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The Impact of Collegiate Marching Band on the Intra- and Interpersonal Competencies and Capacities of Alumni: A Qualitative Case Study

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The Impact of Collegiate Marching Band on the Intra- and Interpersonal Competencies and Capacities of Alumni: A Qualitative Case Study

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of the
College of Education and Social Work
West Chester University
West Chester, Pennsylvania

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of
Doctor of Education

By
Adam Gumble
May 2022

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Dedication

Marching band teaches you everything that you need to know about life. This work is dedicated to all the educators, peers, and students that I’ve learned from along the way.
Acknowledgments

Teamwork makes the dream work. I’ve been incredibly fortunate to be surrounded by so many amazing teammates who have inspired and supported me throughout this process.

First, thank you to my committee members Dr. Ralph Sorrentino and Dr. M. Gregory Martin for your thoughtful feedback and continued support. In addition to having a positive impact on the quality of this work, you’ve provided the perspective needed to help me navigate the highs and lows of the process. Your insight and feedback have propelled me and my work to a new level.

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Finally, I’d like to thank my family for their unrelenting support. To my father, thanks for teaching me the powers of music and education. To my mother, thank you for demonstrating strength and inspiring me to see the world through the lenses of others. To my sons Dorian and Bennett - thank you for encouraging me every day to be the best version of myself…I hope I have made you proud! And, to my INCOMPARABLE wife Kelly, I could never adequately express how much your support has meant through this journey. It’s incredible to think how a random training camp “ice-breaker” could lead to everything we have together…
…I’m sure glad that you chose me.
Abstract

This qualitative study examines how participation in collegiate marching band impacted alumni’s social and emotional development. Specifically, this study examines (1) how the intra- and interpersonal domains and related competencies of former marching band members (now alumni) developed during their time in a nationally recognized collegiate marching band and (2) how those competencies and capacities are deployed in their post-graduation professional settings. Semi-structured hour-long interviews with marching band alumni (N = 9) who graduated from a medium-sized university in the Mid-Atlantic region (Mid-Atlantic University) were conducted between 2019 and 2021. Participants described the impact of participating in a nationally recognized collegiate marching band on their social and emotional development and indicated growth in the intra- and interpersonal domains. Participants reported how their experiences in collegiate marching band led to heightened intrapersonal self-awareness and self-management levels with significant development in the related capacities of self-confidence, growth mindset, goal setting, perseverance, emotional regulation, and time management. Additionally, participants recounted how collegiate marching band experiences positively impacted their interpersonal social awareness and relationship skills with noted growth in the capacities of empathy, communication, inclusion, and trust-building. Lastly, participants shared how they deployed social and emotional competencies fostered through collegiate marching band participation in their professional environment. Results indicate that collegiate marching band developed intra- and interpersonal competencies and capacities that positively impacted participants’ personal and professional lives. Implications for research, practice, and policy are explored.
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Chapter 1

Anyone who knew me in 2017 or even 2018 knows how much change has happened to me in such a short amount of time and that really is due to being exposed to all the different mindsets and all the different people that I was exposed to in college marching band...Being able to meet new people, have all the experiences I had as a leader, as a member...it all helped me on this journey to really figure out who I am. All of those exposures, I think, really led to me really finding my own identity.

- Jacob (Participant Five)

Emotions are individuals’ reactions to stimuli, followed by their perceptions about the stimuli’s context (Baumeister et al., 2007). Researchers categorize emotions as positive or negative. While negative emotions are often linked with specific action tendencies such as fight or flight, most positive emotions have social origins that are somewhat vague and underspecified (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998). Although negative emotions lead to immediate adaptive benefits by narrowing one’s focus, positive emotions occur when people feel safe and mindsets broaden (Isen et al., 1987).

Social groupings and organizations provide contexts in which individuals feel a broad range of emotions. People feel good when they engage with others (Watson et al., 1992). Positive emotions appear to collect and multiply their effects over time, increasing coping and resilience by widening people’s thoughts and actions (Fredrickson, 2000). These sentiments improve temporary mindsets and improve the likelihood that they will continue to feel and perform well in the future. Research shows that individuals can improve themselves through experiencing positive emotions, becoming more creative, knowledgeable, resilient, socially integrated, and healthy (Fredrickson, 2000).
Schools at all levels connect people in ways that elicit positive emotions. Emotions have a critical role in students’ motivation, interpersonal competency, memory, and learning (Lewis & Haviland-Jones, 2000). According to Fredrickson (1998), pleasant emotions promote academic competency by encouraging exploration, integrating various information, and extending viable problem-solving approaches. Research on the relationship between positive emotions and academic achievement indicates that joy, optimism, and pride connect positively with students’ academic self-efficacy, academic interest and effort, and overall achievement (Pekrun et al., 2004).

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the educational means through which humans acquire the knowledge, mindsets, and abilities needed to understand and direct emotions, orient themselves to goals, engage in positive and empathic relationships, and make responsible decisions (“Core SEL Competencies,” 2018). Evolving from studies on multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983) and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995), SEL expands on both theories to encompass prosocial conduct as a form of mental health competency. The origins of social and emotional learning can be traced back to Yale child psychologist James Comer and his 1960s–1980s research in New Haven, Connecticut. Comer (1988) developed a theory based on his observations while leading a two-year school intervention program in two inner-city elementary schools that children’s experiences both at home and in school play a significant role on their psychosocial development and, subsequently, their academic achievement.

Music and SEL are innately complementary. While the origins of emotional responses to music remain unknown, there is widespread agreement that music plays a substantial role in stimulating and inducing human feelings (Juslin & Sloboda, 2001). People use music to motivate emotions, engage in artistry, relax, imagine, express themselves, and form bonds through group
experience (Pellitteri, 2006). Music plays a significant role in the social creation of emotions and is heard in a specific location and time, with or without the presence of other individuals, and in conjunction with other activities that have their complex sources of meaning and emotion (Sloboda and O’Neill, 2001). These ambient elements influence, and in some cases entirely decide, the emotional response to music.

Schools in the United States have long acknowledged the importance of systematic music education. In 1838, Lowell Mason convinced the Boston School Committee to add music to the curriculum based on the three-pronged argument that music is intellectually, morally, and physically beneficial to children (Birge, 1928/2007). Since then, music programs have become recognized as compulsory in public schools across the country and have led to a proliferation of music programs at the post-secondary level. In 2015, the United States Senate passed the reauthorization of the bipartisan Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), known as the “Every Child Achieves Act” (S. 1177) which listed music as a core academic subject for the first time in American history.

While the arts have been considered auxiliary experiences that help or motivate students in other disciplines for years (Greene, 2001), the genuine significance of music education extends beyond academic domains of human experience. Research shows that school music programs foster extra-musical growth in several SEL competencies. Music educators possess a unique ability to monitor the social-emotional development of their students due to the collaborative nature of music creation (Carter, 2011). Musicians surveyed as part of Ros-Morente’s (2019) study displayed significantly higher scores in emotional competencies than non-musicians and demonstrated a greater ability to serve as leaders. Additional research shows that music study has a direct impact on empathic development. Bates (2004) explored empathy
in music education through the “nurturant” ethic of care. All factors, such as musical abilities, musical habits, musical styles, and musical works, are mediated by empathy (Bates, 2004). Musical organizations at all levels provide a continuum of programming that integrates the musical, intellectual, and social-emotional dimensions of learning throughout the curricula.

Perhaps more than any other educational setting, music education can assist students and teachers in cooperating to identify differences, engage in polite discussion to overcome conflict, and empathically appreciate human dignity (Edgar, 2017). While music classes at all levels of school foster more significant personal growth than other subjects, the relationships developed through the study of ensemble music are much more substantial. Students enrolled in instrumental music programs outperform their classmates in terms of the intrapersonal competencies of emotional awareness, self-regulation, autonomy, and well-being (Ros-Morente et al., 2019). As such, marching band benefits are not limited to musical development.

At both the secondary and post-secondary levels, marching bands provide students with an opportunity for compounded social-emotional development due to their position as an extension of the core music program. Participation in marching band fosters an increased sense of belonging and self-efficacy (Dagaz, 2012; Matthews, 2017) that improves student motivation and persistence (Tinto, 2017). Typically, whether at the high school or post-secondary level, marching bands involve large populations of students from a wide range of social backgrounds. Rather than limiting membership based on talent or utility like most athletic teams, marching bands seek to include as many students as possible and provide opportunities for membership and inclusion to a highly diverse student population (Dagaz, 2012). Participating in prosocial extracurricular activities (such as marching band) correlates to a positive academic trajectory, affinity towards school, and enrollment in post-secondary education (Eccles & Barber, 1999). As
there is no “second string” in the marching band, every member is relied upon equally and plays a critical role in group development and achievement.

The collegiate marching band is a large music ensemble that engages participants in various musical and extra-musical activities (Matthews, 2017). Researchers have identified several reasons why students participate in college marching bands. McDavid (1999) found that first-year college students engage because they have already devoted a considerable amount of time in their high school marching bands and wish to continue that commitment at the post-secondary level. According to Madsen et al. (2007), many students choose to attend a university based on the reputation of its marching band. Additionally, students join college marching bands for social reasons, develop a sense of belonging to the school community, and the simple joy of playing their instrument (Alosi, 2012). While these factors identify why students choose to participate in college marching band, they do not address the specific benefits of participation. This study seeks to illuminate how participation in collegiate marching band fosters social-emotional competencies in the intra- and interpersonal domains.

**Purpose of Study**

Existing at the intersection of musical and physical activity, marching band participation at the secondary and post-secondary levels involves the development of various goal setting, performance, and reflection techniques that develop the social and emotional competencies of its members (Matthews, 2017). For example, the practice of learning a new musical skill, marching fundamental, or performance technique includes complimentary SEL components such as the development of self-control, focus, and self-efficacy. Likewise, reflective practices such as performance evaluation include SEL components such as developing critical listening skills, engaging in constructive conversation with others, and managing emotions.
This study aims to determine how participation in collegiate marching band impacted its members’ social-emotional development. Specifically, this study will examine how the competencies of marching band alumni developed in the intra- and interpersonal social-emotional domains. While several studies have focused on various social and emotional benefits of college marching band (Matthews, 2017; Healey, 2016; Weren, 2015), research that focuses on the development of specific competencies and capacities in the intra- and interpersonal domains has yet to be conducted. Additionally, qualitative studies investigating the lasting impact of collegiate marching band on post-graduates’ social and emotional competencies do not yet exist. Communicating with recent alumni of a nationally recognized collegiate marching band program and learning about the social and emotional skills fostered through their participation will yield valuable insight and influence the development of SEL programming at all levels of the marching arts.

**Rationale for Study**

This study seeks to determine the impact of collegiate marching band on the development of the intra- and interpersonal social-emotional domains and related competencies. New research examining the effects of collegiate marching band membership on band members’ social and emotional development may contribute to more effective educational practices for marching arts organizations at all levels.

There is a need for more detailed research into exactly how collegiate marching bands develop their members’ social and emotional competencies and what experiences are most impactful in the young adults who participate in the activity. Alumni who are 1-3 years removed from the program have had experiences recent enough to recount them with specificity but have also had time away from collegiate marching band to reflect on the social and emotional impact.
of their participation. Recent alumni will provide insight into how the social and emotional benefits of collegiate marching band participation are transferred to their post-graduate life experiences.

This research could lead to an increased understanding of the efficacy of current collegiate marching band curricula as related to social and emotional development. Individual practices can foster various SEL competencies depending on how learning activities are developed and deployed throughout any curriculum. SEL embeds itself naturally within the individual practices found in marching band. In much the same way that skills-based practice provides opportunities to build one or more curricular competencies, the social-emotional component of practice offers opportunities to develop one or more SEL competencies (University of Chicago Consortium on School Research, 2019). Research illuminating the extra-musical impact of marching band participation on the intra- and interpersonal development of its members could aid in the development of curricula that enable marching arts educators to develop more effective educational programs for their students.

Despite the positive sentiments regarding college marching band membership, many students perceived barriers to entry that limit their likelihood of participation. The amount of time devoted to marching band during the semester can be a barrier to entry for incoming college students. Many high school students cease their engagement in marching band following graduation due to worries about adequate study time (Moder, 2013); however, more recent research indicates that marching band participants may study at the same rate as non-marching band students (Cumberledge, 2015). In addition to reservations about lost study time and potential academic consequences, students who join a college marching band must balance the benefits of involvement against the expense of not earning income while working comparable
hours. Research that highlights the positive extramusical benefits of college marching band membership may serve as an advocacy tool that helps increase participation in marching arts organizations at the post-secondary level.

Finally, research in this area could lead to a revaluation of the marching band as educational programming that develops career readiness in various fields. Heckman & Kautz (2012) evaluated the educational landscape and recommended reassessing existing academic programs that enhance interpersonal skills and promote positive personality changes. Standardized achievement tests, ubiquitous throughout public schools and used as a metric by admissions gatekeepers in higher education, do not accurately assess the intra- and interpersonal (i.e., “soft”) skills valued by the labor market (Heckman & Kautz, 2012). The job market contends that their current employees possess underdeveloped intra- and interpersonal skills. In a 2012 study of business executives, Robles declared that employers see immense value in interpersonal skills such as communication, cooperation, and empathy and find these skills underdeveloped in many employees and job applicants (p. 463). Andrews and Higson’s 2008 study of European Business School graduate employability showed that high levels of business knowledge alone are insufficient and “excellent verbal communication skills are also necessary so that graduates feel confident in their abilities to communicate such knowledge” (p. 419). The academic and job-specific skills on which educational institutions intensely focus leaves a chasm in which the “soft skills” the labor market seeks in its employees may reside. As many collegiate marching band members do not major in music (Buyer, 2009), research that supports the marching band’s value as a career readiness tool could aid in university-wide recruitment efforts for higher education institutions.

Problem Statement
There is limited research investigating how collegiate marching band participation influences members’ social and emotional development in the intra- and interpersonal domains and related competencies. Research in this area will provide insight regarding the specific extra-musical benefits of post-secondary marching band membership and may motivate additional students to participate in the activity. Additionally, there is a lack of research regarding the relationship between individual marching band experiences and students’ social-emotional development. An exploration of how the common elements of marching band participation influence specific social and emotional competencies and capacities of its members could inform the creation of model curricula for the marching arts. Finally, no research examines how alumni use the social and emotional lessons learned during their collegiate marching band experiences in their post-baccalaureate professional settings. Research in these areas may yield advocacy tools for collegiate marching bands and related organizations that promote the extra-musical benefits of participation to increase administrative support.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guide this study:

1) In what ways did collegiate marching band participation facilitate the social and emotional competencies of alumni who are 1-3 years removed from the program?

2) How did specific experiences in collegiate marching band impact SEL competencies related to the intra- and interpersonal domains for these alumni?

3) How do recent alumni utilize the social and emotional competencies developed in collegiate marching band in their professional settings?

These research questions were born from a desire to learn more about the social and emotional impact of collegiate marching band participation. Alumni who graduated within the
last three years have had enough time away from collegiate marching band to reflect on the impact of their participation and will be able to describe how marching band membership has benefited their lives after graduation. Answers to these questions may help marching band educators better understand how current collegiate marching band curricula affect student development in the social and emotional domains and aid in the design of more effective educational programming. Additionally, responses that indicate positive benefits may lead to a heightened valuation of the college marching band in the eyes of students as well as university administrators.

**Rationale for Methods**

To address the research questions, this study employs a qualitative case study design. Case study design presents many advantages, including flexibility in data collection and interpretation and favor depth and intensity of study involving a bounded system (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The single instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) allows this research to focus on a central issue (social and emotional growth in a university marching band) with one bounded case as an example.

The Mid-Atlantic University Marching Band (MAUMB) will serve as the bounded case for this study. In addition to performing at local and regional parades and exhibitions, the MAUMB performs at prestigious national events including holiday parades, professional football games, and competitive marching band championships. The Mid-Atlantic University Marching Band has earned a reputation as a leader in the marching arts and has earned national recognition by demonstrating the highest standards of music performance, precision marching, and innovation in show design over many years.
Semi-structured hourlong interviews with MAUMB alumni will be used to explain the impact of participation in a nationally recognized college marching band on students’ social and emotional development. Alumni who are one to three years removed from this program will be able to reflect on a wide variety of experiences with specificity, from events common to all marching bands (such as learning a field show or performing at home football games) to prestigious events with national visibility. These alumni will provide valuable perspectives regarding the marching band’s impact on their lives after graduating from Mid-Atlantic University.

**Significance of Study**

While music education often exists in the neoliberal school system to supplement academic development in areas subject to high stakes standardized assessment, musical experiences provide some of the most fertile grounds upon which to cultivate human capital in non-academic domains. The spiritual, artistic, social, and emotional elements innate to arts education have proven difficult to quantify and have led many to view music classrooms as subservient to those subjected to standardized assessment. While the arts have been viewed for generations as supplemental experiences that improve or motivate students in other subjects (Greene, 2001), the actual value of music education resides beyond the academic domains of human experience. Highlighting the myriad social and emotional benefits of instrumental music education could leverage the neoliberal viewpoint of education into additional support and resource allocation throughout our educational systems.

Music education, possibly more profoundly than any other educational setting, can help students and teachers cooperate to recognize diversity, engage in respectful dialogue to resolve conflict, and empathetically respect human dignity (Edgar, 2017). While music classrooms at all
levels of education encourage stronger personal development than most subjects, the bonds formed through the study of ensemble music (i.e. – bands, choirs, and orchestras) run deeper still. Compared to their peers, students involved in instrumental music programs excel in the intrapersonal competencies of emotional awareness, self-regulation, autonomy, and well-being (Ros-Morente, 2019). The benefits of marching band are not exclusively musical, and thoughtful instruction delivered by caring music educators generates meaningful connections that are essential to social and emotional development.

This study is significant for three reasons. First, there is a need for further in-depth research into how collegiate marching bands develop social-emotional competencies in their members and which experiences have the greatest impact on the lives of the young people who participate. Alumni who are 1-3 years removed from the program have had recent enough experiences to recall them accurately. They have had time away from collegiate marching band to reflect on the long-term influence of their participation. Recent alumni will share how the social and emotional benefits of marching band membership have transferred to their post-graduate lives.

Second, this research could lead to an increased understanding of the efficacy of current collegiate marching band curricula as related to social and emotional development. Individual practices can foster a variety of SEL competencies depending on how learning activities are developed and deployed throughout any curriculum, and SEL embeds itself naturally within the individual practices found in marching band. Research illuminating the extra-musical impact of marching band participation on the intra- and interpersonal development of its members could aid in the development of curricula that enable marching arts educators to develop more effective educational programs for their students.
Finally, research in this area may result in a reassessment of the marching band as a form of educational programming that prepares students for careers in musical and non-musical disciplines. Standardized achievement exams, prevalent in public schools and are employed as a criterion by higher education admissions gatekeepers, do not adequately assess the intra- and interpersonal (i.e. “soft”) abilities desired by the labor market (Heckman & Kautz, 2012). Given that most college marching band members do not major in music (Buyer, 2009), research demonstrating the marching band’s worth as a job preparedness tool may benefit university-wide recruitment efforts and an increased valuation in students’ eyes as they make decisions regarding their participation.

Positionality

Bands have always been an essential part of my life. Some of my earliest memories involve listening to my father play piano with his bandmates as they rehearsed in the basement of my first childhood home. While I was too young to sneak into the venues where he would perform for appreciative over-21 crowds on the weekends, I was old enough to sneak to the top of the basement steps after bedtime to watch, listen, and learn. When they weren’t playing music, my father and his bandmates would talk about the music that they just played. Frequently, I wouldn’t understand most of the words that were said, but I would always wait in anticipation to hear the one word that I knew would trigger the next round of music: “again.” Somehow, the music got better every single time. When I was bold enough to make my way to the third step down from the top of the landing, I could see my father with my own eyes and started to recognize that he and his bandmates could communicate while they were performing by using a language built on eye contact, head nods, and various mouth positions ranging from smiles to
frowns (and every shape in between). It was clear that my father shared a special bond with the other band members, and I hoped to experience something similar someday.

When my parents divorced as I entered fifth grade, my father moved into a modest apartment about twenty minutes away from my new home with my mother and stepfather. We spent time together on Tuesday evenings and Sunday afternoons and bonded over movies, video games, and music. When my father’s apartment burned down and everything was lost, it was his bandmates that opened their homes and took him in. His band wasn’t just a random assortment of people who knew a few chords and could hop on a barroom stage to perform country tunes on Friday and Saturday nights. My father’s band was a family of musicians who spent countless hours working on perfecting their craft and, in doing so, developed deep interpersonal bonds. His bandmates weren’t coworkers who needed to be tolerated; they were friends to be cherished. They were a family.

Joining my elementary school’s band in 5th grade made my dream of playing an instrument with others a reality. As I developed fundamental skills on my instrument through my middle school years, my mother, stepfather, and I would travel each weekend in the fall to watch my stepbrothers perform. Friday nights were reserved for high school football games, while Saturdays they would participate in marching band contests, complete with panels of judges and awards for the highest scoring bands. I witnessed the extra-musical benefits of marching band firsthand as my brothers developed strong interpersonal relationships with their fellow performers and began to codify their intrapersonal identities through their unique experiences.

Joining the high school marching band at the beginning of 9th-grade marked the beginning of my experiences in marching band. After high school, I attended Mid-Atlantic University to study music education. Strong interpersonal bonds were formed immediately; the
first day of training camp during my freshman year brought me into contact with my future wife and mother to my two children. The second day introduced me to the person who would become the best man at my wedding and remains one of my closest friends.

In addition to fostering my own development into a more mature performer and educator, my experiences in the MAU Marching Band helped me learn from people from backgrounds and hometowns other than my own. In addition to quickly becoming more self-aware of my abilities as a musician and conscious of managing my own emotions in various challenging situations, marching band helped me recognize the myopic nature of my worldview. Coming from a highly competitive high school band program, I entered MAU thinking that there was one “right way” to play music, learn drill, and interact with an audience and that “success” was measured by the number of championship banners hanging in the band room. After meeting students from other programs and learning more about the unique environments and approaches that existed outside of my high school experience, I realized that the definition of “success” has nothing to do with winning or losing competitions but is instead contextual based on the needs, cares, and concerns of each school community. The most valuable lessons learned from my own collegiate marching band experience had nothing to do with music and everything to do with viewing the world through a variety of different lenses.

Following my experiences in collegiate marching band, I made it my mission to ensure that the lessons that I learned would be passed on to future generations. I began my professional in 2005 with the goal of using instrumental music as a vehicle to teach students lessons that can quickly transfer from experiences in the band room to the other areas of their lives. After 13 years of teaching high school band in public schools, I returned to Mid-Atlantic University in
2018 to serve as the Director of Athletic Bands and assume the leadership of the MAU Marching Band that played such an essential role in my development.

While my current position does raise important questions regarding researcher bias, the benefits of having a researcher who has lived the experience themselves and understands the nuances of the marching activity serve to strengthen this study. Likewise, my previous relationship with recent alumni should yield meaningful interview data once participants clearly understand the importance of the research and the measures taken to ensure their safety, security, and anonymity. Finally, this research may be appealing to ensemble directors who have strong relationships with their students and are looking to enhance their educational programming in similar settings.

**Summary**

Sitting at the intersections of art, community, self-interest, and education, instrumental music ensembles provide a positive example of social and emotional education (Allsup, 2012). Large music ensembles such as marching bands often immerse students in a culture of interpersonal trust and acceptance that leads to the feeling of family (Dagaz, 2012; Matthews, 2017). The elective nature of ensemble music classes results in students with a positive group attitude toward participation. At the same time, performance opportunities outside of the school day often help form strong interpersonal connections between students (Edgar, 2012). The bonds commonly formed in ensemble music classrooms such as marching band are typically more powerful than those found elsewhere in the education system and are the types of relationships that lead to the intrapersonal codification of identity and a stronger sense of self.

There is a dearth of evidence related to the specific social-emotional effects of marching band in postsecondary education. Research in this area will help illuminate the impacts of post-
secondary marching band participation on young adults’ social-emotional competencies and capacities and highlight the non-musical benefits of participation. Additionally, limited research exists examining the relationships between specific marching band experiences and students’ social-emotional development. A study of the non-musical effects of marching band participation on the intra- and interpersonal development of its members could help establish a model SEL curriculum for the marching arts and increase the value of involvement in the eyes of all stakeholders. Finally, there is no research on how alumni apply the social and emotional lessons learned through collegiate marching band participation to their post-baccalaureate professional settings. These investigations may result in advocacy materials for collegiate marching bands and similar organizations that emphasize the long-term social and emotional benefits of involvement to garner additional support.
Chapter 2

This chapter presents a review of literature related to college marching band followed by a description of the theoretical foundations used to frame and guide this study. The first section begins with a broad overview intended to provide background related to the collegiate marching band’s purpose and composition. The ensuing section examines the value of collegiate marching band as related to institutional recruitment and retention, followed by a brief review of literature related to existing barriers that prevent student participation. As marching band exists at the intersections of music education and prosocial extracurricular activity, the first half of the chapter concludes by examining existing research related to the extramusical benefits of marching band participation. The second half of this chapter presents the theoretical framework used to guide this research. Grounded in a constructivist paradigm, the framework combines the work of Kegan (1982), Gardner (1983), Goleman (1995), and Comer (1988) to form the foundations upon which this study is conducted.

The College Marching Band

Early collegiate marching bands developed out of the history of student clubs when social activities were frequently prioritized over musical or marching excellence (Thelin, 2004). Today, college marching bands represent their schools in front of hundreds of thousands of spectators at popular events on campuses across the country. This section reviews existing literature related to the purpose, composition, barriers, and benefits of the collegiate marching band.

Purpose

Collegiate marching bands serve a variety of purposes on campuses across the country. For many students, alumni, educators, and supporters, the college marching band is a source of pride and is symbolic of the institution’s spirit. The College Band Directors National Association
(CBDNA, 2008) stated that the role of college athletic bands is to promote institutional tradition and pride; to serve a variety of institutional partners, including university administrators, alumni, community members, and students; and to increase the university’s exposure through performances and outreach efforts. According to the CBDNA (2008), the primary function of athletic bands is to “contribute to the musical and social education of its participating members” (p. 1).

According to Haynie (1971), the marching band at a college performs three separate functions: entertainment, education, and performance. Although some have claimed that too much focus has been placed on entertainment, particularly at athletic events, contemporary literature stresses the educational and artistic value of the collegiate marching band (Bailey et al., 2015). The educational benefits of marching band participation in college have also been examined for individuals considering careers in music instruction. Williamson (2009) established that high school band directors rely on knowledge gained while marching in college to prepare them for effective instruction at the high school level. These directors felt that collegiate marching band show design and rehearsal skills were beneficial to their jobs as high school band directors. Richards (2012) confirmed these findings, demonstrating that public school band directors considered their participation in college marching band as a useful means to build successful music teaching skills. Marching bands provide entertaining performances to audiences and valuable educational programming to participating members on college campuses across the country.

**Composition**

Typically, marching bands involve large student populations from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds (Dagaz, 2012). Most marching bands include instrumentalists that
perform on woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments in addition to visual performers such as a color guard, dance team, and/or baton twirlers. In most traditional band configurations, woodwind and brass instruments are about equal in number. Brass instruments produce more volume and projection in big outdoor situations and are hence preferred by many marching bands. Marching percussion is classified separately. Most marching bands have a mobile percussion section dubbed the “battery.” The battery’s instrumentation is often comprised of marching snare drums, tenor drums (or “quads”), and bass drums of differing sizes. During field performances, some marching bands also offer a “front ensemble” or “pit” comprised of stationary mallet and auxiliary percussion instruments arranged along the front sideline.

Rather than limiting membership based on gender, talent, or utility, marching bands seek to include as many students as possible and provide the opportunity for membership and inclusion to a highly diverse student population (Dagaz, 2012). Unlike athletic programs that compete in men’s and women’s team sports, marching bands do not limit participation based on gender-based parameters. Male students have traditionally outnumbered female students in the brass and percussion sections of most college marching bands, but there is evidence that an increasing number of female students are crossing historical gender boundaries found in many collegiate marching bands (Marshall, 2011). Students have claimed that the marching band community is more welcoming of ethnic, cultural, social, and ideological diversity than their non-band counterparts (Dagaz, 2010). The marching band setting establishes relationships between students from diverse backgrounds because of the inclusive nature of the activity.

**Benefits to the University**

In addition to supporting student participants in myriad ways, the existence of a college marching band provides direct benefits to the harboring institution. Universities profit from
public relations when marching bands and pep bands perform at highly visible university activities such as athletics (Foster, 1978; Schwadron, 1974). Although there are many musical organizations present on college campuses, the marching band’s appearances and performances are frequently viewed as symbolic of the worth and quality of whole music departments by the general public (Foster, 1978; Kearns, 2011). This section highlights research that supports the function of marching band as an institutional recruitment tool as well as an activity that aids in student retention.

Recruitment. Universities benefit directly based on the recruitment efforts of their marching bands (Madsen et al., 2007). Many students make the decision to attend a specific institution due to the reputation of its marching band (Cumberledge, 2015; Alosi, 2012; Madsen et al., 2007). Students that join a college marching band do so for a variety of reasons. According to Moder’s (2013) survey of 2,933 undergraduate non-music majors from 95 different colleges and universities representing 37 states, the top three reasons for joining a college athletic band were a passion for playing a musical instrument, a positive high school band experience, and pride in being a member of a college band. In his 2012 survey of over 2,700 college band members from across the United States, Alosi found that seeing college bands perform via internet clips and at home football games had the biggest impact on students’ decisions to join college band. Additional factors included seeing the band perform at high school exhibitions, at professional sporting events, and receiving promotional materials from the respective university (Alosi, 2012). Townsend (2004) discovered that students identified the following characteristics as an incentive to join in college marching band: love of playing, social aspects, desire to participate in a school activity, requirement, appreciation of sports, and scholarships. These
results support the assertion that social characteristics are a central component in determining whether to join a college marching band.

Despite the difficulty and prestige associated with marching band membership at a college, most participants do not major in music (Krause, 2011). Buyer (2009) analyzed statistical data from seven major university bands in the southern and eastern United States and discovered that music majors made up between 15% and 25% of overall band membership. With many students being attracted to an institution based on its marching band and most participants not majoring in music, the college marching band holds immense value as a university-wide recruitment tool.

**Retention.** The retention of students is an issue that requires the attention of every institution of higher education. Tinto (1999) found that 40% of college students drop out without earning a degree with 75% of these students dropping out of school during the first two years. Tinto posits that student retention is best fostered through involvement in prosocial activities during their first year of college (Tinto, 1999). These findings provide direct support to the importance of marching band as related to student retention.

Research shows that students continue to participate in college marching band due to their overall enjoyment of the activity itself (Alosi, 2012; Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2011; Madsen et al., 2007). Alosi (2012) finds that marching band creates a feeling of connection to the institution that motivates students and inspires continued participation. According to Young (2001), individuals who continue in the college marching band do so mostly for the enjoyment of the experience. A separate poll of 528 upper-class college marching band students from eight colleges discovered that scholarship help, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, community
involvement, and avoiding burnout were all significant predictors of a student's decision to remain in the band (Hill, 2012).

Despite recognition by many campus leaders as a source of institutional pride, marching bands are not always recognized for their developmental and instructional worth by some music departments and student affairs programs. The following section reviews literature that examines barriers to marching band participation. Additional research in this area may lead to a revaluation of marching band in the minds of education officials that leads to additional support.

**Barriers to Access**

While research has highlighted the marching band’s value to the governing institution, barriers exist that limit participation. This section reviews research related to three key obstacles to collegiate marching band participation: time, mental and physical demands, and credit allocation.

**Time.** Involvement in college marching band requires a substantial time commitment from each student. Prior to the season, band members may be asked to practice for up to ten hours each day during a preseason training camp that lasts one- to two weeks. In some situations, the preseason camp includes more rehearsal hours than the duration of the fall season. During preseason camp, members must develop music and movement fundamentals, learn the drill for pre-game and halftime shows, and memorize the music that will be performed at events throughout the season.

Following preseason camps, marching band members are expected to devote a great deal of time and effort to the organization throughout the fall semester. In addition to preseason training camps, many bands practice every day in addition to the rehearsals prior to Saturday games (Krause, 2011). On average, rehearsals last between six and twelve hours per week.
Marching band members often begin their game day many hours prior to kickoff. Members of the band report early to review performance material and take part in a variety of pre-game ceremonies and festivities (Sarver, 2014).

The amount of time spent on marching band during the semester can deter potential participants. Citing concerns with appropriate study time, many high school band students discontinue their participation in band following graduation (Moder, 2013), however more recent research indicates that marching band participants can study at a similar rate as non-marching band students (Cumberledge, 2015). In addition to concerns about losing study time and the possible negative academic impact, students joining a college marching band must weigh the benefits of participation against the cost of not earning wages while employed during comparable hours. This cost may easily reach $3,000 per student over the course of a semester, assuming an average hourly wage of $15. The fact that so many students choose to participate in this challenging and time-consuming activity reflects both the character of the students who commit to the college marching band experience and the perceived non-monetary benefits enjoyed by members.

**Mental and Physical Demand.** In addition to temporal demands, college marching bands can impose significant psychological and physical demands on their members. The volume of musical and visual material is substantial, and some students may be asked to learn additional instruments as the ensemble requires, especially in smaller programs. Band members are often required to memorize dozens of drill coordinates that combine to create the on-field visuals seen during a field show, and some schools conduct tests to ensure that members have memorized their music (Krause, 2011). During a typical season (late August through December), conditions on a football field can be harsh. Depending on the college or university’s location,
environmental conditions can range from stifling heat and humidity to rain, sleet, and snow in a single season.

The rigorous nature of marching band in college increases the likelihood of physical injury. A study of college marching band performers discovered a 124-injury rate per 1,000 rehearsals/performances (Moffit et al., 2015), a level of frequency that led the authors to assert that special attention and support should be required by athletic trainers and other health care professionals. The auditory health of college marching band students is similarly compromised (Chesky, 2008; Washnik et al., 2021). An examination of 90 college instrumental music students who participated in band discovered that 13% had a history of hearing loss and more than a third had tinnitus (Olson et al., 2016). Miller et al. (2007) stated that college marching band students were chronically exposed to 170 times the acceptable daily noise exposure based on sound duration, frequency, and intensity.

There are variances in how marching band members adapt to related physical obstacles. Hatheway & Chesky (2013) found that music majors were substantially more likely than non-music majors to report experiencing increased pain levels and discontinuing participation due to associated pain. The authors found that a culture of pushing members to perform despite physical discomfort (or even injury) exists in the college marching band activity, leading many students to discontinue their involvement (Hatheway & Chesky, 2013).

**Credit Allocation.** Despite the significant cognitive and expressive abilities required for marching band participation, most institutions offer either no academic credit or one credit hour for participation. This lack of credit allocation may be partly because marching band is perceived as an extra-curricular activity rather than a worthwhile academic pursuit. For example, a student at student may satisfy the fine arts core requirement by enrolling in 40 hours of “Foundations of
Music Performance” but will not receive academic credit for more than 200 hours of reading, rehearsing, memorizing, and performing music as a member of the Marching Band (West Chester University, 2021). The more than 200 hours spent by band students in this educational endeavor is comparable to or higher than the time spent by students taking a full semester course load of five 40-hour subjects.

While barriers to access continue to exist, the benefits of marching band participation continue to outweigh the costs for many college students. The following section surveys literature associated with the benefits of marching band participation.

Benefits of Participation

Marching band exists at the unique intersection of music performance, prosocial activity, and team athletics. While the musical benefits of marching band participation have been the subject of intense scrutiny (Dunnigan, 2007; Garrison, 1986; Revelli, 1979; Schwadron, 1974), the extramusical benefits of marching band participation have been lauded as positive with relation to student development (Garrison, 1986; Isch, 1965; Markworth, 2008; Wickes, 1978). This section reviews existing literature related to the non-musical benefits of marching band membership.

Adolescent Development. Most collegiate marching band participants begin their marching band experience as members of their high school band. Typically, marching band exists as an extracurricular extension of the public-school music program. Researchers studying extracurricular activities and adolescent development have demonstrated an interest in the association between participation and social and academic outcomes. Broh (2002) examined the relationship between extracurricular programs and academic accomplishment and found that non-athletic extracurricular activities increased achievement test scores and semester grades.
Eccles and Barber (1999) established a link between participation in prosocial activities, such as marching band, and positive educational paths associated with low rates of risky behavior. Additionally, it was discovered that teenagers engaging in performing arts in grades ten through twelve engaged in less risky conduct, particularly alcohol-related behavior (Eccles et al., 2003). Many authors have found that alcohol and drug usage among students active in non-athletic extracurricular activities such as band, music, and drama is lower than that of non-participants in these activities (Cooley et al., 1995; Elder et al., 2000; Shilts, 1991). These findings show that students interested in extracurricular activities such as marching band may possess greater decision-making abilities regarding social and societal standards compared to students who do not participate in these non-athletic extracurricular activities.

Qualitative studies have discovered that extracurricular activities provide social benefits for students. Flores-González (2002) explored the influence of activities in developing Latino students' identities and found that kids who participated in after-school activities demonstrated a stronger connection to school and a higher level of adherence to social norms. Flores-González also argued that kids engaging in extracurricular activities might earn the respect of their classmates and determine their level of social recognition (Flores-Gonzalez, 2002). Additional research in the ways that extracurricular activities promote social and emotional growth may provide advocacy tools that aid in additional support and resource allocation that lead to additional marching band participation at the high school and, as a result, collegiate levels.

**Physical Benefits.** Recent research indicates that members may also experience derivative health benefits from their participation in marching band. Weren (2012) discovered a substantial difference in heart rates between students playing in practice and their average resting heart rate. Additional health-related studies highlight the number of steps taken by marching
band members on game day (Cowen, 2006), the number of calories burned during a summer band camp (Wenta et al., 2011), and the potential for the marching band to exist as an effective form of high-intensity, low-repetition muscle exercise (Wenta et al., 2011).

A study of 15 marching band members discovered that physical effort on a treadmill while playing instruments at slower and faster speeds resulted in metabolic equivalent (MET) values above the moderate recommended value for adults, implying that marching band engagement over several months may result in significant physical advantages (Erdmann et al., 2003). Cowen (2006) discovered that band members take roughly 62% more steps on rehearsal days and 91% more steps on game days than on typical non-band days. Using the Forestry Step Test, cardiovascular fitness testing of 269 college marching band members indicated that oxygen demand increases proportionately with faster marching speeds (Pascoe et al., 2005). Members whose heart rates were monitored throughout field performances maintained a level of activity between 70% and 85%, depending on the musical and marching requirements. The authors concluded that all college marching band performers must possess adequate muscle strength and endurance to participate (Pascoe et al., 2005).

**Social and Emotional Benefits.** The social and emotional benefits of high school marching band participation have been the subject of research for decades. Mead (1934) asserted that students in marching bands cultivate a vital sense of self through the social relationships developed through their participation. The confluence of personal fulfillment and interpersonal camaraderie fosters the creation of what Cooley and Rieff (1909) referred to as the "primary group," where band members collaborate closely and form a close-knit unit with common standards and expectations. Holloway (1950) examined the marching band's role in Ohio schools and discovered that involvement in the band fosters learning, teamwork, and cooperation and
provides pupils with the opportunity to develop social distinction and insight into social ideals. Mills (1988) attempted to convey the high school band experience from the perspective of a student and identified five primary elements of the high school band experience based on statements from over 1,000 band members in south Florida: personal development, social enrichment, musical growth, group identification, and recreation (Mills, 1988). Additionally, some experts claim that marching band membership enables students to engage in social interaction and self-expression during a formative phase of their life (Holloway, 1950; Markworth, 2008).

Dagaz (2010) conducted a qualitative study on the identity formation and social ramifications of high school marching band membership that establishes a link between identity and marching band involvement. Dagaz asserted that the marching band fosters a strong bond between families and schools within the cultural capital framework. While students in marching band had a variety of opinions, familial backgrounds, beliefs, socio-cultural norms, and sexual orientations, the activity united them in a strong and close-knit community that was accepting of differences and demonstrated that participation in marching band increases students' sense of confidence through sentiments of acceptance, belonging, trust, and respect (Dagaz, 2010).

While several studies focusing on the social and emotional benefits of high school marching band exist, there is little research available that examines the specific benefits at the collegiate level. Cumberledge (2017) highlighted the educational benefits of allowing students to assume leadership roles and exercise teaching and decision-making abilities through his examination of the available literature. These benefits include lessons in cooperation, leadership, responsibility, and mental discipline. Despite these findings, there remains a dearth of research
regarding how specific elements of college marching band impact the intra- and interpersonal domains of human development.

The purpose of this study is to determine how experiences in collegiate marching band impact specific social and emotional competencies. Specifically, this research aims to discover how recent collegiate marching band alumni developed in the intra- and interpersonal SEL domains and related competencies. The following framework provides the theoretical foundations upon which this study is built.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study examines the impact of a college marching band on its members’ intra- and interpersonal competencies. As marching band is a lived experience that leads to a greater understanding of the world in which we live, this research is being conducted through a constructivist paradigm.

Constructivism in education has its roots in epistemology, a theory of knowledge concerned with the logical categories of knowledge and basis in philosophy. Epistemology also considers the justification of one’s subjective understanding and conventional wisdom. As a result, constructivism recognizes that the learner has past knowledge and experiences, which are typically shaped by their social and cultural surroundings (Piaget, 1952). As a result, children learn by “constructing” knowledge from their experiences.

Constructivism can be traced back to the work of Jean Piaget. Piaget (1952) was interested in how humans make sense of their experiences and described mechanisms by which information from the environment and ideas interact and result in internalized cognitive structures. According to Piaget, individuals develop new knowledge from their experiences through assimilation and accommodation. When people first encounter new information, they
assimilate it by adding it to an existing framework without modification. If the information does not properly assimilate, they modify their mental picture of the external world to accommodate the new experiences (Piaget, 1952).

Piaget theorized that development occurs along a hierarchical continuum separated into stages, each indicating a fundamentally distinct style of thinking (Piaget, 1952). Each stage represents a more distinct and integrated structural organization encompassing the preceding phases. While development is regarded as sequential, it does not progress linearly from one stage to the next, but rather in a staggered manner across time. Developmental goals are stated explicitly in these models; the highest stage (Formal Operational) defines human effectiveness beginning at approximately age 12 and lasts through adulthood (Piaget, 1952).

Piaget’s work is seminal in constructivism and has spawned a large body of additional research in educational psychology. While the work of Piaget is pivotal in the understanding of learners to age 12, it does not account for learning beyond adolescence, nor does it address the areas of social and emotional development. The following post-Piaget theories work in concert to create a framework that supports research of the intra- and interpersonal development of collegiate marching band members.

**Theory of Self-Evolution**

Kegan (1982) built on Piaget’s (and others) work by developing a sequence of five progressive ways of knowing that involved evolutions of meaning, shifts in stability, and continual reconstruction of persons and their environments. Kegan’s theory viewed development as a means of resolving the tension between the desire for differentiation and inclusion in one’s environments (Kegan, 1994). Deemed “stages of development” in 1982, “orders of consciousness” in 1994, and “ways of knowing” in 2000, each of the five levels of progression in
Kegan’s theory incorporated cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal elements unseen in the stages outlined by Piaget (Kegan 1982, 1994, 2000).

Kegan presented the idea of a “holding environment” that aids in the transition between stages, supporting individuals in their current stage while motivating them towards the next (Kegan, 1982). The concept of holding environments is particularly beneficial for higher education professionals when developing and deploying programming that is beneficial for student growth (Patton et al., 2016) in the intra- and interpersonal domains. In this framework, Kegan’s theory supports Piaget’s concept of progressive developmental stages but incorporates the social and emotional dimension of human experience which supports the topic of this research.

Multiple Intelligences Theory

Howard Gardner’s (1983) multiple intelligences (MI) theory claimed that all human beings possess not only a single cognitive intelligence but own a set of relatively autonomous abilities (“intelligences”) that allow persons to identify and solve problems, create projects, and produce cultural value. Most writings about general intelligence focus on a combination of linguistic and logical, however Gardner’s multiple intelligences theory stated that a fuller appreciation of human cognitive capacities emerges if one accounts for spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences (Gardner, 1983). Gardner theorized that all humans possess these intelligences but differ in the strengths and weaknesses of their profiles due to both genetic and experiential reasons.

Intra- and interpersonal intelligences present complexities not seen in the musical, linguistic, and spatial domains due to the differing symbolic and interpretive systems native to differing cultures (Gardner, 1983). Regardless of culture, the intra- and interpersonal
intelligences strongly influence one another throughout a person’s cognitive development (Gardner, 1983). Learning about oneself is dependent on the application of lessons learned by observing the actions of others, while learning about others relies on applying the knowledge gained by examining oneself (Gardner, 1983). Due to the inextricable linking of intra- and interpersonal development, Gardner often categorized the two together as “personal intelligence” and referred to “sense of self” as a combination of one’s intra- and interpersonal knowledge (Gardner, 1983). As such, immersion in prosocial cultural environments such as marching band promotes interactions that help codify a sense of self that will allow persons to secure their place in society.

**Emotional Intelligence Theory**

Like Gardner’s multiple intelligences theory, Daniel Goleman’s (1995) emotional intelligence (EI) theory viewed intelligence as more than an individual’s cognitive ability to memorize facts and solve problems. Emotional intelligence theory refers to the capability to effectively address oneself and others, connect to and manage emotions, and identify the motivations that lead to human impulses (Goleman, 1995). According to EI, individuals can learn and grow as emotionally intelligent beings throughout their lifetimes due to the composition of the human brain. Because the amygdala (the area of the brain that manages emotions) acts more quickly than the neocortex (the area of the brain that controls rational thought), human beings can develop mechanisms that serve to redirect emotional stimuli and, therefore, cultivate a higher level of emotional intelligence over the course of a lifetime (Goleman, 1995).

The EI model is comprised of five abilities: self-awareness, emotional management, self-motivation, social awareness, and relationship skills (Goleman, 1995), which align with
Gardner’s intra- and interpersonal intelligences. Through Goleman’s lens, emotional intelligence is nurture over nature and is developed through immersion in various formal and informal educational settings.

**Theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development**

William Perry and his colleagues at Harvard University sought to build upon Piaget’s work and developed a theory that defines college students' intellectual and ethical development. Perry’s (1968) theory of intellectual and ethical development showed how students' perspectives on the nature of knowledge, truth, and values, as well as the purpose of life and duties, evolve over time. Perry theorized that students progress through nine positions (stages) from a simplistic, categorical view of the world (described in such unqualified terms as we-they, right-wrong, and good-bad) to an understanding of the contingent nature of knowledge, relative values, and the formation and affirmation of their commitments (Perry, 1968). Perry’s work explored the relationship between college students’ intellect, or how they understand the world and the nature of knowledge (“How do I know what to believe?”), and their identity, or how they discover personal significance in their place in the world (“How do I know who I am and can be?”) (Perry, 1968).

In contrast to previous developmental schemes, one of the unique elements of this theory is that it offers three alternatives to progressing through the hierarchal positions. Students may "temporize" by holding a single position for an extended period, "escape" and avoid responsibility, or "retreat" and return to a previous position, perhaps to find security and the strength to cope with an overly demanding environment (Perry, 1968). As a result, linear progress through the nine positions of Perry’s continuum cannot be assumed as deflections may occur.
Patton et al. (2016) suggest that the nine positions of Perry’s theory can be easily simplified into three categories that can help educators understand and interact positively with college-aged students. Dualistic students see the world in dichotomies (good-bad, right-wrong, etc.) and view knowledge as fact-based and teachers as having the correct answers. When teachers or figures express uncertainty or offer dissenting viewpoints, students begin the transition to multiplicity where they begin to understand the validity of diverse viewpoints and multiple perspectives. During multiplicity, peers develop as legitimate sources of knowledge and analytical thinking develops. The recognition of the need to support opinions provides the impetus for the transition to relativism, where opinions are no longer considered equally valid and knowledge is viewed more qualitatively (Patton et al., 2016).

Perry’s theory has been used extensively in various higher education settings as a framework for measuring program effectiveness (Patton et al., 2016). Additionally, Perry’s theory has helped researchers develop tools by which the model can be operationalized in educational settings. For this framework, Perry’s theory can be utilized to measure growth in the intra- and interpersonal domains and social-emotional competencies developed through marching band participation.

**Framework**

The alignment between Kegan, Gardner, and Goleman’s theories creates a framework (Figure 1) for studying the social and emotional benefits of lived experiences. Perry’s theory of intellectual and ethical development (1968), aligned with the intra- and interpersonal domains, illustrates how dualism, multiplicity, and relativism may be utilized as a growth metric to develop social-emotional competencies within each domain.

**Figure 1**
Theoretical Framework

Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning (SEL) grew out of research in emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995) and multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983), but developed upon those concepts to provide a broader sense of mental health intelligence that included prosocial behavior. The origins of social and emotional learning can be traced to Yale child psychologist James Comer and his work in New Haven, Connecticut from the 1960s through the 1980s. Based on his observations while leading a two-year school intervention program in two inner-city elementary schools, Mr. Comer developed a theory that children’s experiences at home and in school deeply affect their psychosocial development, which in turn shapes their academic achievement (Comer, 1988).

SEL encompasses a wide range of educational programs aimed at enhancing social competence, encouraging healthy youth development, preventing abuse, promoting character education, and improving mental health. In contrast to the focused approaches often used for
children who have social and emotional needs, SEL is a broad-based technique designed to benefit all students in an educational setting (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010). SEL is a mechanism that teaches children to regulate their feelings in social settings.

While multiple organizations have developed frameworks to organize SEL into competencies that enable people to interact positively and constructively with one another, cultivate a strong sense of self and community, and engage in practical goal setting and achievement processes, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework is used by the 14 states that currently align SEL competencies with their state learning standards (Dusenbury et al., 2019). Founded in 1994 to “establish high-quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning as a part of school education,” CASEL comprises education scholars from around the country committed to advancing SEL practices in education. (“History,” 2019).

The CASEL framework aligns with the work of Gardner (1983) and Goleman (1995) and provides the structure for a comprehensive education that meets the non-academic needs of students during traditional academic curricula. The domains and competencies are presented in the CASEL framework as follows:

**The Intrapersonal Domain.** Gardner (1983) refers to the core capacity of intrapersonal intelligence as “access to one’s own feeling life” (p. 253). Intrapersonal intelligence is the understanding of one’s range of emotions and affects, the ability to affect those feelings, and the capacity to label and draw upon them to understand and guide behavior (Gardner, 1983). The intrapersonal domain of the CASEL framework includes self-awareness and self-management.

**Self-Awareness.** Self-awareness is rooted in the intrapersonal domain of SEL and Gardner’s intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1983). Self-awareness includes the ability to
distinguish and understand emotions; perceive oneself accurately; recognize one's attributes, desires, and values; believe in oneself; and behave under a self-imposed moral framework (Zins et al., 2004). Self-awareness also includes the ability to consider one's positionality and relationship to the rest of the world (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010).

**Self-Management.** Self-management is entrenched in the intrapersonal domain of SEL and Gardner’s intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1983). This domain includes impulse control and stress management, self-motivation, discipline, and goal setting (Zins et al., 2004). The prime objective of this competency is for children to develop internal self-regulation skills and demonstrate them in social interactions (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010).

**The Interpersonal Domain.** Gardner (1983) refers to the core capacity of interpersonal intelligence as “the ability to notice and make distinctions among other individuals” (p. 253). Interpersonal intelligence includes the ability to detect the moods, temperaments, motivations, and intentions of others (Gardner, 1983). The interpersonal domain of the CASEL framework consists of two competencies: social awareness and relationship skills.

**Social Awareness.** Social awareness is a critical component of SEL's interpersonal domain and Gardner’s interpersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1983). Social awareness includes the development of a sense of perspective, empathy, appreciation for diversity, respect towards others (Zins et al., 2004), and relating efficiently with others (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010).

**Relationship Skills.** Relationship skills exist within SEL’s interpersonal domain and Gardner’s interpersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1983). Relationship management entails contact, social interaction, relationship building; cooperating; bargaining, refusing, managing conflict; and finding and offering assistance (Zins et al., 2004). This competency necessitates the conversion of knowledge through action—in this case, from social awareness to human contact.
Summary

One of the primary goals of American schools is to equip students to live lives as productive citizens in an increasingly varied democratic society (Labaree, 1997). The college marching band may serve as an ideal environment for developing these extramusical abilities. Students who learn to communicate and work through problems as connected community members are more likely to develop into responsible citizens, vote in elections, and take on leadership roles in their communities after graduation (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Engaging in common interests is crucial for developing healthy communities. Providing students with opportunities to engage in challenging and collaborative endeavors such as those found in collegiate marching bands should be a fundamental goal of higher education.

While membership in the college marching band does not guarantee that students will develop a range of skills associated with individual and ensemble music participation, the college marching band experience provides students with unique opportunities for development and growth that may not be available elsewhere in the undergraduate experience. The extramusical benefits of marching band include heightened self-discipline, increased loyalty to the school community, positive public relations, increased budgetary support, the development of an increased sense of belonging and self-efficacy, and increased leadership skills (Garrison, 1986; Isch, 1965; Markworth, 2008; Wickes, 1978). Because the development of specific intra- and interpersonal competencies among college marching band participants has not been evaluated, it is possible that college administrators do not fully appreciate the marching band's role in providing critical educational opportunities that may be associated with fundamental outcomes of higher education.
This study seeks to highlight how specific experiences in collegiate marching band impact participants in the intra- and interpersonal domains. Specifically, this work aims to determine how collegiate marching band develops intra- and interpersonal competencies in its members and what experiences are most impactful in the lives of those who participate. Communicating with recent alumni of a nationally recognized collegiate marching band program and learning about the social and emotional skills fostered through their participation will yield valuable insight and influence the development of SEL programming at all levels of instrumental music. Research illuminating the influence of marching band participation on its members’ intra- and interpersonal development could aid in the development of curricula that enables arts educators to develop educational programming that focuses on human progress over performance products and may ultimately lead to a revaluation of arts education.
Chapter 3

This study seeks to determine how participation in collegiate marching band impacted the social and emotional development of recent alumni. Specifically, this study examines how the competencies of former marching band members (now alumni) developed in the intra- and interpersonal SEL domains. Semi-structured hour-long interviews with Mid-Atlantic University Marching Band (MAUMB) alumni who graduated from Mid-Atlantic University between 2019 and 2021 described the impact of marching in a nationally recognized collegiate marching band on participants’ social and emotional development. Alumni who were one to three years removed from this curriculum provided detailed reflections on a range of experiences, from those common to all marching bands (such as learning a field show or performing at home football games) to events unique to MAUMB participation. These alumni provided valuable perspectives regarding collegiate marching band’s impact on their lives during their careers at Mid-Atlantic University and described how those experiences impacted their post-baccalaureate professional settings.

This chapter introduces the research methodology for this qualitative case study, including the research design, participants, setting, instrumentation, researcher’s bias, analysis procedures, and informed consent protections.

Research Design

The following research questions guide this study:

1) In what ways did collegiate marching band participation facilitate the social and emotional competencies of alumni who are 1-3 years removed from the program?

2) How did specific experiences in collegiate marching band impact SEL competencies related to the intra- and interpersonal domains for these alumni?
3) How do recent alumni utilize the social and emotional competencies developed in collegiate marching band in their professional settings?

These research questions were prompted by a desire to understand more about the social and emotional consequences of marching band engagement at the collegiate level. Alumni who graduated within the last three years have had sufficient time away from collegiate marching band to reflect on the impact of their participation and can articulate how marching band membership benefited their lives following graduation. The answers to these questions may enable marching band instructors gain a better understanding of how current collegiate marching band practices affect students' social and emotional development and could aid in developing more effective educational programming. Additionally, perceived benefits may result in an increased appreciation of the college marching band among students and university authorities.

To address the research questions, this study employs a qualitative case study design. A qualitative case study is a research methodology that aids in the analysis of a process, program, or individual within a specific context using a variety of data sources and lenses to highlight unique phenomenological features (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Case studies are especially effective for investigating a process, program, or individual in a holistic, in-depth manner that generates deeper understanding (Merriam, 1998). According to Patton (1990), case studies are useful for gaining a full grasp of certain persons, problems, or circumstances.

Case study design presents many advantages, including flexibility in data collection and interpretation and favor depth and intensity of study involving a bounded system (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). According to Creswell (2008), 'bounded' refers to a case that is isolated for inquiry by time, place, or some physical boundary. The single instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) allows the research to focus on a central issue and one bounded case. For this work, the
central issue is social and emotional growth in collegiate marching band alumni with the Mid-Atlantic University Marching Band serving as the single bounded case.

**Setting and Case Description**

The Mid-Atlantic University Marching Band (MAUMB) serves as the bounded case for this study. The MAUMB is a group of over 300 students that represent Mid-Atlantic University and the greater Mid-Atlantic community. Comprised of students from more than 60 different majors, the MAUMB involves students from every segment of the campus population and is the largest student organization at Mid-Atlantic University.

Founded in the 1870’s as an institute for teacher preparation, Mid-Atlantic University (MAU) is a comprehensive public institution, offering more than 110 undergraduate programs, 80 graduate programs, and four doctoral programs in more than 50 fields of study. MAU rests on over 400 acres of land located in southeastern Pennsylvania and serves a diverse population of over 17,000 students. MAU is organized into six colleges (Arts and Humanities, Health Sciences, Business and Public Management, Mathematics and Sciences, Social Work and Education, and University College) and one school (The MAU School of Music).

Mid-Atlantic University has offered a music curriculum since its founding in the late 19th century. The MAU School of Music employs 80 faculty members who serve more than 500 students and is the only School of Music in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (Mid-Atlantic University, 2021). The MAU School of Music offers degree programs in music composition, music education, music performance, music therapy, and music with elective studies. Students in the MAU School of Music have the opportunity to perform in over 30 unique performing ensembles, including four concert band ensembles, a basketball pep band, and the Mid-Atlantic University Marching Band. In addition to performing at home football games and
MAU events, the MAUMB performs at local and regional engagements as well as prestigious national exhibitions including holiday parades, professional football playoff games, and competitive marching band circuit championships. The Mid-Atlantic University Marching Band has earned a national reputation as a leader in the marching arts.

Semi-structured hourlong interviews with MAUMB alumni who graduated from Mid-Atlantic University within the past one to three years (2019-2021) detailed the impact of participation in a nationally recognized college marching band on participants’ social and emotional development. Alumni reflected on a wide variety of specific experiences, from rehearsal and performance endeavors common to all marching bands to prestigious engagements that provided national visibility. Participants provided valuable perspective related to the marching band’s impact on participants’ social and emotional development while at Mid-Atlantic University and described how they drew on those experiences in their post-baccalaureate lives.

Participants

Following IRB approval (Appendix E), the researcher emailed a written description of the project (Appendix B) to a purposeful sample of Mid-Atlantic University alumni who participated in marching band and graduated between 2019 and 2021. Email addresses were obtained via the Mid-Atlantic University Bands Alumni Association (MAUBAA) database. Alumni who were one to three years removed from the program were chosen due to their ability to reflect on a wide variety of experiences with specificity, from events common to marching bands at all levels and institutional sizes to large events with national visibility reserved for the largest Division I collegiate programs. Out of the initial round of nine invitations sent, all nine accepted and became participants in this study.
**Instrumentation**

Participants engaged in hourlong semi-structured interviews via the Zoom platform. Interviews were recorded and stored on the researcher’s password-protected computer. Interview questions encouraged participants to describe their perspectives on how participation in the Mid-Atlantic University Marching Band program impacted their social and emotional growth.

**Demographic Data**

Along with informed consent, demographic data was collected via the Qualtrics online platform (Appendix E). In addition to general personal information, the Qualtrics form surveyed race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, employment status, household income, graduation year, years in collegiate marching band, section(s) while in collegiate marching band, leadership position(s) while in collegiate marching band, and participation in other marching arts programs outside of collegiate marching band.

**Interview Guide**

A questioning guide (Appendix C) was used to maintain consistency between interviews. Questions asked participants to specifically address how collegiate marching band experiences impacted competencies within the intra- and interpersonal domains of the CASEL framework (2020). Additional questions encouraged participants to describe their background in the marching arts, recall specific formative experiences in the collegiate marching band, and discuss how the SEL lessons learned through marching band impacted their professional roles.

**Researcher’s Bias and Positionality**

As the Director of Athletic Bands at Mid-Atlantic University, one of the researcher’s primary duties is to serve as the Director of the MAUMB. Participants in this study were former MAUMB students who had established relationships with the researcher. While these prior
relationships yielded honest and personal interactions, they also presented the risk of participants not fully disclosing their truths due to fear of damaging said relationships. To mitigate this risk, the researcher conveyed the importance of the study to all participants and reiterated their anonymity and security of their interview data in any publications. In addition, the language on the Informed Consent document (Appendix A) was reviewed prior to the start of the interview to reiterate how study participation would not lead to repercussions with regards to their relationship with Mid-Atlantic University.

Similarly, the utilization of MAUMB alumni as a participant pool was a convenient sample for the researcher. Despite concerns surrounding convenience samples in the areas of bias and replicability, this sample was appropriate to address the aims of the study. Even though Mid-Atlantic University is a Division II NCAA school, the MAUMB has earned a national reputation as a leader in the marching arts which has led to high-profile performances and prestigious honors. Alumni who were one to three years removed from the program could reflect on a wide variety of experiences with specificity. Additionally, findings may be appealing to ensemble directors who have strong relationships with their students and may be looking to use this study to benefit their own programs.

**Generalizability**

Research findings may be generalizable to a broader population of marching arts organizations and participants. The MAUMB engages in a rehearsal schedule that is typical of collegiate marching bands. Prior to the season, members of the MAUMB engage in a week-long training camp with ten hours of rehearsal each day. Once the semester begins, the MAUMB rehearses for six hours per week. Both figures are in line with the national average for college marching bands (Marshall, 2011).
The MAUMB enjoys an active performance schedule that is like other collegiate marching bands. The MAUMB performs at all MAU home football games as well as community events and high school exhibitions. In his survey of over 2,700 college band members from across the United States, Alosi (2012) found these experiences to be common components of the collegiate marching band experience. As members of the MAUMB have comparable schedule commitments as other collegiate marching bands, findings from this research could help illuminate practices that are employed during that time that effectively foster social and emotional development.

**Procedures**

All study interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically. Thematic coding of interview data allowed the researcher to assess the subjective experiences, views, and opinions of the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While thematic coding has been thought of more as a tool rather than a method (Boyatzis, 1998), additional research supports the use of thematic coding as a standalone data analysis method due to its ability to provide a detailed and nuanced account of data (Nowell et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004).

Thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2006) and King (2004), is a valuable tool for exploring the viewpoints of various research participants, showing parallels and differences, and providing unexpected findings. Data gathering, data analysis, and report writing practices are frequently interconnected and occur concurrently and repeatedly throughout the qualitative process (Creswell, 2008). While the thematic analysis process outlined in this section is presented in a linear manner based on the work of Braun and Clarke (2006), the actual process was far more reflective and iterative which allowed for increased flexibility as codes and themes emerged.
Phase 1 – Data Familiarization

Scholars should immerse themselves in the data in order to fully grasp its depth and breadth (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Following the transcription of interviews, Phase 1 of data analysis focused on familiarization with the collected data, including memos written during the interview process as well as the interview transcription itself. Immersion required active reading of data and looking for significance and patterns that were revisited often throughout the analysis process.

Phase 2 – Code Generation

Phase 2 entailed the initial generation of codes from the data. During this phase, the researcher found key sections of text and labeled them to indicate their relationship to a certain subject or issue related to the research questions and phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2008; King, 2004). For the first round of coding, the intra- and interpersonal competencies of the CASEL Framework (SfA – Self-Awareness, SfM – Self-Management, SoA – Social Awareness, RS – Relationship Skills) were used as deductive codes and informed the development of an initial code manual used as a data management technique for grouping related text segments. A second round of inductive coding served to recognize additional recurring text that initial SEL competency-related deductive codes did not highlight.

Phase 3 – Thematic Development

Phase 3 began once data was coded and a list of the various codes detected across the data set was generated. This stage entailed categorizing and collating all potentially relevant coded data extracts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes were identified by assembling codes that initially seemed unrelated in isolation (Aronson, 1994). Early analysis and thematic development was guided by the deductive code manual related to CASEL competencies, however codes
highlighted during inductive coding allowed for the emergence of new themes involving linked capacities in addition to those unrelated to the CASEL framework.

**Phase 4 – Thematic Review**

Phase 4 began once a group of themes were developed. During this phase, the researcher analyzed the coded data extracts for each topic to determine whether they appeared to form logical patterns while individual themes were evaluated for validity to establish whether they accurately reflected the meanings evident in the data set as a whole (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this phase, deficiencies in the initial coding and thematic development were exposed that necessitated additional rounds of coding and revision (King, 2004). By the end of this phase, data existed coherently within a distinct organization.

**Phase 5 – Thematic Definition**

Phase 5 involved the written analysis of each theme’s place in the larger research. In this phase, each theme was named and presented in a written analysis that outlined how the theme related to the larger narrative and the original research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this point, consultation determined that themes were clear and complete enough to stop revisiting the previous phases and enter the production of the final report.

**Phase 6 – Report Production**

Phase 6 began once codes and themes were reviewed multiple times by outside entities and analysis progressed from organization to interpretation. Findings related to this research study are presented in Chapter 4 while interpretation and discussion of data is presented in Chapter 5.

**Informed Consent and Protection of Human Subjects**
Ethics remained a priority throughout this study. Following the methods as outlined strengthened the validity and reliability of the study, and informed consent forms (Appendix E) were obtained from each subject prior to full participation.

This study presented minimal risks to participants. Participants experienced the loss of time when completing the interest form (approximately three to five minutes), completing the Qualtrics Survey (approximately 10 to 15 minutes), and conducting the hourlong interview. Given the emotional nature of the research topic, interview subjects could discontinue their participation for any reason. At the outset of each interview, the researcher clarified the confidential nature of the information shared as well as the steps taken to secure information in password-protected data centers. The assignment of pseudonyms serves to de-identify participant data. This list and all consent forms will remain stored on the researcher’s password protected computer until the data is destroyed three years after the completion of the study, approximately May 2025. These precautions and procedures help maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

**Summary**

This chapter outlined the research methods used to determine how collegiate marching band participation impacted the social and emotional development of recent alumni in the intra- and interpersonal domains. The research design, participants, setting, instrumentation, researcher’s bias, analysis procedures, and informed consent protections have been outlined. The following chapter presents participant data and study findings.
Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of collegiate marching band participation on the social and emotional development of recent alumni. Specifically, it considers how experiences in collegiate marching band developed the intra- and interpersonal domains and related competencies of SEL and how these lessons were later deployed in participants’ professional environments. Data was obtained through semi-structured hourlong interviews with nine recent alumni of Mid-Atlantic University (MAU) who participated in the MAU Marching Band.

This chapter is structured into three primary sections. The first section presents participant demographic information as reported via Qualtrics survey (Appendix E). The second section offers findings related to collegiate marching band’s impact on social and emotional growth as reported by study participants. The final section presents findings related to how collegiate marching band experiences influenced the participants’ professional lives.

Participant Data

A written description of the project was emailed by the researcher to a purposeful sample of Mid-Atlantic University alumni who participated in marching band and graduated within the previous one to three years. Out of the initial round of nine invitations sent, all nine accepted. After providing informed consent and demographic information via Qualtrics survey, participants engaged in semi-structured interviews with the researcher in December 2021. Interviews were conducted via the Zoom platform and served to illuminate participants’ unique perspectives on their own social and emotional growth through experiences in collegiate marching band.

Participant Demographics
Participants provided demographic information via Qualtrics. All nine participants ranged in age from 23 to 28 years old with four identifying as female and five as male. Of the nine participants, five graduated in 2021, three in 2020, and one in 2019. Seven participants reported their race as White with two reporting as Latino. Eight participants were employed as educators during the time of the interviews with two at the elementary school level, three at the middle school level, and three at the high school level. The ninth participant was employed as a market analyst for a mid-sized corporation. Additional demographics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Graduation year</th>
<th>Gender identity</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
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</thead>
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<td>2021</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Elementary music teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashida</td>
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<td>2020</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
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<td>2021</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>High school special education teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry</td>
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<td>2019</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>High school band director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results

Participants reflected on the impact that collegiate marching band participation had on their social and emotional development as well as how they deployed specific social and emotional competencies developed during their time in collegiate marching band in their professional environments. Responses were coded and curated based on the SEL capacity
described by the participant. SEL capacities were then categorized into their related core competencies (i.e. – the capacity of empathy relates to the core competency of social awareness) and placed in either the intrapersonal (self-awareness and self-management) or interpersonal (social awareness and relationship skills) domain. This method of organization closely aligns the organization of the CASEL framework.

Findings are presented below in three large sections. The first two sections present how participants described the impact of collegiate marching band on the development of capacities and competencies related to the 1) intra- and 2) interpersonal SEL domains. The third section presents participant responses related to the deployment of social and emotional lessons learned during collegiate marching band in their own professional settings.

The Intrapersonal Domain

Study participants described how participation in collegiate marching band developed their social and emotional capacities within the intrapersonal SEL domain. Findings are presented below and are organized based on the intrapersonal CASEL competencies (self-awareness and self-management) and the related capacities as described by participants.

Self-Awareness. All nine study participants reported that involvement in collegiate marching band helped foster improved levels of self-awareness. On many occasions, participants used the term “self-confidence” to describe what SEL labels as “self-efficacy.” For the purposes of this study, the language used by the participants is retained. The curation and coding of interview data illuminated two primary capacities related to self-awareness: self-confidence and mindset development. Participant responses are presented below.

Self-Confidence. Participants who experienced high levels of self-confidence in high school discussed how the transition to a new environment with added peer competition fosters
feelings of self-doubt. Austin, now a 24-year-old systems analyst, witnessed this phenomenon often during his five years in collegiate marching band. He explained that while a band member might have a sense of their excellence in high school, when they were a top performer in a study body of some 1,000 students, this changes when they arrive to college:

…now you go to [Mid-Atlantic University] that has 17,000 kids…you might have been one of five trumpets in your high school, but at [Mid-Atlantic] you’re one of 50 now…And I think when you go from that jump from like a small town to such a large…that jump that can really hurt someone’s confidence when they might be like ‘well I’m the best here or I’m successful here, but am I going to be successful when I get put in that environment?’ And I think that’s where a lot of the confidence can kind of come into place. Everyone starts to doubt themselves, “am I good enough to be here, do I belong here in the first place?”

In other words, many collegiate band members have just entered a brand-new environment, many times larger than their previous secondary institution, and the competition is more intense. These factors cause a natural decrease in confidence, or an increased sense of uncertainty.

Jerry was a drum major during his time in high school which helped him gain confidence in himself and his leadership skills. After choosing to attend a large Division 1 institution outside of his home state and joining a collegiate marching band roughly four times the size of his high school band, Jerry quickly realized that he was no longer a big fish in a small pond. “When I got to college (and especially when I got to [Southern State University]) it was a totally different atmosphere, you know? I wasn’t this big dog anymore, I was just another student in the marching band.” Jerry found that his confidence grew once he was able to show what he could do as a performer during his audition. “I placed in the top ensemble seated right behind the Grad
students…I know a lot of people acknowledge that and that kind of got me noticed and raised my confidence.”

After a year at Southern State University, Jerry transferred to Mid-Atlantic and once again found himself questioning his abilities in a new environment. Jerry’s success as a performer helped to ease the transition and build his confidence:

I was fortunate enough to get the solo. And that sort of same recognition that I got for my placement at [Southern State] I got here for the solo so that helped out a lot…I made a lot of really great friends that made everything a lot more comfortable being at the new school and working with everybody.

Students coming into collegiate marching band, whether straight from high school or transferring from one postsecondary institution to another, experienced dips in self-confidence.

For participants experiencing self-doubt entering the collegiate environment, new relationships based on marching band fostered increased self-confidence. Like Jerry, Rashida, now a 22-year-old band director in Pennsylvania, remembered that she was nervous coming into college. Leaving her lifelong home and a community in which she had developed strong relationships for a new environment led to a difficult transition to higher education. Rashida credited the relationships formed during her first collegiate marching band preseason training camp with helping to build comfort and self-confidence:

I remember my very first day of band camp [section leader name] pulling me aside…I’ve never met this person in my life…and she was like “hey, you’re coming to dinner with me.” So, I went to dinner. I joined a group chat with people at that table. And my entire freshman year, I had people to eat with every single night. They just develop those kinds of friendships and those relationships – having section nights and just getting to
know all of these different people that support you and that are all kind of working
toward a common goal – that just taught me self-confidence, a lot.

Unlike Rashida, some students may not be comfortable in their home environment. Tyler, now a
23-year-old music teacher, struggled with mental health issues throughout his adolescence in
large part due to challenges faced at home. For Tyler, arriving at college provided a fresh start in
a new and more accepting environment that led to increased self-confidence:

…before I got to [Mid-Atlantic] um…no, honestly, I thought that I wasn’t gonna be able
to graduate college…I grew up in a very, for lack of a better term, conservative
household, and as someone who, for lack of a better term, struggles with mental health
issues, I came into college very…I was struggling very much. I was struggling with self-
esteeem, I was struggling through the very real realities of depression and anxiety and that
was a very damaging mindset to have for myself, because I was very self-deprecating
and…just honestly…I didn’t believe in myself. However, going into the collegiate
marching arts program and being at [Mid-Atlantic] exposed me to so many different
people and so many different viewpoints and people from so many different
backgrounds…I really figured out who I am – the self-confidence has grown and grown
and grown over time.

While the transition to a new environment presents social and emotional challenges that can lead
to feelings of self-doubt, participation in collegiate marching band can help build relationships
that lead to heightened levels of self-confidence.

Several study participants described how performance experiences in collegiate marching
band impacted their ability to believe in themselves. Rashida described how the inherent exposure
associated with collegiate marching band performance led to increased self-confidence:
Marching band is a very exposed activity, people are watching you. It’s a group activity, but at the same time, everything that you’re doing can tend to be scrutinized, so I think that it’s something that does develop confidence because if you’re going to keep going back and you’re going to keep doing this music thing in front of other people and performing, you have to build some level of self-confidence to keep that up. The more I did that, the more comfortable I became.

Participants also reported that time spent assembling and rehearsing a marching band production led to increased confidence for all involved. Gabriel, a 23-year-old music teacher, shared how performance preparation played a role in developing self-confidence as well as confidence in others:

You could be nervous but there’s a bit of confidence that comes with that…Confidence in yourself that I’ve worked hard at this, I know what I’m doing, and we are going to go and do it. And that’s something that every member of collegiate marching band has experienced as soon as you do one show it’s like, you gotta have the confidence in yourself and you also have to have the confidence in the people around you that we’re all going to put this we’re going to put this together. I’m going to do my part, and the people around me are going to do their part.

Participants shared how positive affirmation from mentors led to heightened levels of self-confidence. Madison described the impact of trust demonstrated by caring instructors:

I wasn’t even going to go out in 2018 as a section leader and [color guard instructor] messaged me and was like “hey get your butt here…come interview” and I was like “no…I’m not ready…I’m not good enough” kind of thing. And so, like, I still went because I’m not going to disappoint [color guard instructor], I can tell you that!…So I
showed up and when they were like “oh you’re a section leader” I was like “no I’m not!” and I’m like “oh shoot…I’m a section leader!” That was like the light bulb moment all of a sudden, like I need to give more faith in myself because, clearly, these people are putting a lot of faith in me…seeing that confidence in me being like “okay…I guess I’m kind of good at it…” that kind of made me break down some of that anxiety.

Jessica, a 25-year-old elementary music teacher, described how positive feedback from others during drum major auditions helped develop her own self-confidence:

…I don’t think I’m that good, but apparently other people do, so I push myself. I wanted to go, I wanted to be challenged more, and I wanted to learn and…again, because of those experiences, I’m excited to see how far I can go and I’m excited for when I may stumble or may fail and am able to push through again.

Mindset Development. Participants described how participation in collegiate marching band developed a growth-mindset. Jerry shared how he “definitely felt that at [Mid-Atlantic] there was…a growth mindset. There wasn’t really a limitation of ‘this is as good as we can do.’” Learning from mistakes was integral to the development of a growth-mindset. Gabriel recalled how he learned that “in the end, we’re all still human and we make mistakes…it’s always about growth and it’s always going to get easier and better with time and with practice.” Janet, a 26-year-old band director in New Jersey, credited heightened self-confidence on the opportunity to learn from her mistakes:

At [Mid-Atlantic] I knew that my professors trusted me to do things right or to at least try them and fail and learn, whereas in other college programs, we were…told what to do and ‘I expect you to do it the right way’ and ‘I’m going to check in on you every five seconds to make sure you’re doing it the right way.’ Or they just don’t ask you to do
things at all, and then the director ends up doing all the work or, like, three people do all
the work. And I think that was something that was different about [Mid-Atlantic’s]
program that was helpful in building my self-confidence.

Aaron, a 27-year-old high school music teacher, described how the process of learning from
mistakes developed into a growth-mindset:

…trusting the process is the growth mindset that I embrace every single day. As band
directors, we talked about you know, like, I want to hear the loud note, or I want to hear
the wrong notes the loudest. And I take that to my daily life. So as a growth mindset
every time I fail…I don’t know, for me that’s a fascinating moment…rather than like a
“well crap that happened” it’s more of like being able to laugh at yourself, being able to
understand that there’s a longer goal, there is a process…if it doesn’t feel complete, then
the process isn’t complete. Then you haven’t failed enough, you have to continue failing.

Like Aaron, Jessica developed a growth-mindset by learning to grow from her mistakes during
her time in collegiate marching band. She credited her experiences in collegiate marching band
with fostering a mindset that made anything possible:

My mindset, from the marching band experiences, is that I am absolutely capable of
anything. So, I’m a really shy person and I always have been my whole life. In
elementary school when they would be like, “three descriptive words” for each kid, mine
was always like “quiet, shy, and like, kind or something… I put on a different persona
every time I get up on the podium. I acted confidently and I have proven to myself time
and time again that anything that’s thrown at me I can achieve. Being only 22 years old,
it just makes me happy because I KNOW that I can do a lot more.
This section presented how experiences in collegiate marching band fostered intrapersonal self-awareness in study participants via their development of self-confidence and growth-mindset. Findings related to the intrapersonal competency of self-management are presented in the following section.

**Self-Management.** All nine study participants reported that collegiate marching band positively impacted their self-management capabilities. Four main capacities related to self-management emerged from the data: goal setting, perseverance, emotional regulation, and time management. Participant responses are presented below.

**Goal Setting.** Participants described how collegiate marching band participation developed their abilities to set relevant and achievable goals. Learning a marching band production involving hundreds of students requires a great deal of long- and short-term goal setting from all members. Jerry explained how setting goals helps the collegiate marching band develop and deploy complex performances involving large groups of members with diverse backgrounds. “It’s starting with the fundamentals and making sure those are in check and then moving on from that point with small but achievable goals. Making sure that you can play…making sure you can move…making sure that you [can] communicate.” Jerry described how the foundational performance concepts are then refined over time to maximize the ensemble’s performance potential:

…once you get to that point where you sound great and you’re very pleased with what you do…you continue to scaffold with the fundamentals and add slowly over time more specific goals and details…That way, by the time the end of the season comes, you’ve achieved the small goals that have ultimately built up to the overarching goal, which is making the best product that we can as a unit.
Jessica described the process of scaffolding larger goals into smaller, achievable objectives as something that was “engrained” in her by Mid-Atlantic University. “It was always thinking about one thing – achieving that goal – then moving on to the next [goal]…really just taking this massive production that you’re putting on a field…and breaking it down to one goal at a time.” Jessica recalled working on a challenging and exposed musical passage during her first year at Mid-Atlantic University that helped solidify her understanding of the process:

…it was the woodwind feature and we had to learn that visual that was pretty difficult for me to put together with my playing…I remember every day during band camp, any free time we had…I would just work on two beats of it at a time or one beat of it at a time to the next movement. Breaking that down into the short-term goals – just one count, two counts, two more counts – and then going back and putting them together…I can remember that vividly to this day.

While effective goal setting and scaffolding techniques led to a greater probability of goal achievement, challenges are inevitable and require members to develop the ability to persist and overcome barriers to success. The following section presents how participants described the impact of collegiate marching band on their capacity to persevere.

**Perseverance.** Perseverance is necessary to break through the barriers to goal achievement that present themselves during each collegiate marching band season. Several participants described how collegiate marching band participation fostered their ability to persevere through adverse conditions. Reflecting on her past experiences, Rashida couldn’t recall a season without challenges. She described how attitude shifts can help persevere in difficult situations:
…it’s just kind of naturally ingrained in you that if you want to have a successful season, you have to be able to get over things…If you get hung up, it can really ruin the rest of the season for you, whereas if you’re able to persevere through that and have those attitude shifts and be able to talk through those things, that’s what allows you to be successful.

When asked to recall specific instances where she persevered in collegiate marching band, Rashida described how her peers would regularly motivate one another to maintain a positive environment through difficult situations. “In [MAU], at the end of a long hot day of rehearsal…a section leader running back to a set or cheering or high five or something…just something to keep the energy alive and to keep the motivation going.” Rashida’s choice not to highlight a specific moment in time but rather a coping strategy used to make the challenges of a daily rehearsal easier to manage illuminates how integral the development of perseverance is to the day-to-day quality of life of collegiate marching band participants.

Echoing Rashida’s sentiments with regards to the importance of perseverance, Jessica described a key part of every marching band experience as “hitting walls, breaking through them, and being happy.” As a member of a four-conductor drum major team, Jessica and her colleagues needed to develop a congruent conducting style to ensure clear communication with over 300 on-field performers. During a particularly challenging production in 2019, Jessica and her drum major team needed to conduct two different time signatures at the same time which required them to work together and persevere through a tedious process in an effort to maximize the performance product:

…it was hard because usually we’re working as one team, we are all doing the same thing, and we have to look the same…any time that we had we be videotaping each other,
do slow motion videos to, over time, work on conducting both time signatures together, having our partners look the same and to make sure it was clear…the first few weeks that we were doing it it was definitely a train wreck, but afterwards – every week, months, and whatever – we kept going by the end of the season it was REALLY good!

Jerry described how performance opportunities served as the catalyst for developing his capacity to persevere through difficult experiences. Jerry noted that performances in front of enthusiastic audiences were enough to keep him pushing through the challenges presented in the daily rehearsal environment. “Whenever we would go to those competitions and perform and just hearing the crowd… that was really what made it worth it, what kept me wanting to come back.”

Tyler discussed how performing in front of others impacted his ability to persevere through difficult moments:

[Quitting] is just not a thing you can really do [when] there’s a show [that] you have to put on. There are all these things you have to do, you can’t just quit, you can’t just give up just when you’re in the moment, you have to be there, and you have to be present, and I think marching band has really just shown me that.

Collegiate marching band placed study participants in challenging situations that developed their capacity to persevere. The following section illuminates how challenges associated with collegiate marching band fostered the participants’ capacity to manage their own emotions.

**Emotional Regulation.** Participants shared how participation in collegiate marching band developed their ability to regulate their emotions. As collegiate marching bands involve large groups of people in close proximity for long periods of time, emotions inherent in music and musical activities are heightened. In Jessica’s words, “you are with so many people, you are being pushed beyond your limits, and the emotions are high.” Austin described collegiate
marching band as an “emotional roller coaster” that prepares you for life. “Nothing bad enough can happen that you can’t recover from it, and I think that’s really something that marching band taught me…there’s always another day, there’s always another show.”

With marching band training camp serving as the first college experience for most members, older members serve as role models for incoming students. Rashida credited immersion in a new environment surrounded by new people with helping her learn how to regulate her emotions in a positive way during the transition into college:

…you naturally find role models and people that you want to be like when you’re in an ensemble setting like that…a lot of what I think I admire about people and why they become role models is because of how they regulate their emotions and their attitudes and how they’re approaching what they’re doing. People that can keep a positive attitude (or that can show emotion in an appropriate way and sort of make those adjustments), I think that’s something that leads me to admire people more.

Following the coding and curation of data, participants highlighted how the presence of two negative emotional states found in collegiate marching band – frustration and anxiety – lead to the development of strategies for emotional regulation.

_Frustration_. Rashida spent her first season acclimating to the collegiate marching band program and auditioned for a leadership position prior to her second year. While she felt as though she earned the position, she was passed over in favor of members with more experience in the program. Rashida described how her initial frustration led to acceptance of and commitment to her role:

I remember really having to check myself at the beginning of that season and be willing to fully commit to a season and to those relationships with the people that had been
chosen and making sure that I was doing everything I could, as a member, despite the fact that it wasn’t in the role that I wanted to be in.

Madison described a similar situation where her lack of experience in the ensemble led to frustrating interactions with older members. Despite having many years of experience in other award-winning marching organizations, she and her roommate were not comfortable speaking up. Madison explained:

You are new here…your past experiences don’t mean anything to anyone” that has marched here for four years. So that was definitely a moment that I had to kind of, like, not let that get to my head, check myself, “don’t let them get to me”…but also, don’t take out my angry emotions towards them. Just do my job, do what I’m asked, and the people that are above me that are telling me what to do will be happy.

Participating in an activity that involves people from so many different backgrounds, readiness levels, and levels of commitment can lead to frustrating experiences for members. As a member who always gave full effort, Madison found it frustrating when she would see other members not share her level of commitment. “I’d always get annoyed when I would be there on the field bustling my butt like sweating like trying to catch my breath and other people are like ‘yeah…I’m tired I’m just going to skip it’ kind of thing.” She learned to manage those emotions by recognizing that different people had yet to learn how to be committed at her level and stated “you can’t get mad…they were never taught how to…and that’s the key to understanding. You, you have to take the time to teach them. Even though it’s college, you still have to teach them.”

Emotional compartmentalization may also be deployed to meet the physical and mental demands of collegiate marching band. Tyler learned to validate his emotions while continuing to focus on the task to be accomplished in the moment:
I think it is just what participation in the collegiate marching band has really taught me is...just that idea of, like, I have to understand what my job is and even if, regardless of what emotions, I am feeling – those feelings are valid – however there is something more important than that, right now.

Participants who expect perfection can be frustrated by an artistic activity where perfection is unattainable. Jessica, a self-described perfectionist, had a difficult time managing her frustration when she was unable to achieve her short-term performance goals. Jessica explained, “there’s so many times in marching band where things just get frustrating because every time you do it you just keep doing it wrong and you know what you need to do…but it’s not working and that’s hard.” Eventually, Jessica found strategies that helped her regulate her frustration. “It’s hard to get past that mental block…take a deep breath, calm yourself down, and just bring it back to the basics and take it one step at a time. That applies to everything in life.” The previous quote illuminates how Jessica learned to deploy a system of previously discussed intrapersonal capacities (goal setting, scaffolding, and perseverance) to effectively manage her own emotions and work through frustrating situations.

Performance Anxiety. Multiple participants described how marching band taught them to deal with performance anxiety. For some participants, the transition from high school football games to college football games represented a huge leap with regards to size of venue and number of spectators. While he hadn’t suffered from performance anxiety during his time in high school, Jerry described his first time performing in a large stadium at a Division 1 football game as “a great experience, but I was, I was very, very, very nervous. I knew that I had people watching, I knew I had family members who were there to support me.” Jerry regulated his
anxiety through positive self-talk and phrases like “You know what you’re doing this for!” and “We’re here to rock this house!” to modify his emotions from anxiety to excitement.

As a drum major at the high school, drum corps, and collegiate levels, Jessica was charged with getting on a podium and leading her bands in front of large audiences for big events. Despite dozens of experiences, Jessica felt crippling anxiety each time she stepped up on the box:

…getting up on the podium was terrifying. At [MAU] my first time as drum major, I avoided it. I kept saying “I think you should go up for this one” [to the other drum majors] and like, I was shaking. I mean, even up to my last time on that podium – being in front of over 300 people is nerve-racking and I don’t want to let anyone down.

Jessica dealt with her anxiety by playing a character and putting on a different persona every time she got up on the podium. “I acted confidently, and I have proven to myself time and time again that anything that’s thrown at me I can achieve.” After deeper reflection, Jessica realized that her ability to manage emotions consistently required heightened awareness of her own ability to control them:

…just taking every moment and being able to look at it with a clear mind and not let your emotions take over you. I’m a very strong believer that you are not your emotions, at all.

Emotions are just hard-wired, they’re just human.

The wide spectrum of human emotions experienced in the collegiate marching band setting helped participants develop their capacity to manage their own emotions. While participants focused on frustration and anxiety, continued interactions with those negative emotions led to positive intrapersonal development.

**Time Management.** All nine participants presented time management as an area where collegiate marching band fostered personal growth. Five of the nine participants described it as
the aspect of collegiate marching band that had the most positive impact on their social and emotional development. Madison shared that “the marching arts taught me that I need to stay on top of everything, prioritize my time, and I will be successful in all areas that I want to be.” Tyler shared similar sentiments and stated that the most important life lesson taught by collegiate marching band “was time management and management in general, because so much of life…it’s just managing a lot of different things at once.” Janet explained how collegiate marching band “helped develop a sense of structure” in her life. Janet shared that she didn’t think that she could manage her “schedule and [her] life if it wasn’t for band, and especially in college because college is so unstructured.”

Austin’s narrative illustrates how participation in a structured and time intensive activity such as collegiate marching band while immersed in a loosely structured collegiate environment Austin explained how the college environment provided less structure than his previous experiences in school:

When you’re going into college and you’re all of a sudden on this totally different schedule than in high school…you might have on Monday, a class at eight and then the next thing you have is out there on the marching band field at three o’clock ready for rehearsal. I think that for a lot of college students – and me included in that – is that’s a big change…And you [have to] start to manage it.

Austin recalled how the schedule was difficult to manage at first and described the fall of his freshman year as “hard” due to the demands of the schedule. With rehearsals lasting “seven and a half hours during the week…and then your whole Saturday, every [week],” Austin found that he had far less free time than many of his peers:
Marching band was that thing that filled up my schedule a lot throughout my college career. I mean I didn’t have all this free time that a lot of other college kids have. Every single one of my Saturdays was jam packed from beginning to end.

Three weeks into his career at Mid-Atlantic, the MAU Marching Band took a three-day road trip to perform at halftime of an NFL football game. Austin recalled how challenging the trip was for a first-year student, “just being away for three days and having to catch up on homework when you’re just trying to figure out what college is.” Austin credited that experience with teaching him how to “succeed and manage your time and resources in college.” He realized that a key to enjoying success as a member of a group like the MAU Marching Band and success as a student at MAU required the development of time management skills. He described the importance of the trip:

There probably couldn’t have been a more important trip for me to…set me up for success throughout the entire rest of my career at [Mid-Atlantic]. So I think that that hard trip, in the end, was probably one of the best things that could have happened for me.

As an economics major, Austin viewed his experience using the Opportunity Cost Theory and explained “when you’re doing something, when you have an opportunity, it always costs you something…So all that time that you spent…what else could you have done in your life?” After reflecting on whether his GPA might be higher or he may have been able to earn money with a part-time job if he hadn’t participated in collegiate marching band, Austin added the following: “Time is the biggest thing that I lost from it, but it’s the biggest thing that I also wouldn’t give back at the same time…looking back on it, I wouldn’t have had it any other way.”

This section detailed how experiences in collegiate marching band fostered intrapersonal self-management skills in study participants via their development of goal setting, perseverance,
emotional regulation, and time management capacities. The following section presents findings related to the impact of collegiate marching band experiences on the competencies and capacities related to the interpersonal domain.

**The Interpersonal Domain**

Study participants described how involvement in collegiate marching band developed their social and emotional capacities within the interpersonal SEL domain. Findings presented below are organized based on the interpersonal CASEL competencies (social-awareness and relationship skills) and the related capacities as described by participants.

**Social Awareness – Empathy.** The curation and coding of interview data highlighted empathy as the primary capacity related to social awareness described by participants. This section begins by presenting how the collegiate marching band environment fostered an awareness of new perspectives impacted the empathic development of participants. The second section presents how participants’ evolving roles in the collegiate marching band environment developed their social awareness.

Participants indicated that collegiate marching band participation facilitated the development of empathic viewpoints. Frequently, participants used the blanket term “empathy” when describing both cognitive empathy (i.e. – intellectually seeking to understand someone else’s viewpoints, often referred to as perspective-taking) and affective empathy (i.e. – the skillset required to actively feel the emotions of another person). For the purposes of this research, the blanket term “empathy” is used.

**New Perspectives.** Multiple participants reflected on their arrival at college and how their new environment helped develop their empathic viewpoint. Rashida explained how the transition to the college environment helped develop new perspectives. Since high school bands are
comprised of individuals who live in the same community, students in the same high school marching band “have a lot of the same values instilled” in them. Upon arrival to college, students are confronted with people who, in Rashida’s words, “are coming from all over the place that have very different experiences in marching band, but also in life.”

Learning to get along with people from diverse backgrounds was a key to the quality of life that Rashida experienced during her marching band experience. According to Rashida, “there are so many people there with all these different [backgrounds] that you learn to get along with, because if you don’t, you’re not going to have a good time.” Rashida also noted that the significant amount of time spent together helped her learn about people from differing backgrounds than her own. While she described the time spent together in organized rehearsal and performance activities as “important” to developing her worldview, the time spent with people from diverse backgrounds outside of collegiate marching band rehearsal is where Rashida found the most value. “You go to dinner with them after practice and you talk and you hang out outside of rehearsal and you’re together all the time. I think it just helps you to learn more about other people.” Exposure to new people from communities other than her hometown helped Rashida develop an “appreciation for that diversity and differences that people bring to the table” and begin to see the world from fresh perspectives.

Like Rashida, immersion in a new environment helped Janet develop an empathic viewpoint. Janet explained how she lacked empathy throughout high school because she was so focused on her own needs. “I would always forget about what other people were [feeling] because I was so focused on making sure I was okay.” Janet described how she developed empathy due to immersion in the collegiate marching band environment:
There were so many different groups of people in college band, so many different experiences that forced you to take a second, sit down, listen, and process because you were in such an intimate environment…You weren’t just sitting next to me in class, you were sitting next to me on a bus late at night…crying because you couldn’t get something…you don’t get those experiences just by going to class…like, if I was just casually friends with someone like, sitting next to them in a lecture hall I would never have learned so much about what [they were] going through…And I think that helped build empathy…I don’t know if I would have without that.

Janet credited experiences in collegiate marching band with developing her empathic capacity due to increased exposure to new people in intimate environments.

Aaron described how his arrival at a college in a different region (“New Region University Marching Band”) from his hometown introduced him to new perspectives that lead him to realize how different communities engage in the marching arts in different ways. According to Aaron, “the whole [new region] marching band sphere is so different from the [hometown region’s] marching band sphere. [In new region] it’s very much the festival style shows – they got the majorettes that are spinning fire out there!” Aaron described how he struggled to understand how other members could find value in an approach to marching band that was so different than the competitive environment that he was used to. Aaron recalled “thinking ‘wait a minute, do people compete with this?’ And that was a real struggle for me going in there…So there’s just such a wealth of difference in what they think of as a good marching band.”

Over time, Aaron developed cognitive empathy in his new environment. Aaron explained how he “needed to take a step back for a second” and recognized that “these people take
ownership, for their contributions in their marching band...It may not have been [competitive marching band contest name] or [other competitive marching band contest name]...but it was ‘their thing.’” Aaron noted that other people “felt more invested” in his marching band because they came from programs that embraced the non-competitive (“festival”) approach of his new region:

They had no idea what drum corps or [Mid-Atlantic Marching Band] was…so [New Region University Marching Band] was the peak for them…Everyone’s perspective is different, everyone’s goal is so different, but they were feeling self-realized. They were realizing that they get to do what they do best and perform it for thousands and thousands of people on a Saturday night on TV. It wasn’t the coolest for me, which is why I transferred to [Mid-Atlantic], but for other people...they were really invested.

Eventually, Aaron developed an empathic viewpoint. His experiences in collegiate marching band helped him realize that there was no “right way” to do marching band, but rather a variety of approaches based on the needs and traditions of the community. More importantly, Aaron realized that “his way” was not “the way” for everyone based on their previous experiences and helped him gain new perspectives which developed his empathic capacity.

New perspectives gained as first year members of the collegiate marching band helped participants develop an empathic viewpoint and expanded worldview. As they progressed through their marching band careers, participants began to assume official and unofficial leadership responsibilities. The following section describes how these evolving roles helped participants foster their capacity for empathy.

_Evolving Roles._ Several participants described how the journey from new member to veteran leader developed heightened levels of empathy. Gabriel described his own experience as
a first-year member and recognized that “there were people that picked up things faster than I did, and there are people things that picked up things slower than I did.” He found out early-on that empathy was a key to building relationships in his role as a student leader. “You’re going to need to be empathetic and shape the way that you think about things to be able to properly connect.”

Despite participating in marching band during his high school years, Austin arrived at MAU having never read a drill chart. During his first year, Austin experienced great difficulty trying to find the correct placement on the field with 300 other members. He recounted the story and how it helped him develop an empathic viewpoint moving forward:

I mean it was terrifying for me…I was panicking…I thought I had [the drill chart] upside down. I ended up on the wrong side of the field, I think, in a senior’s dot, and I was adamant with them that I was in the right dot. [It turned out] I had the paper upside down, so I was looking at it backwards.

As Austin grew more and became a leader in the program, he’d think back to his previous experiences and empathize with new members. He shared “I’d be way more into helping everybody find their dot because I remember(ed) when I knew it was my first time ever, looking at a drill chart.” Since student leaders were once new to the program, they can empathize with the struggles experienced by first year members.

Participants described how teaching their peers while serving in a leadership capacity provided the catalyst for their own empathic development. The level of difficulty associated with various marching band performance elements is perceived differently by members based on their prior experiences and preferred learning styles. Jessica explained how becoming a leader in marching band was the first time that she “started realizing that everyone sees things differently
and needs different supports.” She noted that, and “learning how to deal with just helping people work through visual and technical challenges was a huge help” in developing an empathic viewpoint.

When recounting his early experiences at MAU, Tyler discussed how he failed to understand social cues and how his actions would impact others. “I didn’t really have that – that sense of empathy – I just didn’t have it really…sometimes I would say things that obviously impacted the person in a negative way, but I wouldn’t understand why.” Tyler credited his own empathic development with becoming a student leader and needing to learn to connect with and provide support to peers. He recounted a time in 2018 where multiple section members joined the MAU marching band who had some musical training but no prior marching band experience. “Teaching them, it really made me realize ‘oh wow…there’s a lot of things that go into marching band that I just like to take for granted, I don’t even think about. And I have to teach them.’”

Experiences like these helped Tyler begin to see the world through the lenses of others and helped him develop his empathic viewpoint.

Madison reiterated the importance of recognizing prior experiences and readiness levels when dealing with her peers. “Thankfully, with [MAU], especially the color guard program, you learn that everyone learns differently, everyone comes from a different point of view.” While musicians often learn how to play their instruments through instruction during the school day beginning in elementary school, color guard members typically begin their formal training as part of a purely extracurricular program at the secondary level. As a leader with the MAU color guard, Madison dealt with members with a wide variety of prior experiences and learned how to develop an empathic viewpoint to provide educational supports for her peers:
…at [Mid-Atlantic] you have to all of a sudden get everyone on the same page you kind of have to accept and empathize with that. You can’t get mad…”oh you can’t do it!” No, they were never taught how to do it and that’s the key to understanding. You, you have to take the time to teach them, even though it’s college, you still have to teach them.

Madison found that further understanding of others had a residual impact on self-efficacy, eventually realizing that “once you empathize with them, you can help them more and you feel like you’re going to make an actual difference.”

As part of their teaching responsibilities, leaders are often tasked with establishing the standards and expectations of the organization. Once Gabriel became a student leader during his third year at MAU, he found that an empathic viewpoint was important in shaping the experience for others. Gabriel described how an empathic viewpoint allowed him to share expectations of the program. “Those aren’t always experiences that some of those people have ever even had, this is brand new. They have to learn the expectation and then they have to fulfill the expectation.” Gabriel found that understanding the previous experiences of others helped him to connect with and inspire others to raise their personal standards to meet the expectations of the group.

In addition to helping develop and deploy elements of the curriculum to less-experienced members, student leaders often find themselves providing support to their peers in other areas. Jessica went on to discuss the importance of developing that empathic viewpoint when dealing with members who were struggling with interpersonal conflict:

…it was almost more important to understand that they see it as something different.

Each and every one of us – although we’re all on the same field and we are putting on a show with like 324 people at [Mid-Atlantic] – we are still all our own main characters in
our story, and we all see things through our lens and no one else’s. So being able to try to put yourself in other people’s shoes – how they might see it, how they might feel – can completely change everything.

Fresh perspectives developed as first year members of the collegiate marching band helped participants fostered an empathic viewpoint and expanded worldview. As they progressed through their marching band careers, participants began to assume additional responsibilities which further developed their capacity for empathy. As student leaders responsible for presenting aspects of the educational program and providing interpersonal supports to their peers, participants gained an empathetic perspective that aided in their capacity to view the world through the eyes of others.

This section presented how experiences in collegiate marching band fostered interpersonal social awareness in study participants via their empathic development. The following section presents findings related to the interpersonal competency of relationship skills.

**Relationship Skills.** All nine participants reflected on how their experiences in collegiate marching band helped develop relationship skills. This section begins with the ecological conditions present in collegiate marching band that facilitate the development of interpersonal relationships, described by participants as environmental, temporal, and proximal. The section then presents the specific relationship capacities described most frequently by participants: effective communication, the ability to create inclusive settings, and the building of trust in others.

**Ecological Conditions.** All nine participants reflected on how the natural conditions found in collegiate marching band helped develop their interpersonal relationships. Participants described how environmental, temporal, and proximal conditions helped facilitate the development of relationships during their time in collegiate marching band.
Environmental Conditions. Several participants described how their relationship skills developed due to immersion in a new environment. A self-described introvert, immersion in the collegiate marching band setting placed Aaron into situations where he needed to connect with new people. During his high school experience, Aaron was used to performing with between six and eight other trumpet players with whom he had built relationships through shared experience in his hometown. At his first college marching band rehearsal at a large Division 1 institution, he found himself in a section of 46 trumpets, none of whom he had met prior to his arrival. Aaron recounted thinking “I’m like ‘holy crap I have 46 people in my section right now…I have no idea who they are or anything about them.’”

Aaron quickly realized that building relationships with others would require him to “get himself out there” and connect with the people around him. Upon stepping outside of his comfort zone, Aaron “suddenly became part of this group that…would go to lunch every single day” and soon developed into strong relationships and a positive network of support. Aaron shared, “We would share and help each other in different ways and create that network. That’s really what it was, you know we’re slowly building to creating a full network of people.” Over time, that network included more than just his lunch group and the 46-member trumpet section, extending “out to the 250 or 260 people that were in the full marching band.”

Temporal Conditions. Collegiate marching band participation requires a substantial time commitment on behalf of all members, and multiple participants described the development of their relationship skills as “natural” based on the amount of time spent together. She explained, “when you’re spending that much time with people, [close] relationships are naturally going to form.” Jerry described the development of relationship skills as a natural occurrence due to the time spent together “every other day for however many weeks [and] every weekend for however
many weeks…you just kind of mesh together.” When asked to describe what spurred the “mesh” that he described, Jerry replied with “you become close because you are always working together and are always trying to achieve a goal.”

Likewise, Austin credited shared goals and commitment as a catalyst for the development of relationship skills centering on positivity:

If you’re spending your whole Saturday with those people doing the thing that you all care about and love to do…you might as well be happy and create an environment that everyone wants to be a part of so that you can all at least enjoy that time that you’re there. Austin described how collegiate marching band taught him to invest in the quality of his relationships to positively impact the quality of the experience. “Are you only trying to enjoy 80% of your life when you’re in marching band, or would you rather put in a little bit of effort and time into managing some of those relationships?” Austin added that he learned the importance of resolving interpersonal issues. “If you take the time to resolve [issues], that other 20% of your time is going to become a lot more enjoyable.” The investment of time required by collegiate marching band impacted the development of interpersonal relationship skills in study participants.

Proximal Conditions. Rashida described the impact of proximity on relationship skills and credited her drill placement on the field as the catalyst for developing some of her closest relationships. She explained, “[y]ou’re running back and forth and back and forth over and over again, all season…the inside jokes that come up – I think that’s a big part of building relationships.” Madison also discussed how her placement on the field lead to meeting new people and developing her relationship skills. As a member of the color guard in 2017, Madison found herself moving props on the field at different points of the show which placed her around
many people outside of her section with whom she would not normally come into contact. She explained that she “felt like I got to talk to more people on the field and kind of build those relationships.” The development of relationships in collegiate marching band has a direct impact on the development of the related relationship skills of its members. The following section presents data related to the specific skills described most frequently by participants.

**Specific Relationship Capacities.** Several participants described how specific relationship capacities were cultivated during their time in collegiate marching band. This section presents the relationship capacities most frequently described by participants: effective communication, inclusion of others, and the building of trust.

*Effective Communication.* Several participants shared how their experiences in collegiate marching band impacted their ability to communicate effectively with others. Rashida listed communication skills as one of the areas where she experienced the most growth. According to Rashida, participation in collegiate marching band taught her “how to communicate with people in a lot of different ways – you’re communicating with your section, you’re communicating with other [sections] and then you’re communicating with teachers and directors.” Rashida credited her experiences in marching band with developing the communication skills that she uses as an adult. “I think a lot of that was a takeaway for me just in my life now and how I speak to people and how I communicate with people. A lot of those skills were developed through marching band.”

Jerry described how his experiences at Mid-Atlantic impacted his communication skills and recounted a specific rehearsal day in 2019. Having earned a role as a student leader, Jerry was charged with working with the leadership team to compose and teach new choreography to members of the band during an important section of the show. Rather than have a single leader
present the choreography to a single group of over 300 members, the leadership team decided that the material could more easily be presented to smaller, more manageable groups of 70-80. While the leadership team had written the choreography together, they failed to communicate exactly how the material would be presented to smaller groups of the membership which led to some significant incongruities, frustration, and lost time once the full ensemble was reassembled. Jerry described the breakdown in communication:

…people were very annoyed…I remember leaving that just kind of feeling defeated, and I kind of accepted that emotion…I was just like “Well, I know exactly the reason why it didn’t really work is because we didn’t talk as a team.” I didn’t know exactly what I was doing and just kind of went in there and winged it…I found that when you are a leader and you don’t know what’s going on, people don’t really like that, so I had to work on communication skills.

Jerry’s experience in the stadium lead to a heightened awareness of the importance of strong communication skills and found that making time to communicate was critical to team success. He explained how the team “made sure that before we went [on the rehearsal field]…we talked about when we’re going to do things, what everything is, and I know we worked much harder to make sure we were teaching the same material.” Over time, he came to value increased levels of communication with his fellow leaders who had differing approaches and perspectives. Jerry explained how “It was really awesome to have that team very close to communicate all the time about different things that we believed in…and talk about our perspectives.” When asked about how he currently uses the lessons learned in collegiate marching band, Jerry referred to his improved communication skills: “I think just being able to reach out to friends and colleagues and talk…we can sort of relate to each other about how we’re feeling and understand our
feelings.” Improved communication skills led to improved relationships for Jerry beyond the collegiate marching band setting.

Not all communication is verbal, and Jessica described how non-verbal communication skills were developed through her experiences in collegiate marching band. As a drum major, much of Jessica’s role involved communicating musical information with her hands while conducting. Jessica wanted the people on the field “to have the best possible experience that they can, and that [meant] being seen.” While conducting, she made sure to incorporate meaningful eye contact with as many individuals as possible. During performances, she found that she was able to communicate deeper emotional content through eye contact with the members on the field and heighten the performance energy on the field. Jessica described, “There’s been so many moments on the podium where I’ve just made eye contact with people and it has just upped the energy of their performance and my performance so much.” The heightened level of communication from the drum major on the podium to the members on the field often inspired greater levels of performance energy communicated to the audience in the stands. Jessica shared, “It’s energizing when you’re in front of one of those high school crowds and there’s literally high school kids crying…it’s exhilarating!”

Inclusion of Others. Multiple participants described how their experiences in collegiate marching band developed their capacity to create an inclusive and accepting environment that fostered the development of positive relationships. Rashida shared how collegiate marching band made her a more inclusive person and credited her first experiences in the collegiate marching band with instilling that value. She described, “I remember coming into the program for the first time, and you want to be included, and you want people to reach out to you and you want to be a part of thing.” As Rashida continued to participate in marching band,
she sought to “make sure that everyone is included, and to make sure that that’s a priority” for everyone involved.

Participants spent much of their time in collegiate marching band around other members of their instrument family, or “section.” Gabriel described the sense of responsibility that he felt as a section leader with regards to fostering an inclusive environment. Going into his junior year, Gabriel “was going to be responsible for the growth of [himself] and the growth of others” as a section leader for the first time. He felt immense responsibility to create an environment that allowed others to enjoy the experience the way that he had for his first two seasons. Gabriel referred to his junior season as the season where he grew the most due to the development of his section mates. He shared, “I feel like I was successful in creating positive relationships with everyone in my section and making them feel like this is a place, you know, where they belong.” Gabriel developed his capacity for inclusion by fostering an environment where his peers felt a feeling of acceptance and a sense of belonging.

*Building Trust.* Participants described how their experiences in collegiate marching band improved their capacity to build trust when forming relationships. Rashida described the power of emotions when building trusting relationships. She shared that emotions “help you bond with people much quicker, because anytime there’s emotion involved, especially sort of to the extremes, whether they’re good or bad, it brings people together.” Rashida went on to describe the importance of trust when building relationships in emotional environments. She shared how “[y]ou have to trust the people around you when you’re showing emotion.” When music is involved, “you feel things so much deeper” which requires added layers of trust in the people around you.
Building trust is essential to the formation of quality relationships in an emotionally charged environment such as collegiate marching band. Prior to becoming drum major in high school, Jessica was told by her peers that she wouldn’t succeed “because you just have to be too fake to people. I never understood that.” Jessica found that an authentic approach based on shared vulnerability lead to stronger relationships:

…just because one person might come up to you with this big problem or something that (air quotes) “can’t be solved” it might frustrate you, you might get super stressed, you might want to cry and break down, but if somebody else comes up to you two minutes later, that’s a completely new moment. It’s not being fake to them. You have to be vulnerable. You have to open up. But everybody deserves that 100%.

During performances, Jessica would find individuals on the field, make eye contact, and smile an authentic smile that communicated “WE are doing this, let’s throw down!” In Jessica’s words, “I’m there for them and they’re there for me and we’re doing this together.” Jessica found that investing in authentic individual relationships based on trust lead to a stronger team.

As a leader, Austin learned to build trusting relationships with the members of his section that led to strong interpersonal bonds. He described how members would “want to be a part of the team because they want you on their team because you’re going to make…other people feel good about what they’re doing.” When asked how he made his team feel good, Austin shared:

I made them feel it because it was genuine. It made them feel that I was someone that they could work with, could make them better, will make them better and want to make them better…You might have a member crying on a certain day or two members crying or after a show, and I enjoyed going over there and and talking with them and I felt like I
always was able to make them feel better about what was going on, whether it be marching band or outside.

Upon further reflection, Austin added that building trusting relationships is “something that you have to gain experience with…it’s not something that you’re born with.” Austin viewed the development of trust in his own relationships as strengthening the bonds within the band as a whole and having a significant impact on the quality of life within the collegiate marching band.

Like others, Janet embraced authenticity during her time in collegiate marching band and built relationships based on trust and shared vulnerability. During collegiate marching band, she felt comfortable “because everyone was openly making mistakes and people were owning up to it and people weren’t afraid to be whoever they were.” Outside of music activities, Janet found it difficult to be herself and shared that “if I am a genuine self, sometimes I scare people off a little bit and I put on this persona…when I’m around people that I’m not that comfortable with.” Since she “never really felt like [she] had to be that person that was pleasing everybody in band,” Janet was able to develop relationships based on trust and developed an awareness of her own tendencies which led to further interpersonal growth.

Participants described how interpersonal relationship competencies developed through their experiences in collegiate marching band. The environmental, temporal, and proximal conditions inherent to collegiate marching band helped participants develop positive relationships. Specifically, experiences in collegiate marching band fostered participants’ capacities to communicate effectively, create inclusive settings, and build trust with others. Participants also shared how they deployed intra- and interpersonal SEL capacities and competencies developed through collegiate marching band in their professional settings.

Findings are presented in the following section.
**Professional Deployment**

One of this study's distinguishing features was that participants were asked to reflect not only on their personal experiences in collegiate marching band, but also on their present professional jobs. Eight participants were employed at the time of our interview sessions in a variety of roles in education with a single, ninth participant employed as a market analyst for a mid-sized corporation. The interview protocol included questions that would allow participants to express how their unique marching band experiences influenced their pedagogical approach and support of students in their post-baccalaureate professional roles.

Participants described how they deployed the social and emotional lessons learned during collegiate marching band in their own professional settings. Multiple participants made broad comments about collegiate marching band’s impact on their careers as educators. Rashida, a high school band director, felt that her experiences in collegiate marching band “definitely impact[s] everything that I’m doing right now.” Rashida remembered “all of the experiences that I had” and shared that it was “very important to me to make sure that I’m continuing that for my students.” Jerry, a middle school choir and band director, described his ultimate goal as “mak(ing) an impact on [students] in their musical journeys and their appreciation for music, but to [also] use music as a tool to teach these [social and emotional] aspects.” Gabriel, an elementary music teacher, utilized “a lot of the approaches that we learned in college marching band” in his elementary classroom. Asked about when she used the social and emotional lessons learned from collegiate marching band in her classroom environment, Jessica, an elementary general music teacher, replied “I use them constantly – 24/7.”

Participants also reflected on how they deploy specific social and emotional competencies developed during their time in collegiate marching band in their professional
Responses were coded and curated based on the SEL capacity described by the participant. SEL capacities were then categorized into their related core competency (i.e., the capacity of goal setting relates to the core competency of self-awareness) and finally placed in either the intrapersonal (self-awareness and self-management) or interpersonal (social awareness and relationship skills) domain. This method of organization most closely mirrors the organization of the CASEL framework as well as the organization used earlier in this chapter.

**Intrapersonal Capacities.** Participants reported how they utilized specific capacities related to the intrapersonal domain that were cultivated during experiences in collegiate marching band in their professional environments. This section presents the capacities related to the intrapersonal domain and are organized based on the core competencies of self-awareness and self-management.

**Self-Awareness.** Several participants described how the development of capacities related to the core competency of self-awareness impacted their careers. The capacities most often discussed were goal setting, self-confidence, and growth-mindset.

A middle school choir and band director, Tyler, described how he uses goal setting and scaffolding in his teaching, a concept “that, especially as a leader in [Mid-Atlantic’s] marching band, we had to learn so much about.” The concept of scaffolding involves breaking longer-term goals or more complex skills into smaller, more achievable objectives. Tyler learned that “sometimes you really have to break things down for the students and you really have to break it down to the bare minimum” to be a successful teacher in an educational environment such as his middle school choir. Dividing long term goals into achievable short-term objectives is key to “build[ing] them back up and build[ing] upon what [students have] already learned.” Tyler added “that's definitely something that I learned through being a leader in the marching band.”
Jerry, a middle school music teacher, described how his experiences as a performer in collegiate marching band impacted his performance in his middle school music classroom. Even when confronted with new experiences and a resulting lack of confidence, Jerry “plays the role of a teacher with confidence.” Having the self-awareness to identify the need to present self-confidence in the classroom and the ability to “fake it until you make it” is a capacity developed through experiences as a performer in collegiate marching band. As such, when describing how he dealt with mistakes in the classroom in his postbaccalaureate career as a teacher, Jerry drew comparison with his on-field experiences during collegiate marching band:

Even in the moments that I may slip up or do something wrong in the classroom, it’s like playing that [2018] solo. If I cracked the top note, it's fine. It's just water under the bridge and we just keep going and try to improve for next time.

The engagement in consistent reflection and adjustment of practice was a capacity cultivated through experiences as a performer in collegiate marching band and allowed Jerry to demonstrate a positive example of growth-mindset for his students on a regular basis.

Janet, a middle school music teacher in New Jersey, credited experiences with collegiate marching band for her own mindset development. She described how marching band “has to be rough before it gets better…the fact that it is so much about growth and about getting better as a group…is very positive for a lot of people, myself included.” Janet made the development of growth-mindset a focal point of instruction in her classroom. When dealing with students in music class, she emphasized how “music is not about perfection, music is about becoming better than you were the day before.” Janet explained that, on the collegiate marching band field, her success was similarly based more on continuous progress than the performance product. In
Janet’s classroom, focus on progress over product placed each student in a situation where they could feel successful regardless of readiness or ability.

Throughout her experiences in marching band, Madison learned to “focus on growth as opposed to perfection.” As a high school special education teacher, Madison worked with individual students on self-evaluation and reflective practices. According to Madison “if you just beat [students] down or only focus on the positives there is no such thing as growth, it's just stamina.” Madison reported that during success coaching sessions with students, she emphasized growth over perfection and credited collegiate marching band with instilling the approach of “always be better than you were the day before. Not necessarily to be the best… You always want to look at those ‘grows and grows’ [to help students improve]” Not only did Madison find that her growth-oriented approach created a more positive and rewarding atmosphere for her students, she continued to use their reflective practices as a means to encourage her own growth as an educator. She explained, “I need to grow as a teacher, and maybe I need to focus on more things for them versus focusing on something that they completely understand.” Continued focus on growth placed Madison and her students on an upward trajectory towards becoming the best versions of themselves.

Aaron, now a high school band director, learned the importance of failure as part of the growth process during his time in the marching arts. For Aaron, failure is “a fascinating moment…rather than like a ‘well crap that happened,’ it's more being able to laugh at yourself, being able to understand that there's a longer goal, there is a process.” Aaron described how he and his students developed a mutual understanding of mistakes as an integral part of the educational process:
…trusting the process is the growth mindset that I embrace every single day. As band directors, we talk about you know, like, I want to hear the loud note, or I want to hear the wrong notes the loudest…I completely embraced that with myself and with my students. I think even in the past few years that I've had with [specific high school band name], the kids laugh at themselves when they miss a note…and they will all laugh about it. It’s like we have an understanding here…we've established in this relationship that like, it's totally okay to make those mistakes.

According to Aaron, if growth is a goal than “you have to continue failing… you have to trust that growing from them is more important than anything in that moment.” For Aaron and his students, growth was impossible without failure.

Growth-mindset is applicable beyond the world of education. Upon his hiring as a market analyst, Austin felt a lack of “confidence in the professional world because it was so different from everything else I had ever experienced.” Austin expressed how his classes in college taught him “a lot of great skills and techniques and things like that…but I think for the specific, like, roles themselves and adjusting to the professional world…they couldn't be more polar opposites.” He described situations in his job where he is confronted with new and complex tasks and stated “you're going to make mistakes at first. And you're not going to know what the heck you're doing…you're going to be like ‘Wow, how the heck am I supposed to do this?’” Austin then explained how his mindset developed during his time in collegiate marching band helped him adjust to his work environment:

I know I run into that all the time at work… I just remember being on the field standing there and eventually getting it and, after a couple times I got better at it, I figured it out, I got my feet under me. And just you move forward from there, and you just get better and
better and better with it over time until eventually it's something that you just don't have to think about.

Austin felt as though the growth-mindset developed during his days at MAU served as a life-

lesson with benefits beyond the collegiate marching band field.

**Self-Management.** Several participants described how capacities related to the competency of self-management developed during their collegiate marching band experience were deployed in their professional environments. The capacities most often discussed were emotional regulation and accountability.

As a member of collegiate marching band, Rashida was inspired by individuals that were able to regulate their own emotions and impact their environment in a positive way. As a high school band director herself, Rashida looked to students with similar energy. She explained, “I have those student leaders that have just amazing attitudes and that I know I can look to when something is not going well or when circumstances aren't ideal.” Rashida learned how to rely on those students to help regulate the rehearsal environment. She elaborated, “In those kinds of situations there's certain people that you look to that you know can regulate the emotion, they can have that attitude.” When placing students in leadership positions, she often looked to students with natural energy as “they just have that charisma that people around them are going to follow.”

Rashida found that being put in leadership positions as a marching band member had a positive impact on her self-management as it led to heightened motivation and greater investment in her own program. She said, “I just always made myself more invested, the more ownership that I had in the program, the more invested, the harder I was going to work for that program.” As a marching band director, Rashida developed a leadership training program
designed to inspire students to take more ownership in her high school band program. “Student leadership was a big focus for me,” she stated. She went on to add that “a lot of that came from the experiences that I had… and what I learned from having students that got to take a little more ownership in the program.” Rashida recalled her own experiences and realized that effective leadership programming could include “not just the student leadership, but how can I get all students to take ownership of everything they're doing?” Rashida planned to continue developing programming that encouraged the development of self-management capabilities in each of her high school band students.

Jessica credited marching band with helping her learn to manage her emotions. As a first-year teacher, she found herself in frustrating environments. Jessica expressed “even now with teaching, there's things that I lose patience with, or get frustrated with, and I just have to take a second to think about it.” Jessica described how she relied on the lessons learned in collegiate marching band to scaffold the process and regulate her emotions, controlling her communication “one sentence at a time…and just go step by step. That is a big way that marching band has just helped with my emotions.” Modeling this regulation helped to facilitate a constructive learning environment and heightened the probability of her students learning to control their own emotions.

In his role as a middle school music teacher, Tyler utilized the ability to manage his own emotions that he learned in collegiate marching band on a daily basis. According to Tyler, the marching arts instilled “that idea of ‘I just have to understand that I might be having a bad day and I might be having a lot of things going on in my life, but I have a job to do.’” As an educator, Tyler recognized the importance of applying those lessons and shared that “I have students to
teach, and I have lives to impact. I have to put myself outside of that situation in order to just make it to the end of the day.”

As an addition to the intrapersonal competencies described above, several participants recounted how their experiences in collegiate marching band impacted how they deployed their interpersonal competencies and related capacities in a professional setting. Results are presented in the following section.

**Interpersonal Capacities.** Participants reported how they utilized specific capacities related to the interpersonal SEL domain that were cultivated during experiences in collegiate marching band in their professional environments. Responses in the intrapersonal domain are presented below and are organized based on the core SEL competencies of social awareness and relationship skills.

**Social Awareness.** Tyler described how his experiences in collegiate marching band impacted his understanding of accommodations with his students. Tyler credited his experiences in collegiate marching band with heightening his awareness of the needs of others. According to Tyler, experiences in marching band “taught me [individual] accommodations, really…while the rest of the section is doing okay, there's this one member of the section that I have to make sure that they have that extra assistance in order to succeed.” Tyler’s experiences in collegiate marching band increased his understanding of the need to make appropriate accommodations to meet the needs of all learners, not just the majority.

Janet, a middle school music teacher, credited her growth in social awareness to her experiences in collegiate marching band. She described how her empathic viewpoint benefited the students in her middle school music classroom:
I can usually recognize pretty quickly when a [student is] in a crisis or just like, internally struggling. One of my fifth graders really struggles. Like, he's really confident person but his family's full of perfectionists and he struggles when he's not perfect. Music isn't perfect, especially when you're learning an instrument. And it really frustrates him very quickly and then he'll start throwing things around the room…as class went on, I spent 15 minutes just talking to him about my personal experiences. I think that was something I really missed growing up was learning about my teachers and learning that they're humans, too, and that some of those experiences that I'm feeling don't exist in a vacuum and other people have experienced them. And I wish someone would have been like that to me sooner.

By demonstrating empathy, Janet connected with her students on a deeper level and formed stronger relationships in the classroom.

**Relationship Skills.** Multiple participants described how collegiate marching band experiences impacted their ability to develop relationship skills in their professional environment. Austin described how he used the interpersonal skills he developed in collegiate marching band to cultivate relationships with his co-workers. Upon starting his post-graduation job as a market analyst, Austin found that he was “shellshocked” with the new environment and “just trying to get to the end of the day.” Once he got his bearings, Austin found himself “engaging more with coworkers” and “making sure they know [his] personality.” He credited collegiate marching band with equipping him with the relationship skills necessary to develop connections that have allowed him to find feel comfortable at his place of employment.

As an elementary general music teacher, Jessica sought to develop relationships with all stakeholders in her school community, including over 500 students, dozens of teachers and
building-level administrators, and her district-wide music team. Jessica described the challenge as “rough sometimes - I mean, that's a lot of people. I'm focusing on the relationships right now [because] that's something that I've been really working on, especially with the students.” In collegiate marching band, she learned how strong relationships lead to higher levels of investment. In Jessica’s words, “If I'm going to impact the students, I need to gain their trust, gain their respect, and show them that I am worth their time, that they should be investing time in me because they are worthy of that.”

Rashida, a high school band director, emphasized the importance of relationship development in her own marching band experiences and how she encouraged her own students to “get together with their sections outside of rehearsal and build those relationships, just because I know how important the connections were to me when I was in marching bands.” While she understood her role as musical leader for the school community, she shared that her priority was making sure that “the students are getting that social aspect and are learning how to build relationships.” Rashida hoped that an emphasis on relationship skills would help her students “learn to become inclusive by get[ting] along with everybody in their sections and not just their best friend.” She credited her own experiences in collegiate marching band as her inspiration for developing such an inclusive environment for her students:

   I am constantly telling my upperclassmen like, the second you see that freshman you have to go over to that you have to start building these connections. All of that I learned, and the fact that I do that now, came from being in college and being that freshman that wanted to be included and that wanted people to reach out to them…Every single day I'm trying to instill that in the students. I'm trying to find ways to help them develop their
relationships to become leaders to become inclusive good people and just to develop that character. That, I think, developed in large part due to marching band.

When describing the application of SEL capacities in their professional settings, participants reflected primarily on intrapersonal competencies. This could be, in part, due to how they viewed the primary importance of their professional role as developing the intrapersonal skills of their students with the deployment of interpersonal competencies (social awareness and relationship skills) as inherent to their positions and, therefore, not worthy of discussion.

**Summary**

Study participants shared how their experiences in collegiate marching band impacted social and emotional growth in the intra- and interpersonal domains and related competencies. Participants described heightened levels of intrapersonal self-awareness and noted development in the related capacities of self-confidence and growth-mindset. Collegiate marching band fostered participants’ self-management competence, including increased capacities to goal set, persevere, regulate emotions, and manage time. Participants described how their experiences in collegiate marching band fostered the interpersonal competency of social awareness and shared how experiences heightened empathic capacities. The ecological, temporal, and proximal conditions inherent to collegiate marching band led participants to develop positive relationships and improve their capacities to communicate effectively, create inclusive settings, and build trust with others. Finally, participants shared how they deployed social and emotional competencies fostered through collegiate marching band participation in their professional environment and described positive intra- and interpersonal impact in the workplace. The final chapter will present interpretation, discussion, and implications related to study findings.
Chapter 5

This is year three for me now. I've been teaching in person, just as much as I've been teaching virtually. I actually teach an SEL course...But I don't do a single thing in the stupid packet that they give me...If you want true SEL classes and true SEL learning just give them all a goddamn music class. That's all you need to do. Because I don't think a single thing in music does not have to deal with SEL, not a single thing. All of it is SEL. They've been striving to do the SEL they're like “yeah we should do SEL in the middle school and SEL in the elementary schools, so it trickles up to our high school” which is dealing with really systemic problems behavioral issues and violence. So all right, have you tried giving them a music class in middle school? Do they have a general music class in middle school?...So, in terms of my professional practice I educate my SEL students, the way I would any of my bands, specifically a marching band. The activities we do are about the collective struggle, the activities we do are about putting on a performance, the activities we do are about introducing new ideas and thinking on the fly. Things that I know I learned from being in a marching band. Why waste your time on buying a packet of silly little activities that these especially high school kids are not going to be able to relate to? Because they're made by some focus group in a boardroom? I think that if they're able to sit down and play music and read music with each other in a classroom that's as close to social-emotional learning as you can get.

The final chapter of this research study summarizes and interprets findings previously presented in Chapter 4. This chapter is presented in four sections. The first section presents a summary that outlines summative findings related to the questions guiding this research. The second section describes the relationship between research findings and the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2. A third section presents a discussion related to said findings
followed by a section outlining the implications for future research, policy, and practice. The chapter concludes with a summation of this research study.

Summary of Study

This study aimed to determine how participation in collegiate marching band impacted the social and emotional development of its alumni. Specifically, this study examined how former marching band members (now alumni) developed in the intra- and interpersonal SEL domains. Semi-structured hour-long interviews with Mid-Atlantic University Marching Band alumni who graduated from Mid-Atlantic University between 2019 and 2021 explored the impact of marching in a nationally recognized collegiate marching band on their social and emotional development. Participants provided valuable perspectives regarding the marching band’s impact on their lives after graduating from Mid-Atlantic University and described how they drew on those experiences in their everyday lives. Three research questions guided this study, and a summary of results related to each question is presented below.

The first research question asked, “In what ways did collegiate marching band participation facilitate the social and emotional competencies of alumni who are 1-3 years removed from the program?” Participants revealed how their involvement in a collegiate marching band helped build their social and emotional competencies and capacities in the intrapersonal SEL domain. Interview data curation and coding revealed two critical capacities related to the competency of self-awareness: Self-confidence and growth-mindset development. Additionally, data revealed four significant capacities associated with the competency of self-management: Goal setting, perseverance, emotional regulation, and time management. These competencies, capacities, and related factors connected to the intrapersonal SEL domain are organized and presented in Table 2 below.
Study participants indicated how membership in a collegiate marching band helped build their social and emotional competencies and capabilities in the interpersonal SEL domain. The coding and curation of interview data revealed empathy as the primary capacity associated with the social awareness competency. The collegiate marching band setting increased members’ understanding of alternative worldviews and influenced their empathetic development. Each of the nine participants discussed how their experiences in collegiate marching band aided in developing the relationship skills competency. The ecological circumstances prevalent in the collegiate marching band assisted in developing three capacities related to relationship skills: Effective communication, inclusion, and trust-building. Relationship skills developed through experiences in a collegiate marching band helped participants create meaningful bonds that extended beyond their undergraduate careers. These competencies, capacities, and related factors connected to the interpersonal SEL domain are organized and presented in Table 3 below.
Table 3

*Interpersonal Competencies, Capacities, and Related Factors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Related Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social awareness (SoA)</td>
<td>Empathic development (em)</td>
<td>New perspectives, expanded worldview, evolution of role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship skills (RS)</td>
<td>Effective communication (ec)</td>
<td>Teamwork, non-verbal skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion (in)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of belonging, shared goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust-building (tb)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shared vulnerability, authenticity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second research question asked, “How did specific experiences in collegiate marching band impact SEL competencies related to the intra- and interpersonal domains for these alumni?” Participants found that experiences common to most collegiate marching bands generated high-yield social and emotional growth experiences in both the intra- and interpersonal domains and across multiple competencies. Ecological conditions associated with transition to higher education helped heighten intra- and interpersonal awareness, build self-management capacities, and strengthen relationship skills in participants. Proximity to peers encouraged prosocial interactions outside of the rehearsal and performance environment that further increased the levels of social and emotional growth. Engagement in preseason training camp positively impacted the college transition and related social and emotional development. Immersion in a regular rehearsal environment that requires macro- and micro-goal setting, scaffolding, self-reflection, and interpersonal relationship-building with students from different communities and differing worldviews positively impacted the development of heightened social and emotional capacities of those interviewed. Emotional performance experiences in front of appreciative audiences helped develop intrapersonal skills and competencies and strengthened...
interpersonal relationships initially forged on the practice field. These findings are summarized and presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4**

**Impactful Experiences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Impactful Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>SeA</td>
<td>sc, gm</td>
<td>Transition, training camp, rehearsals, performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SM</td>
<td>gs, p, er, tm</td>
<td>Transition, training camp, rehearsals, performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>SoA</td>
<td>em</td>
<td>Transition, training camp, rehearsals, performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RS</td>
<td>ec, in, tb</td>
<td>Transition, training camp, rehearsals, performances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final research question inquired, “How do recent alumni utilize the social and emotional competencies developed in collegiate marching band in their profession?” All participants discussed how they deployed the social and emotional competencies and capacities acquired throughout their collegiate marching band experiences in their respective professional settings. Enhanced intrapersonal capacities related to growth mindset and emotional regulation along with strengthened interpersonal competencies of empathy and relationship-building established by collegiate marching band experiences equipped participants with the social and emotional competence to successfully navigate their early professional careers.

**Application of Theoretical Framework**

In Chapter 2, I presented the theoretical framework used to guide this research. Grounded in a constructivist paradigm, the framework combines the work of Kegan (1982), Gardner (1983), Goleman (1995), Perry (1962), and Comer (1988) to form the foundations upon which this study was conducted. Overall, data reported by study participants indicated growth in the intra- and interpersonal domains and related social and emotional competencies due to their
experiences in collegiate marching band. This section briefly summarizes the authors’ work mentioned above and describes how study data compares with these theories.

Kegan (1982) presented a sequence of five developmental modes of knowing that included evolutions of meaning, fluctuations in stability, and the ongoing reconstruction of individuals and their surroundings. Based on the interview data, participants typically entered their undergraduate careers in Order 3 of Kegan’s levels of consciousness (“socialized mind”). Participants indicated an awareness of their feelings and their ability to commit to communities of others, however their interview data showed that they continued to rely on others in order to function within the organization and be accepted by others. Over time, participants reported experiencing heightened capacities of self-confidence, emotional regulation, and perseverance that indicated movement into Order 4 of Kegan’s levels of consciousness (“self-authoring mind”).

Gardner’s multiple intelligences theory (1983) stated that a complete understanding of human cognitive capabilities emerges when spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligence are considered. Gardner theorized that humans differ in the strengths and weaknesses of their profiles due in part to experiential reasons (Gardner, 1983). Learning about oneself requires the application of lessons learned via observation of others’ activities, while learning about others involves the application of information obtained through self-examination (Gardner, 1983). Participant data aligned with Gardner’s theory. Participant growth in the intrapersonal domain related to interpersonal experiences. Likewise, interpersonal development occurred due to growth in the intrapersonal domain. As such, immersion in the prosocial cultural environment of collegiate marching band promoted interactions that helped codify participants’ sense of self.
Goleman’s emotional intelligence (EI) theory referred to the capability to effectively address oneself and others, connect to and manage emotions, and identify the motivations that lead to human impulses (Goleman, 1995). According to EI, individuals learn and grow as emotionally intelligent beings throughout their lifetimes (Goleman, 1995). Study participants indicated that the social and emotional development related to collegiate marching band participation positively impacted their emotional intelligence in the intra- and interpersonal domains and related competencies. Additionally, participants described how they continued to use their heightened SEL capacities in their post-baccalaureate professional settings. Findings confirm Goleman’s theory that emotional intelligence grows and evolves over one’s lifetime.

Perry’s (1968) intellectual and ethical development theory showed how students' perspectives evolve. Patton et al. (2016) suggested that the nine positions of Perry’s theory can be simplified into three categories that can help educators understand and interact positively with college-aged students. Study findings indicate that collegiate marching band had a significant impact on the evolution of participants’ perspectives. Participant data described increased capacities of growth-mindset and empathic viewpoint that progressed them from dualism (viewing elements in their world as good-bad, right-wrong, etc.) to multiplicity (understanding the validity of diverse viewpoints) and even to the final stage of relativism (accepting the importance of context when evaluating solutions to problems) in Perry’s scheme.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) evolved from research on emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995) and multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983), but expanded on both concepts to encompass prosocial conduct as a form of mental health intelligence based on the work of James Comer (1988). Participant responses were categorized in the domains and competencies of the CASEL framework. Results in Chapter 4 were presented primarily according to the CASEL
framework which provided a method of organization that closely aligned with participant responses. Data indicated heightened levels of consciousness (Kegan, 1982), increased personal intelligence (Gardner, 1983), growth in emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995), and developed intellectual and ethical perspectives (Perry, 1968) in study participants due to their experiences in collegiate marching band.

**Discussion of Results**

While a summary of study findings related to each research question has been presented earlier in this chapter, additional insights can be gained when looking across the data. This section places findings related to the research questions into conversation with one another to illuminate further understanding related to collegiate marching band’s impact on SEL development. This section is presented in three sections: transition support, leadership development, and lasting impact.

**Transition Support**

Experiences in collegiate marching band positively impacted participants’ transitions to higher education. Initial experiences in collegiate marching band affected participants in several important ways with preseason training camp serving as a significant experience with regards to social and emotional development. During the first days of training camp, the formation of interpersonal relationships helped participants develop and strengthen self-awareness and self-management while finding a sense of belonging at their new institution. Interactions helped strengthen veteran leaders’ goal setting, scaffolding, emotional regulation, communication, and empathic capacities. Educational experiences led by student leaders helped secure the organization's performance goals and, perhaps more importantly, communicated the program standards, norms, and traditions that led to heightened levels of self-management and self- and
social awareness in all participants. Based on this data, it's plausible to conclude that immersion in a new environment and forming relationships with people from other backgrounds at the outset of the collegiate marching band experience were meaningful experiences that led to heightened levels of intra- and interpersonal competence and aided with the transition process.

**Leadership Development**

Leadership experiences in collegiate marching band played an important role in participants’ SEL development. As student leaders, participants were charged with instructing their younger peers and developed heightened goal setting, scaffolding, emotional regulation, communication, and relationship-building capacities. Having engaged in the transition process themselves as first-year members, participants reflected on their own experiences when developing and deploying educational content for their younger peers as student leaders. Austin remembered how he felt when holding his drill chart upside down during his first training camp experiences and was able to empathize and build strong interpersonal connections with his younger and less-experienced section mates as they struggled to adapt to collegiate marching band. While he felt a sense of belonging and began to build self-confidence as a first-year member, Tyler didn’t truly understand how to communicate and empathize with others from different backgrounds until he became a section leader and realized the importance of perspective-taking and empathy. Jessica learned to understand the importance of worldview as a drum major in collegiate marching band and began to assume the lenses of others while conducting from the podium and connecting with on-field performers. These perspective shifts positively impacted participants’ goal setting, self-confidence, motivation, and empathic capacities.

**Lasting Impact Beyond the College Years**
Participants reported that the SEL competencies and capacities developed through collegiate marching band participation had a lasting impact on participants. Participants indicated that many of the relationships formed during their time in collegiate marching band led to long-lasting friendships that extended well beyond their careers as undergraduate students.

Participants described how the social and emotional development experienced through collegiate marching band taught them valuable lessons that they continued to call upon in their professional lives. All participants described the deployment of competencies developed through collegiate marching band in their professional settings. Heightened intrapersonal capacities of growth mindset and emotional regulation along with the interpersonal competencies of empathy and relationship building developed through collegiate marching band experiences provided participants with the ability to successfully navigate their early careers. Jerry described how his experiences as a performer informed his self-confidence as a teacher while Janet and Madison emphasized how they related growth mindset to her students and focuses on progress over product. Jessica and Rashida had difficulty compartmentalizing aspects of their marching band experiences and opted to describe collegiate marching band’s influence in more universal terms that indicated the impact of lessons learned as more ubiquitous in nature. Aaron made it clear that the lessons learned through his marching arts experiences are omnipresent in his instruction and pedagogical philosophy, including an SEL course that he instructs as part of his teaching responsibilities.

Implications

This research study examined the impact of collegiate marching band on the intra- and interpersonal domains of social and emotional development, both during the undergraduate years and the few years post-graduation. The study found that experiences in collegiate marching band
led to heightened levels of SEL competency and capacity in participants. This section outlines the implications of this study for future research, policy, and practice.

**Research**

While this qualitative research study included semi-structured interviews with nine alumni that graduated from a single Division II institution (Mid-Atlantic University), three study participants transferred to MAU from larger Division I programs and referenced their prior experiences at various points throughout the interview process. Additional research involving samples from multiple institutions of varying size and geographic location would help highlight the impact of those variables on the SEL development of collegiate marching band members.

All nine participants in this research study were 1-3 years removed from their participation in collegiate marching band and were able to remember their experiences with specificity and relate the impact of their experiences to the early stages of their professional careers. Future longitudinal research involving alumni further removed from their collegiate marching band experiences would illuminate professional impact over a more extended period. Additionally, research involving current members of collegiate marching bands may help illustrate the immediate impact of specific experiences on social and emotional development.

Although this research study focused on the impact of marching band at the collegiate level on social and emotional development, participants referenced how earlier experiences in high school marching band and ancillary experiences in drum corps, winter guard, and string bands also impacted their intra- and interpersonal growth. Future research focusing on experiences in these different areas of the marching arts would help foster an increased understanding of how the unique ecological conditions and nuanced approaches related to these varied contexts impact SEL development. It is crucial to continue research along this line of
inquiry to raise awareness of the extramusical value associated with participation in marching arts programs which could increase support and involvement for organizations at all levels.

**Policy**

There are also meaningful implications for policy based on study findings, especially in curriculum development at both secondary and post-secondary levels of education. Eight of the nine participants in this research study were employed as public-school educators at the time of their interview. All eight participants indicated that social and emotional learning was a focal point in their school community. Five participants described a systematic deployment of SEL programming during the school day. While the incorporation of SEL programming in school systems demonstrates acknowledgment by educational stakeholders that social and emotional development is essential, their deployment in school systems was described by study participants as an added element of the school day, not as an initiative that encourages the embedding of educational activities that develop capacities and competencies within existing curricula.

Programs that naturally embed SEL currently exist in school systems, and students may reap similar benefits indicated by this research that focused on collegiate marching band participation if similar programming is supported at the high school level.

Experiences in collegiate marching band led to long-term growth in the intra- and interpersonal SEL domains and related competencies for participants. With that said, several participants indicated that the immersive and time-intensive experience that ultimately led to growth in multiple areas also served as a significant challenge to overcome throughout their undergraduate careers. College band directors should be cognizant of their students' myriad challenges when scheduling marching band activities, particularly for first-year members navigating the transition to higher education.
Participants described how SEL is naturally embedded within the practices and ecological conditions commonly found in collegiate marching band. The practice of learning a new performance skill developed the SEL capacities of self-confidence, perseverance, goal setting, and emotional management. Likewise, working with peer leaders led to interpersonal growth related to the capacities of empathy, communication skills, and trust-building. As such, developing a marching arts curriculum that emphasizes peer teaching, proactive goal setting, and consistent self-reflection could strengthen the social and emotional development of members and amplify the extramusical impact of marching arts participation. The development of a model curriculum that connects SEL competencies with existing practices is a logical step that will help positively impact marching band directors and their students at all educational levels.

Participants described how their participation in collegiate marching band increased their sense of belonging and strengthened their connection to the school community. Higher education staff and administration should consider how these improved connections to the institution may impact student retention while generating an affinity towards the institution that could heighten involvement and support as students become alumni. Consideration in this area may lead to the allocation of additional resources to collegiate marching band programs. Scholarships that encourage additional students to participate in college marching bands might be a wise investment for institutions of higher education hoping to increase recruitment, retention, and alumni engagement. Moreover, scholarships might replace the income generated through part-time employment and allow students experiencing financial stress to benefit from both the short- and long-term social and emotional benefits of collegiate marching band participation.

Practice
Findings from this study have implications for future practice. Specifically, participants experienced significant growth during their transition to higher education with preseason training camp serving as a particularly impactful experience with regards to developing their social and emotional capacities. These findings suggest that increased emphasis on formative onboarding experiences by educators and program leaders could lead to further social and emotional development. The intentional deployment of mentorship programming that engages new members and veteran members during training camp experiences may heighten and hasten SEL growth for new students as they enter their collegiate careers.

Additionally, the symbiotic relationship between veteran leadership and first-year members has an increasingly positive impact on program culture and collegiate marching band members' social and emotional development. In addition to developing goal setting, scaffolding, and communication capacities when providing educational support to younger members, student leaders possess the experiences necessary to look at the organization through various lenses and strengthen their empathic viewpoint. Collegiate marching band directors should consider increasing the emphasis on the role of all veteran members as leaders within the organization in order to increase the social and emotional development of members without a leadership title.

Conclusion

Providing undergraduate students with opportunities to participate in challenging and collaborative endeavors such as those found in collegiate marching bands should be a fundamental goal of higher education. While participation in the college marching band does not guarantee that students will develop the range of skills associated with individual and ensemble music participation, the college marching band experience provides students with unique
opportunities for social and emotional development that may not be available elsewhere during their undergraduate experience.

This study aimed to determine the impact of participation in collegiate marching band on the social and emotional development of alumni. This study used a qualitative case study methodology and included semi-structured hour-long interviews with nine alumni of Mid-Atlantic University. Participants revealed the impact of participation in a nationally recognized collegiate marching band on their intra- and interpersonal development. Alumni who are 1-3 years removed from participation in the Mid-Atlantic University Marching Band discussed how their involvement impacted social and emotional competencies and related capacities and shared their perspectives on how the SEL benefits of collegiate marching band membership transferred to their post-graduate lives.

Participants shared that immersion in the collegiate environment and the creation of relationships with people from diverse backgrounds at the beginning of the college marching band experience heightened intra- and interpersonal competence and assisted with the transition to higher education. Leadership experiences in collegiate marching band had a crucial influence on participants’ SEL development. The intra- and interpersonal competencies and capacities developed by collegiate marching band engagement had an enduring impact on participants on and off the field. Participants also highlighted how the social and emotional growth experienced via collegiate marching band offered them significant skills that they continued to depend upon in their professional lives.

While this study examined the impact of collegiate marching band on social and emotional development, future research examining experiences in different areas of the marching arts would aid in the development of a better understanding of how the specific ecological
circumstances and nuanced techniques associated with these diverse environments affect SEL development. When planning and implementing marching band activities, college band directors should keep in mind the challenges that their students face, particularly first-year members negotiating the transition to higher education. Consideration from higher education officials may result in heightened resource allocation to collegiate marching band programs, including prospective scholarship options to encourage more students to participate and benefit from the social and emotional advantages. The deliberate deployment of mentoring programming that includes new and experienced members throughout training camp experiences would heighten and accelerate SEL growth for new students as they begin their collegiate careers. Increased focus on the role of all experienced members as leaders within the organization may help all individuals enhance their social and emotional skills.
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Appendix A
Informed Consent and Assent Form(s)

Project Title: Social and Emotional Learning in Marching Band

Investigator(s): Adam Gumble

Project Overview:

Participation in this research project is voluntary and is being conducted by Adam Gumble as part of his Doctoral Dissertation to determine how participation in collegiate marching band impacts the social and emotional development of its members. If selected, your participation will take approximately one hour to engage in an interview with Professor Gumble.

The research project is being conducted by Adam Gumble as part of his Doctoral Dissertation to examine how members’ intra- and interpersonal SEL competencies are affected by experiences in a nationally-recognized university marching band. If you would like to take part, Mid-Atlantic University requires that you agree and sign this consent form.

You may ask Adam Gumble any questions to help you understand this study. If you don’t want to be a part of this study, it won’t affect any of your studies from Mid-Atlantic University. If you choose to be a part of this study, you have the right to change your mind and stop being a part of the study at any time.

1. **What is the purpose of this study?**

   The purpose of this study is to determine how participation in collegiate marching band impacts the social and emotional development of its members. Specifically, this study will examine how members’ intra- and interpersonal SEL competencies are affected by experiences in collegiate marching band.

2. **If you decide to be a part of this study, you will be asked to do the following:**

   Participate in one hourlong interview (if selected)

3. **Are there any experimental medical treatments?**

   No

4. **Is there any risk to me?**

   The research presents minimal risk to selected participants. Participants will experience the loss of time when completing the interest form (approximately 3-5 minutes), completing the Qualtrics Survey (approximately 10-15 minutes), and conducting the hourlong interview. During interviews, participants may experience slight discomfort or anxiety when asked to
answer questions regarding their previous experiences. Interview participants may stop the interview at any point for any reason. The researcher will also take the time to clarify the confidential nature of the information that is shared as well as the steps being taken place to keep information secure in password-protected data centers.

5. **Is there any benefit to me?**

While there is no direct financial benefit, participants may enjoy reflecting on their experiences as a marching band member and its extramusical impact on their life.

6. **How will you protect my privacy?**

Interviews will be recorded via audio recorder (if in-person) or Zoom (if online) and stored on a password protected computer.

Your records will be private. Only Adam Gumble, Dr. Orkideh Mohajeri (Faculty Advisor) and the IRB will have access to your name and responses.

Your name will **not** be used in any reports.

Records will be stored: Password Protected File/Computer

Records will be destroyed Three Years After Study Completion

7. **Do I get paid to take part in this study?**

No

8. **Who do I contact in case of research related injury?**

For any questions with this study, contact:

- **Primary Investigator:** Adam Gumble at [phone number] or agumble@[mau].edu
- **Faculty Sponsor:** Dr. Orkideh Mohajeri at [phone number] or omohajeri@[mau].edu

9. **What will you do with my Identifiable Information?**

Identifiers might be removed from the identifiable private information and after removal, the information may be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent from you or the legally authorized representative.

For any questions about your rights in this research study, contact the ORSP at [phone number].
I, _________________________________ (your name), have read this form and I understand the statements in this form. I know that if I am uncomfortable with this study, I can stop at any time. I know that it is not possible to know all possible risks in a study, and I think that reasonable safety measures have been taken to decrease any risk.

______________________________Subject/Participant Signature       Date:________________

______________________________Witness Signature                  Date:________________
Appendix B

Recruitment Emails

B.1. Alumni Recruitment Email
Dear Recent [MAU Marching Band] Alums –

Greetings! I am excited to invite you to participate in a research study that examines the social and emotional impact of participating in marching band! Alumni who are 1-3 years removed from the program have had experiences recent enough to be able to recount them with specificity but have also had time away from the activity to reflect on the impact of their participation. Recent alumni will provide insight into how the social and emotional benefits of collegiate marching band participation are transferred to post-graduate life experiences. The study is being conducted by myself and would involve the following:

- Hourlong interview with Professor Gumble at a mutually agreed-upon time and location (in-person or via Zoom). The interview will include questions about how your experiences in marching band have impacted your social and emotional development.

Research in this area will provide insight regarding the impact of post-secondary marching band participation on the social and emotional development of young adults and provide an advocacy tool for collegiate marching bands and related organizations to promote the extra-musical benefits of participation. Additionally, the resulting data will aid in the creation of a marching arts SEL curriculum that could serve as a tool that educators across the country can integrate into their own programs to foster social and emotional growth in their band members.

Please indicate your interest in participation by completing the interest form at the following URL. Should you be selected to participate, you will receive an additional email with more information. If there are any questions or concerns with this research, you may contact agumble@[mau].edu.

Thank you for your consideration!
Professor Gumble

B.2. Alumni Recruitment Email Follow-up
Dear Recent [MAU Marching Band] Alums –

Greetings! This email is a follow-up to my previous correspondence with regards to a research study that I am conducting on the social and emotional impact of collegiate marching band participation - I am hopeful that you’ll consider participating!

Alumni who are 1-3 years removed from the program have had experiences recent enough to be able to recount them with specificity but have also had time away from the activity to reflect on the impact of their participation. Recent alumni will provide insight into how the social and emotional benefits of collegiate marching band participation are transferred to post-graduate life experiences. The study is being conducted by myself and would involve the following:

- Hourlong interview with Professor Gumble at a mutually agreed-upon time and location (in-person or via Zoom). The interview will include questions about how your experiences in marching band have impacted your social and emotional development.

Research in this area will provide insight regarding the impact of post-secondary marching band participation on the social and emotional development of young adults and provide an advocacy tool for collegiate marching bands and related organizations to promote the extra-musical benefits of participation. Additionally, the resulting data will aid in the creation of a marching arts SEL curriculum that could serve as a tool that educators across the country can integrate into their own programs to foster social and emotional growth in their band members.
Please indicate your interest in participation by completing the interest form at the following URL. Should you be selected to participate, you will receive an additional email with more information. If there are any questions or concerns with this research, you may contact agumble@mau.edu.

Thank you for your consideration!
Professor Gumble

B.3. Qualtrics Survey Response (Participant Selection)
Thank you for your interest in participating in my research study regarding the social and emotional impact of collegiate marching band participation – YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE! Please complete the following:

- Qualtrics Survey: includes Informed Consent and Demographic Information.
- Email Professor Gumble (agumble@mau.edu) with your preferred days/times that may work for an hourlong interview. Please include your modality preference (in-person or Zoom) and feel free to include specific date(s) that may work best for you!

I look forward to hearing from you!
Professor Gumble

B.4. Qualtrics Survey Response (Non-Participant)
Thank you for your interest in participating in my research study regarding the social and emotional impact of collegiate marching band participation. While you have not been selected as a participant at this time, I greatly appreciate your willingness to engage in this research and will look to include you in future studies with regards to this topic. Should any selected participants be unable to fulfill their commitment for any reason, I will reach out with additional information.

Thank you!
Professor Gumble
Appendix C

Research Instruments – Interview Route

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself, where you grew up, how you came to [Mid-Atlantic University], and your background in the marching arts.
   1.1. (If not addressed in Q1) How did you get into marching band?

2. Social and emotional learning is often divided into 5 domains. I’ve listed them out on this piece of paper. Let’s talk through each one. (Give quarter page handout to participant).
   2.1. How have your experiences in marching band impacted your ability to persevere to achieve long-term goals? (Self-Management > Grit).
       Can you think of a concrete experience that you had?
   2.2. How have your experiences in marching band affected your mindset? (Self-Awareness > Growth-Mindset)
       Can you think of a concrete experience that you had?
   2.3. How have your experiences in marching band impacted your ability to manage your emotions in different circumstances? (Self-Management – Self-Management).
       Can you think of a concrete experience?
   2.4. How have your experiences in marching band impacted your ability to consider the perspectives of others and empathize with them? (Social Awareness).
       Can you think of a concrete experience?
   2.5. How have your experiences in marching band impacted your self-confidence? (Self-Awareness > Self-Efficacy).
       Can you think of a concrete experience?
   2.6. How have your experiences in marching band impacted your ability to manage your relationships? (Relationship Skills).
       Can you think of a concrete experience?

3. What extra-musical aspects of marching band had the most positive impact on your social and/or emotional development?

4. What extra-musical aspects of marching band had the most negative impact on your social and/or emotional development?

5. Tell me a story about a time when you felt like you grew the most in terms of social and emotional development during your time in Marching Band.

6. How are you using the social-emotional lessons that you learned through marching band at [MAU] in your current professional role?
   6.1. (If Band Director) You are currently employed as a Band Director, right? Tell me about your program and your work. (Size, student characteristics, role, etc.)
   6.2. How are you passing these lessons along to your current students?
   6.3. Do you have specific curricular interventions that you have designed or use?

7. You know that I am trying to learn about how Marching Band develops social and emotional learning in its participants. So, with that in mind, is there anything I should have asked you about that I didn’t ask? Anything important that I am leaving out or not even thinking about?
Appendix D
Qualtrics Survey (Informed Consent and Demographics)

**SEL and Marching Band - Informed Consent and Demographic Survey**

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**Start of Block: Eligibility**

Q37 Were you a member of the [Mid-Atlantic University] Marching Band for at least two seasons?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Were you a member of the Mid-Atlantic University Golden Rams Marching Band for at least two seasons? = No*

Q38 Did you graduate from [Mid-Atlantic University] in 2019, 2020, or 2021?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Did you graduate from Mid-Atlantic University in 2019, 2020, or 2021? = No*

Q39 Are you at least 18 years of age?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Are you at least 18 years of age? = No*

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**End of Block: Eligibility**
Q1 Project Title: Social and Emotional Learning in Marching Band  
Investigator(s): Adam Gumble  
Project Overview: Participation in this research project is voluntary and is being done by Adam Gumble as part of his Doctoral Dissertation to determine how participation in collegiate marching band impacts the social and emotional development of its members. If selected, your participation will take approximately one hour to engage in an interview with Professor Gumble.

The research project is being done by Adam Gumble as part of his Doctoral Dissertation to examine how members’ intra- and interpersonal SEL competencies are affected by experiences in a nationally-recognized university marching band. If you would like to take part, Mid-Atlantic University requires that you agree and sign this consent form.

You may ask Adam Gumble any questions to help you understand this study. If you don’t want to be a part of this study, it won’t affect any of your studies from Mid-Atlantic University. If you choose to be a part of this study, you have the right to change your mind and stop being a part of the study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?  
The purpose of this study is to determine how participation in collegiate marching band impacts the social and emotional development of its members. Specifically, this study will examine how members’ intra- and interpersonal SEL competencies are affected by experiences in collegiate marching band.

If you decide to be a part of this study, you will be asked to do the following: Participate in one hourlong interview (if selected)

Are there any experimental medical treatments? No

Is there any risk to me?  
The research presents minimal risk to selected participants. Participants will experience the loss of time when completing the interest form (approximately 3-5 minutes), completing the Qualtrics Survey (approximately 10-15 minutes), and conducting the hourlong interview. During interviews, participants may experience slight discomfort or anxiety when asked to answer questions regarding their previous experiences. Interview participants may stop the interview at any point for any reason. The researcher will also take the time to clarify the confidential nature of the information that is shared as well as the steps being taken place to keep information secure in password-protected data centers.

Is there any benefit to me?  
While there is no direct financial benefit, participants may enjoy reflecting on their experiences as a marching band member and its extramusical impact on their lives.
How will you protect my privacy?
Interviews will be recorded via audio recorder (if in-person) or Zoom (if online) and stored on a password protected computer in Room 253 of the [MAU Music Building]. Your records will be private. Only Adam Gumble, Dr. Orkideh Mohajeri (Faculty Advisor) and the IRB will have access to your name and responses. Your name will not be used in any reports.

**Records will be stored:** Password Protected File/Computer  
**Records will be destroyed:** Three Years After Study Completion

Do I get paid to take part in this study? No

Who do I contact in case of research related injury?  
For any questions with this study, contact:  
Primary Investigator: Adam Gumble at [phone number] or agumble@wcupa.edu  
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Orkideh Mohajeri at [phone number] or omohajeri@wcupa.edu

What will you do with my Identifiable Information?  
Identifiers might be removed from the identifiable private information and after removal, the information may be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent from you or the legally authorized representative.  
For any questions about your rights in this research study, contact the ORSP at [phone number].

☐ I have read this form and I understand the statements in this form. I know that if I am uncomfortable with this study, I can stop at any time. I know that it is not possible to know all possible risks in a study, and I think that reasonable safety measures have been taken to decrease any risk (Choose this option and sign your name in the box below) (1)

________________________________________________________________

☐ I do not wish to participate (2)

---

First Name What is your First Name?
Last Name What is your Last Name?

________________________________________________________________

Email What is your Email Address?

________________________________________________________________

Age What is your Age?

- Under 18 (1)
- 18 - 24 (2)
- 25 - 34 (3)
- 35 - 44 (4)
- 45 or Older (5)

Zip What is your ZIP code?

________________________________________________________________
Race/Ethnicity Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:

☐ White (1)

☐ Black or African American (2)

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native (3)

☐ Asian (4)

☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)

☐ Hispanic or Latino (6)

☐ Mixed/Multicultural (7)

☐ Other (8) ____________________________________________

Gender Which of the following best describes your Gender Identity?

☐ Male (1)

☐ Female (2)

☐ Non-binary / third gender (3)

☐ Prefer not to say (4)

☐ Other (5) ____________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________
Sexual Orientation Which of the following best describes your Sexual Orientation?

- Heterosexual (straight) (1)
- Homosexual (gay) (2)
- Bisexual (3)
- Other (4) __________________________________________
- Prefer not to say (5)

Q41 Marital Status

- Married (1)
- Widowed (2)
- Divorced (3)
- Separated (4)
- Never married (5)
Employment Status Which statement best describes your current employment status?

- Working (paid employee) (1)
- Working (self-employed) (2)
- Not working (temporary layoff from a job) (3)
- Not working (looking for work) (4)
- Not working (retired) (5)
- Not working (disabled) (6)
- Not working (other) (7) _______________________________________________________________________
- Prefer not to answer (8)

Display This Question:

If Which statement best describes your current employment status? = Working (paid employee)  

Employer Who is your current employer?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Q40 Gross Household Income (Annual, USD $)

- $10,000 - $19,999 (2)
- $20,000 - $29,999 (3)
- $30,000 - $39,999 (4)
- $40,000 - $49,999 (5)
- $50,000 - $59,999 (6)
- $60,000 - $69,999 (7)
- $70,000 - $79,999 (8)
- $80,000 - $89,999 (9)
- $90,000 - $99,999 (10)
- $100,000 - $149,999 (11)
- More than $150,000 (12)
- Prefer not to answer (13)

End of Block: Personal Information

Start of Block: Membership Information

Degree Earned Degree Earned

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Graduation Year Year of Graduation

- 2021 (1)
- 2020 (2)
- 2019 (3)
- 2018 (4)

[MAU Marching Band] Seasons During which season(s) were you a member of the [MAU] Marching Band? (Select All That Apply)

- Fall 2021 (1)
- Fall 2020 (2)
- Fall 2019 (3)
- Fall 2018 (4)
- Fall 2017 (5)
- Fall 2016 (6)
- Fall 2015 (7)
- Fall 2014 (8)
- Other (9) _______________
Sections What section(s) were you a member of while participating in the Mid-Atlantic University Marching Band? (Select All That Apply)

☐ Flute (1)
☐ Clarinet (2)
☐ Saxophone (3)
☐ Trumpet (4)
☐ Mellophone (5)
☐ Trombone (6)
☐ Baritone (7)
☐ Tuba (8)
☐ Front Ensemble (9)
☐ Battery Percussion (10)
☐ Color Guard (11)
☐ Drum Major (12)
☐ Coordinator (13)
[MAU] Leadership What Leadership Position(s) did you hold while a member of the Mid-Atlantic University Marching Band? (Select All That Apply)

☐ Drum Major (1)

☐ Coordinator (2)

☐ Section Leader (3)

☐ President/VP (4)

☐ Personnel Director (5)

☐ Other (6) ________________________________________________

☐ No Leadership Positions (7)
Other Programs

What other experiences have you had as a performer in the marching arts? (Select all that apply and List Programs)

☐ High School Marching Band (Please List) (1)

☐ Scholastic Indoor Percussion (Please List) (2)

☐ Scholastic Indoor Color Guard (Please List) (3)

☐ Independent Indoor Color Guard (Please List) (4)

☐ Independent Indoor Percussion (Please List) (5)

☐ Drum Corps (Please List) (6)

☐ Other (7) _____________________________

Display This Question:

If What other experiences have you had as a performer in the marching arts? (Select all that apply a... = High School Marching Band (Please List)

HS Band Was your High School Band program competitive? (i.e. - performing regularly at adjudicated contests for scores and/or ratings?)

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)
Appendix E

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

Nov 19, 2021 8:32:10 AM EST

To: Adam Gumble
Educational Found. & Policy St, Music Education & Therapy

Re: Expedited Review - Initial - IRB-FY2022-17 The Impact of Marching Band on the Social-Emotional Learning of its Members

Dear Adam Gumble:

Thank you for your submitted application to the WCUPA Institutional Review Board. Since it was deemed expedited, it was required that two reviewers evaluated the submission. We have had the opportunity to review your application and have rendered the decision below for The Impact of Marching Band on the Social-Emotional Learning of its Members.

Decision: Approved

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Sincerely,
WCUPA Institutional Review Board

IORG#: IORG0004242
IRB#: IRB00005030
FWA#: FWA00014155