining the half steps between the first and second finger; violas, cellos, and basses needed clarity.

Janice [student teacher]: Needs to work on conducting posture (elbows, etc).
Brandon [student teacher]: Love the tuning of chord, musical dance, really listening to quality-nice. Modeling--!, conducting.
Mary [student teacher]: Good demonstration of pizzicato, use conducting as a tool more to show us what you want.

With these evaluations and assessments, BYU students determine effective ways to implement what they have learned in their courses. They are also able to problem solve and suggest solutions for how their peers could have improved their teaching. This problem solving and practice of higher level thinking will be invaluable to students as they begin teaching these techniques on their own.

All of the past BYU participants who were interviewed agreed that observing and evaluating other teachers was part of their learning experiences at BYU except one. For
additional teaching opportunities in the BYU NHO program, string majors are occasionally asked to run sectionals, give private lessons, or work with small groups of adult students given their expertise with stringed instruments. The one interviewee who was the exception in this instance, pointed out that since she was a string major, she was mostly involved with running sectionals or giving private lessons so she did not have the opportunity to observe many other teachers.

**Category 5: confidence with an ensemble.** In a study dealing with the assessment of effective teaching conducted by music education professors from Florida State University and Louisiana State University, a group of music experts composed a list of the “best teaching skills” that they observed while analyzing video tapes of pre-service music teachers. Two of the best teaching skills on this list include “musical conviction” and a “confident/in control appearance” (Madsen, et al, 1992). In the BYU undergraduate responses, developing confidence in front of a group also emerged as a valued musical experience while participating with the NHO. One student explains how her confidence level increased:

> It was helpful for me to have the opportunity to conduct the orchestra. I found each successive session of conducting became more and more successful. I both saw this in others and experienced it myself. Conducting the group is not easy, and the first time seems fruitless and sometimes embarrassing. However, as we were provided with more and more conducting experiences, I saw the nerves melt away and the level of confidence and success in the student conductors increase.

Another student arrived at her conclusion that confidence in front of a group is important through observations of her peers:

> Many other students also conducted. It was interesting seeing how they were different and what worked and what didn’t. Some people thought they were being very loud when they spoke, but they really came across as nervous and not that confident. Looking confident even when you aren’t is very important.
On his daily participation reflection forms, this student points out the value of confidence in his brief evaluations of his fellow classmates:

Sam: Stressed style. Excellent demonstration. Very confident and used excellent communication.
Liam and Sam: These are the two most confident and clear teachers. They really articulate well what they want accomplished.

In my interviews with participants of the BYU New Horizons programs, the three individuals who mentioned that they did not develop their conducting skills in NHO also agreed that they did not have the opportunity to build confidence in front of a group. As explained earlier, this was due to the fact that they were participating as performers on their secondary instrument. However, the interviewees that had the opportunity to teach in the NHO expressed how beneficial the time in front of the group was in building their confidence. One interviewee commented about her undergraduate NHO experience:

I believe that [my participation with the BYU NHO program] did help me to gain in confidence, in front of a group. It also felt though, more than just confidence, I felt like it was a safe place that I could be in. And my confidence and appreciation for the participants and for their patience with me really helped me feel like, ok I can do this.

Another former BYU NHO participant who had also completed her first year of teaching in a middle school was asked how her participation in the program helped prepare her for job said:

I was a string major, so I did a lot of teaching, I did a lot of sectionals, I did a lot of private lessons at New Horizons. And all of those things, of course, I used over the course of this year. I did sectionals at my middle school probably every few weeks. So yes, I definitely used those skills. Just being comfortable in front of the group, too. Because we did that with student teaching, but other than that, prior to teaching, this was the only experience that I had with that really. Because other than that, it's all just those fake things in class, that you know, you're teaching each other and that's kind of lame, but at New Horizons, like I said before, it was real. And so it was one of those only real experiences before student teaching that I had.
Category 6: valuable experience with a secondary instrument. Another musical competency that the 1970 MENC Commission on Teacher Education deemed necessary is the ability to perform with musical understanding and technical proficiency. “[The music educator’s] performance ability on an instrument or with their voice must be sufficient to enable them to interpret representative works of the past and present. Their performance opportunities during their education should have included solo, small ensemble, and large ensemble experience” (p. 39). Undergraduate students in the BYU NHO program have the opportunity to learn secondary string instruments in a small ensemble setting during their String Workshop class, and then in a large setting during their weekly visit to the NHO. The String Workshop class is also organized in way that undergraduate students are taught in a heterogeneous, mixed-instrumentation setting that mirrors a typical public school teaching situation. One goal of String Workshop and the involvement with NHO is to help students reach a level of proficiency at which they can successfully teach all stringed instruments and demonstrate fundamental techniques on secondary instruments.

BYU undergraduate students frequently commented on their experiences and the importance of learning a secondary instrument in a large ensemble setting at NHO. This student was particularly articulate about her secondary instrument experiences:

I found that switching instruments gets a lot easier with experience. My first day on the cello, all I could think about was how different it was from bass, and I kept trying to use bass fingerings on the cello. After we swapped back and forth between instruments, though, I started to get better at categorizing bass-specific and cello-specific skills. I think that being able to play multiple instruments helps you with all your instruments; for example, swapping from violin to viola always makes me think more about the fingers on my left hand. Then when I go back to violin, I have the better finger control that I learned from switching to viola. It’s cross-training, essentially. Besides that, I feel very empowered when I play three different instruments in one class period—“Hey, look at what I can do!” Success = fun.
Another student shares why participating with NHO on a secondary instrument was a unique and valued experience that completed a gap in her musical learning:

The New Horizons Orchestra was a very beneficial experience for me this semester as I learned to play new string instruments. Having never participated in an orchestra before as a string or woodwind player, I was surprised at how much faster I was able to learn the specific String Workshop instrument I was assigned. New Horizons allowed me to become completely immersed in the music, style, and technique of string playing. Not only was I able to hear what the specific instrument should sound like, I was able to see many models of correct playing. Modeling was also helpful as I learned how to play with correct balance and intonation.

Even the BYU students who were string majors found the experience on a secondary instrument beneficial:

Learning the cello was a lot of fun and I feel I have become proficient enough to comfortably teach any beginner or early intermediate player. Playing in New Horizons has given me the opportunity to have to think fast and decrease my reaction time when figuring out fingerings and notes. Being a violinist, I caught on fairly quickly, and gave many of my classmates, who are not string players, time to practice in the orchestra while I observed and walked around, listening to different sections helping many of the players.

In the interviews I conducted with past BYU student participants, all but one student agreed that experience on a secondary instrument represented a category of their musical learning. One student commented:

I thought [playing a secondary instrument] was, from a band person’s point of view, it was great to have an experience with a secondary ensemble . . . . This was my first experience in an orchestra, as opposed to a band, and so you kind of do things differently.

The one student who did not feel that learning a secondary instrument represented her learning with NHO explained:

I would say for me personally, I didn’t really get any secondary instrument learning. Mostly because as a string major, I already really knew the instruments and so it wasn’t like I was really having to struggle with learning a new one. And also, because I was often split off, either doing sectionals or whatever . . . because either I was teaching or I was off doing private lessons or something like that . . . I didn’t really observe and I didn’t really learn a secondary instrument in the situational sense of that. But I can imagine that other people would have.
Learning a secondary instrument in String Workshop and NHO is tailored to individual student needs as much as possible. As shown in the examples above, one string player felt like he needed more time on the cello, so he spent most of his time in NHO on the cello as his secondary instrument. Another example of tailoring the NHO experience to meet student needs is found with the interviewed student who felt comfortable enough with her abilities on secondary stringed instruments that she was assigned to other teaching responsibilities with NHO.

**Category 7: interaction with NHO members.** From the MENC Commission on Teacher Education (1970) two of the recommendations for pre-service teachers include relating to individuals and society and understanding the role of a teacher. The Commission explains: “[Music educators] must develop empathy with students and colleagues of varying backgrounds, and restore positive attitudes and commitments toward children [and adults] of all cultural backgrounds to effect the common goals of mankind” (p. 39). The recommendation to help pre-service educators understand the role of a teacher is further detailed:

> [Prospective music educators] must understand that many attitudes and values that are common and appropriate among college students need to mature substantially for effective music teaching. The desired maturity in attitude must be initiated during prospective teacher training. For example, the ego-satisfaction of the music student in college is often gained through personal performance whereas that of the music educator is gained largely from creating opportunities for students’ musical expression. (MENC Commission, 1970, pg. 39)

In the BYU NHO program, pre-service music educators have the opportunity to interact with and relate to adult students. Pre-service music educators also begin to develop a sense of what it feels like to assume the role of a teacher. As younger, musically advanced students teach adult beginners, they have the opportunity to keep their egos in check and focus on the learning
that is taking place with adult students. One student felt that she needed to be even more respectful when teaching adults:

[The NHO adult learners] were also usually attentive to the conductors who didn’t know what they were doing, but *not always*. They’re like sharks (or lions, or alligators, or whatever); they can sense when the conductor is scared, and then they don’t always put forth their best efforts. I always tried to pretend I was confident, just so they would respond better when I conducted. I felt that they were doing me a favor, letting this funny-looking kid who plays trumpet try to teach them about strings, so I tried to be very respectful, interesting and worth their time. I plan to treat middle and high school students the same way, but I’m afraid I won’t be as intuitively respectful to children as I am to adults. I’m certainly going to do my best.

Another student shared the sense of satisfaction she felt in the role of a teacher to adult learners at NHO:

I also feel like when I can help one of the New Horizons members I have done something good. It is good for us to interact with older people; we don’t get this opportunity often while attending college.

In agreement with the above statement, another student comments on the unique opportunity that NHO provides for interaction with adult learners in real life teaching experience:

New Horizons has been a valuable experience for me in my growth as a teacher. It has provided a great model of what is possible outside of the public school system and it provides an opportunity for life-long learning for its members and conductors. As a future teacher, it has been a good laboratory experience in teaching an orchestra and has given me a real life experience that is not available through our practicum course.

While participating in the New Horizons group several students also commented on the support and encouragement that they felt from the adult learners. In his daily reflection form, one student recalls: “I taught. It went better than I thought. I was nervous but I had fun. The little old ladies are really nice.” After spending some time working individually with some of the NHO violinists, one student commented: “They were very patient, and understanding.” Although the BYU NHO program is set up so adult learners can receive instruction from
students, there are many occasions similar to those mentioned above where the BYU undergraduates are supported and encouraged by the NHO participants. Another student sums up the value of the NHO experience:

As for the program, it’s been an incredible experience for us all. I don’t think any of my other music education friends from high school have this kind of experience in their education every week.

In the interviews I conducted, the past participants were unanimous in agreeing that their interaction with the NHO members was a valuable experience. One interviewee expressed what he found was helpful in working with adult learners:

Something at least that I especially learned from the New Horizons experience . . . that you don’t experience playing with a school ensemble, is you’re working with adults and if you’re doing something that’s not clear, or that people don’t get, someone in the group is going to raise their hand or yell out, “hey we can’t hear you,” or “that doesn’t make sense,” something that you probably wouldn’t get as much with students of a younger age.

Another former BYU NHO college student commented on the value of the real teaching experience:

So it was a real experience teaching. It wasn’t like, ok let’s teach each other and have this fake little experience, like they have in a lot of other classes. But it was real. These are real people, really learning instruments. And that was what was lasting . . . .

A few of the former students interviewed felt like the interaction with the adult learners was so important that they recommended even more interaction with the adults. One student suggested that the beginning undergraduate string students break off into groups with a few of the experienced NHO members to receive instruction from them. Another of the interviewed students suggested that it may be beneficial for NHO members to get to know each of the undergraduate students on a deeper level to form relationships that could provide even more encouragement from the adult students to the pre-service music students.
Category 8: opportunity to self-assess. In Grant and Drafall’s (1991) summary of teaching effectiveness research findings, one of the qualities of an effective teacher listed is that teachers “are thoughtful and reflective about teaching” (pg. 33). The MENC Commission on Teacher Education (1970) further elaborates under the section of professional qualities:

Of major importance during the pre-service period are those qualities and competencies necessary to insure a successful first year of teaching; other qualities and competencies must be realized (or acquired) by a continuous process of self-evaluation and study. The good music teacher discovers many opportunities both formal and informal, for improving his performance as a musician and teacher and this process never ceases. (pg. 41)

Clearly, the ability to self-assess as a teacher is a skill that will contribute to effective teaching.

As participants in the BYU NHO program, pre-service teachers are given the opportunity to develop their ability to self-assess. First, students assess their own experiences teaching and playing secondary instruments each time they participate with the NHO when they fill out their weekly New Horizons Orchestra Teaching/Participation Reflection form. Next, students who are video recorded while teaching have a valuable experience self assessing when they view their teaching videos and comment on what they did well and what they can improve. And finally, students self assess as they complete their end of semester summary reflection.

One example of the self-assessment that emerges on the daily participation reflection forms demonstrates the desire for improvement:

Needed more preparation. Need to decide how I want it to sound. Orchestra knows piece already, but I need to rehearse my conducting more; set a style . . . . Need to bring out melody . . . .

Another student demonstrates the self assessment that took place over the period of three weeks with NHO:

Week 1: How can I feel comfortable when running a rehearsal? Are there certain things I can do to help the orchestra understand? How can I use demonstration if I am awful at it?
Week 2: I’m getting better. I must concentrate the entire time and really make an attempt to be musical all the time!

Week 3: I feel like I’m getting better. I am able to play more musically and more accurately. I’m learning a lot from watching the others teach. A lot of good ideas, and a lot of things not to do.

With these kinds self-assessment occurring during pre-service training, students are building the foundation to what can become a constant source of improvement and reflection throughout their careers.

All of the past BYU NHO participants interviewed agreed that the opportunity to self-assess was representative of their musical learnings.

**Section V: Reflection**

In the process of completing this project I have gained valuable knowledge and skills that have improved my current practice as 5-12th grade orchestra teacher and that will continue to help me improve as a music educator throughout my career. As I analyzed the forms and summary reflections of undergraduate students, I was reminded of the integral components of effective music teaching. This has carried over into my current teaching as it is helpful to have just reviewed the importance of teaching skills such as showing enthusiasm and confidence in front of a group, using effective modeling, teaching to different ability levels, and establishing a rapport with my students. With these teaching skills fresh in my mind I can focus on implementing them into my daily rehearsals.

While analyzing and formulating themes from undergraduate responses it was insightful to reflect on the musical skills that I have found helpful in my teaching experience and compare those with some of the perceived musical skills that undergraduate students felt were imperative. For example, many of the undergraduate student responses focused heavily on intricate and
precise conducting nuances. Although precision in conducting is important, in my personal teaching experience, I have found that a solid foundation in good conducting techniques is important, but that elementary, middle school, and high school students respond better to a steady beat and properly cued entrances than flashy, intricate, and ornamental conducting.

With very few exceptions, the perceived music learning skills that the undergraduate students mentioned have been vitally important in my teaching. For example, undergraduate students frequently commented on the new techniques that they were learning on their secondary instruments such as fingerings and bowing articulations. During my daily teaching of all four stringed instruments in a heterogeneous setting, I use every piece of knowledge that I gained from my experience learning secondary instruments in regards to fingerings, bowing techniques, etc. Student responses also focused on the value of modeling in teaching which is something I also incorporate into practically every class that I teach. I have found that if students can see and hear a model of correct playing, their ability to reproduce the same result is greatly enhanced. Students further commented on modeling by providing a correct example and an incorrect example and then having orchestra participants evaluate the difference. I have found this technique extremely efficient in teaching my beginning orchestra students to play with a proper bow hold, correct instrument hold, and a pleasing tone as they are learning the basics of their instrument.

An additional aspect of this project that was insightful was the process of comparing the musical learning responses from the BYU Provo NHO undergraduate participants with the elements of effective teaching that I found in the research literature. Most of the perceived musical learning categories from undergraduates were clearly cited as elements of effective teaching in the literature. To me, this confirmed that undergraduate students’ teaching
experiences were definitely preparing them to be effective music educators. For the categories that were specific to New Horizons that were not readily found in the reviewed literature, such as valuable experience on a secondary instrument and interaction with NHO members, it was illuminating to see the unique, additional preparation that only students involved in a New Horizons program have the opportunity to receive.

Another part of my project that has affected my practice as a private teacher and as a public school teacher is the principles learned from the research articles on effective teaching methods for adult learners. This past summer I gave lessons to an adult learner who was beginning to learn the viola. As we worked together, she exhibited much of the behavior that was discussed in the adult music education literature. Anxiety at not being able to produce a professional tone immediately was one characteristic consistent with the literature. She also exhibited the positive behaviors of adult learners such as an extremely high motivation to learn, rapid progress due to her prior music and life experience, and the ability to articulate her questions and concerns. When my adult student showed signs of anxiety I made sure to use what I had learned from my research and used a lot of positive reinforcement to help her realize the sizable progress that she had made up to that point while assuring her that most beginners struggle. I also found it important to honor her previous music experience and not spend an inordinate amount of time on subjects such as rhythm and key signatures due to her proficiency in these areas. Additionally, I found it important to cultivate a positive and relaxed environment as suggested in the adult music education literature in order to cater the lesson to an atmosphere appropriate for an adult student.

My research on effective techniques for adult learners has also benefited my practice as a public school teacher. One particular example from the adult music education research that has
influenced my current teaching is the section on establishing rapport with students. Rowher’s (2005) article includes a quote from a music educator who comments on the rapport that a teacher must build with a student: “they need to like you as a person to keep coming back” (p. 43). As I reflected on this and thought of ways to incorporate that into my public school teaching, I began changing my practice in order to help students enjoy their experience in class while having a productive and positive learning experience. At the beginning of the year I showed students pictures of what I did during the previous summer so they could get to know me better. I have also made an effort to learn more about my students on an individual level. I have made an effort to incorporate more humor into my rehearsals. In addition, I have set up a weekly activity in my high school orchestra where students can share favorite songs, YouTube videos, interesting instruments, etc. that are pertinent to orchestra. I have also tried to select repertoire that is engaging and relevant to my students. I have implemented these changes in order to build rapport and establish a positive music learning experience so my students will want to keep coming back to orchestra. I have had a much more positive teaching experience since implementing these changes. Also I have noticed a marked improvement in the enthusiasm and attitudes of my students.

Another section of this project which was insightful to me, and which I believe can benefit the profession was the survey that I conducted with college professors who involve their students with adult learners in New Horizons programs across the U.S. While the response I received from directors was limited, it is encouraging nonetheless to know that there are at least seven institutions of higher learning, including BYU, which are taking advantage of the opportunity to supplement pre-service music educators’ learning with adult music teaching experiences. Several of the directors from these institutions were interested in learning the
results of my survey. I will send them my completed project with the goal that they will gain ideas for their own programs from the information on other New Horizons programs as well as the detailed information from the BYU NHO. I trust that they will share this knowledge with their colleagues and encourage them to start similar programs.

After completing this survey of university directors and my detailed analysis of the BYU Provo NHO, I have reflected on the unique educational value of involving pre-service music educators in New Horizons programs. University music education professors who implement programs that give undergraduate students the opportunity to do more real-life teaching with adult learners—before they start their traditional student teaching—will recognize the benefits, just as the directors who responded to my survey. They will see pre-service music educators enter their traditional student teaching experiences with more confidence and expertise. And when students have finished their total undergraduate experience, directors will see that involvement with New Horizons can create stronger, more prepared music educators.

During my graduate experience with NHO and the compilation of this project, I have made a goal to someday start a New Horizons program. With this program, I hope to encourage life-long learning of music in the community by involving adult learners. In my brief experience working with adults learners I was inspired by their motivation and commitment to music. It was very satisfying to bring music to the lives of such deserving people. In the New Horizons program that I hope to start, I also plan to involve students who are aspiring to be music educators. I have seen the benefits of this program in preparing future music educators and hope to provide this same opportunity. I would also like to be an advocate for adult music learning with the involvement of aspiring music educators. I hope to see many of my colleagues and
more institutions of higher learning, community organizations, and even public school educators participate in this unique program.

Another aspect of this project that will help me in my current and future practice as a music educator is the acquisition of skills that I have learned as a qualitative researcher. In the beginning stages of my research, I had a large amount of data from student reflections and was unsure of how I was going to organize it all. However, as I began to employ qualitative research skills such as coding and categorizing, the data began to take shape and turn into valuable discoveries about music learning. This process has given me ideas for how I can gather and collect data from my own 5-12\textsuperscript{th} grade orchestra students to improve my teaching. I now have the necessary skills to administer and analyze reflections and data gathered from my own students. This process can help me ascertain the effective and less effective elements of my teaching.

The survey and interviews that I conducted as part of my qualitative research will also impact my current and future practice as a music educator. In preparation for my survey and interviews I had to create questions that, when answered, would provide data relevant to my project. It was a valuable learning experience for me to draft and revise my questions so they would be focused, precise, and accessible for the intended survey recipients or interview subjects. In my current practice as a public school educator, I now have the training I need to ask focused questions of my students, parents, or other professionals to gather the relevant data I need to improve my teaching or gain knowledge about students’ musical backgrounds.

The research skills I acquired in developing a literature review have also informed me as a music educator. While completing this project I became more familiar with music education journals, websites, databases, publications, theses, and dissertations that will serve as future
resources for me as a music educator. I have begun reading my various music journals with more interest and appreciation. I now know and feel comfortable accessing the vast supply of information that will assist me in refining my skills and staying current as a professional music educator.

The process of writing and presenting my research also has been a valuable learning experience that will improve my practice as a music educator and researcher. Through the many revisions of my writing, I have had the opportunity to make my writing more precise, direct, and professional. I have also become familiar with the APA writing style which is widely used in music education literature. Learning the importance of organization and structure in writing also has been beneficial. And even more importantly, learning the lifestyle and time management skills required to successfully negotiate a busy, full-time job while conducting and writing research has been valuable. This process has been full of challenges and moments where my motivation has faltered. However, as my music education career progresses, I am sure that I will continue to take on more responsibilities which will require an even more demanding schedule. The experience of completing this project has provided me with the skills and confidence to know that I am capable of accomplishing those responsibilities successfully.

As I conclude this project, I wish to offer the following recommendations to the profession. First, I suggest that studies similar to this one be conducted on those programs at other universities in which undergraduate students provide instruction to adults. The universities that responded to my survey would be an obvious starting point for such studies. Comparisons with my findings would then yield additional valuable insight.

Second, I recommend that the responses of adult music learners to the teaching of and interactions with undergraduate students be studied in a manner not unlike that employed in this
project. Such a study certainly would shed more light on the processes of adult music learning. Further, it would yield helpful information regarding the improvement of undergraduate involvement as teachers in adult music learning environments.

Third, and finally, I recommend that more intergenerational music groups be created. Witnessing the blend of learning that occurred with university students, professors, retired music educators, and adult beginners was an inspirational and educational experience that will be relevant to me for the rest of my career.
APPENDIX A: References


## APPENDIX B: Common Themes and Occurrences of BYU Undergraduate Learnings

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Valuable Experience with Secondary Instrument</th>
<th>Occurrences</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of success from learning secondary instrument</td>
<td>Pg 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observing and Evaluating Other Teachers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Observed useful teaching models/life long learning</td>
<td>Page 2, 55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity to observe, evaluate, and learn from other student teachers and experienced conductors/teachers</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning error detection in technique of NHO musicians, problem solving, assessment in an ensemble</td>
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<tr>
<td>Importance of being prepared</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarity in giving directions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keeping students engaged, teaching to different ability levels, teaching with energy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of example/non example with modeling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Value of modeling in teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giving specific feedback</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Pacing issues</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Specific Music Concepts and Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning to teach and address musicality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity to experiment with teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience playing in NHO helps identify with struggling students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning to teach technical music aspects (intonation, dynamics) and concepts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building from prior knowledge and scaffolding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational because NHO had similar challenges as a middle school orchestra</td>
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<td>Importance of individual attention</td>
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<td>Application of what was taught in string workshop</td>
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<td><strong>Conducting Experience</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conducting experience and techniques</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction with NHO Members</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Excuses from NHO members for physical limitations with technique</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felt a need to be more respectful to adults than students</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unique and valuable experience that other music education students may not receive/interacting with older adults</td>
<td>Pg 22, 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement/feedback from NHO participants</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHO members followed concepts and instructions well, responsive, valiant effort, excellent learning ability, no discipline issues</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure from NHO members to play better</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building rapport with NHO members important/loved the adults</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desire to incorporate community involvement w/ adults in own music program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great laboratory experience/real life teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHO valuable tool for teaching strings</td>
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<td><strong>Confidence with an Ensemble</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>NHO members respond best to experience, confidence, and authority</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Need for Improvement</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transporting bass difficult</td>
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<tr>
<td>Would like more experience with teaching intonation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need more time with NHO</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunity to Self-Assess</strong></td>
<td>Pg 18, 29, 34</td>
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APPENDIX C: List of Themes and Details Provided to Interview Subjects

1. Teaching Specific Music Concepts and Skills
   - Learning to teach technical music aspects such as dynamics and intonation
   - Teaching concepts while building from prior knowledge, scaffolding
   - Teaching musicality
   - Applying what was taught in string workshop
   - Opportunity to experiment with teaching
   - Ability to identify with struggling students

2. Learning Rehearsal Strategies and Techniques
   - How to run a rehearsal
   - Learning error detection w/NHO technique, problem solving, assessing in an ensemble
   - Importance of being prepared
   - Keeping students engaged/pacing
   - Value of modeling in teaching
     - Example/non-example
   - Giving specific feedback
   - Repertoire selection
   - Clarity in giving directions, speaking loudly

3. Conducting Experience
   - Conducting and learning conducting techniques

4. Observing and Evaluating Other Teachers
   - Opportunity to observe, evaluate, and learn from other student teachers in addition to experienced conductors and music educators

5. Confidence with an Ensemble
   - Developing confidence in front of a group as a teacher and conductor

6. Valuable Experience with a Secondary Instrument
   - Playing with a large group was beneficial in learning a secondary instrument

7. Interaction with NHO Members
   - Unique and valuable experience that other music education students may not receive
   - Felt encouragement and received positive feedback from NHO members
   - Felt pressure from NHO members to perform better
   - Important to build rapport with NHO members
   - Great laboratory teaching experience

8. Opportunity to Self-Assess
   - Ability to reflect on your own teaching and make changes