

A STUDY OF  
INSTRUMENTAL<sup>II</sup> MUSIC DROP-OUTS

by

Martin H. Dunlap, Jr.  
III

B.A., Mid-America Nazarene College

Thesis  
1981  
D921  
C.2  
music

Submitted to the Department of  
Music Education and Music Therapy  
and to The Faculty of the Graduate  
School of the University of Kansas  
in partial fulfillment of the re-  
quirements for the degree of  
Master of Music Education

## ABSTRACT

**Purpose.** The purpose of this study was to determine and investigate the extent of the instrumental music drop-out problem in the Kansas City (Kansas) public schools, and to seek reasons for the discontinuance of instrumental music.

**Procedure.** With the aid of the Director of Music for the Kansas City (Kansas) schools, a questionnaire was developed to collect data pertaining to the drop-out problem. The distribution and collection of the questionnaire was handled through the separate building principals and counselors. Subjects were identified by comparing lists of students from the school year 1979-1980 to the list of students enrolled in instrumental music for the school year 1980-1981. The answers from the questionnaires were tabulated in order to determine any patterns in the reasons for dropping out of instrumental music, and to determine what might be done to increase the retention power of the instrumental music programs.

**Conclusions.** The study revealed an instrumental music drop-out percentage of 22.0 for the five high schools and eight junior high schools. If it may be assumed that there will be the same drop-out rate over the next three years, the retention rate for the Kansas City (Kansas) instrumental music program will be 47.6 per cent; or, the probability that a student who began the study of a musical instrument in the school year 1980-1981 will not stay with it for three years is one in two.

There appears to be no relationship between sex, grade level, instrument played, school attended, race, or number of years experience when dropping out of instrumental music.

Conflict with other classes was the primary reason for dropping out; this reason was given by 33.0 per cent of the drop-outs returning the questionnaire. Other reasons with high percentage were dislike of the instrument played (19.4 per cent), participation in extra-curricular activities (14.7 per cent), and influenced by someone else (13.6 per cent).

Student-teacher rapport seemed to have little effect on whether students dropped out of instrumental music. It does appear that 32.6 per cent of the students dropping instrumental music were never recruited by the instructor at the building they were to attend.

Finally, the highest rate of drop-out occurs in the junior high (59.9 per cent) with grade seven (20.9 per cent) in the junior high and grade ten (19.9 per cent) in the senior high having the greatest number of drop-outs.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks go to Dr. John Grashel for his time and effort in encouraging the author. The author is also grateful for the atmosphere conducive to good learning created by the professors of the many courses which aided in the effort to this complete this requirement.

The author is also grateful to Dr. John Albertson and Mr. William Stoskoff for their help in forming the questionnaire and its distribution.

Many thanks and much love to my wife, Kim, who believed in me and encouraged me to keep working.

Martin H. Dunlap, Jr.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The instrumental music program is continually faced with the prospect that even though thousands of elementary students begin the study of musical instruments each year, not many of these students will continue their development into the secondary schools and colleges or universities. The teacher is often perplexed by this problem. To offer a better variety of educational experiences, the teacher tries in various ways to influence students to remain in the program because a healthy participation rate tends to make for better flexibility and opportunity. Few directors can afford to lose many students year after year without the loss having some effect on the program because the students are an essential part of the program.

Music supervisors, teachers, and parents have been made aware of the fact that in recent years studies have indicated 75 per cent of the students who start instrumental music study fail to continue until the completion of their senior year in high school. In a study done by Long (1946) in the Sacramento, California schools, for example, it was discovered that 77.3 per cent of the students who participated in instrumental music classes in junior high school were not participating when they were seniors in high school.

In a study of student participation in the public schools of Massachusetts, Wayne (1965) reported:

A composite view of the instrumental program reveals the highest percentage of participation occurs at the seventh grade level and that the rate declines steadily with each higher grade level.

What are the influences which contribute toward a mortality rate of over half the instrumental students between grade seven and the senior high years?.... that slightly over half the students who enroll in instrumental music in grade seven will disappear by grades ten, eleven, and twelve.

The instrumental music teacher tries with whatever means available to reduce the drop-out rate and keep the students actively involved. Relative to the concerns cited above, it would appear important to seek more data which would shed light on the factors causing students to drop instrumental music at the secondary level.

#### The Kansas City, Kansas School System

The Kansas City, Kansas, public schools as they exist today have been in operation since 1972. They are a unification of a number of smaller districts and the addition of newly located buildings.

In the mid-sixties, the Washington School District, consisting of Arrowhead and Coronado Jr. Highs and Washington High School, united with the Kansas City School District, which included four junior highs (Northeast, Northwest, West, Central), Rosedale Jr.-Sr. High, Argentine Jr.-Sr. High, Sumner High, and Wyandotte High, to form the Kansas City (Kansas) Public School System. Because of great growth, the need for expansion led to the construction

of the J.C. Harmon High School, F.L. Schlagle High School, and Eisenhower Jr. High School. With the completion of these buildings, Rosedale and Argentine became middle schools resulting in a district made up of five high schools, seven junior high schools, two middle schools, and thirty-five elementary schools.

During the next few years, the federal government mandate for desegregation presented problems which before had not existed. Sumner High School and Northeast Jr. High School, which were predominately black in population, were closed and the students divided and bused to the other junior and senior high schools. Sumner became a magnet school of arts and sciences which attracted the more academically inclined students.

These changes presented some trying times for administrators, teachers, parents, and students. With these changes in the district, a number of new problems appeared which had to be dealt with in order to maintain the instrumental music program: 1) Instrumental teachers were relocated and new teachers hired to accommodate each building. 2) Students began dropping out of instrumental music rather than continue in a new building under a new director. The need for more data as to the reasons for these students failing to continue in instrumental music has become more important with the hope of being able to correct these problems and increase the retention of the students in all school buildings.

Kansas City, Kansas School Instrumental Music Program

It is difficult to determine when instrumental music was first introduced to the Kansas City public schools because no accurate records can be located. Through conversations with former teachers it has been determined that each of the junior and senior high schools have had instrumental music from the time they were opened either as part of the curriculum or as an extra-curricular activity. Both band and orchestra were included in all schools with records indicating rapid growth in some schools under the leadership of Bessie Miller who became the district's first supervisor of music in 1908. She is given credit for initiating elementary strings for grades 4, 5, and 6 in 1938 with the approval of then superintendent F.L. Schlagle. During this time members of the Kansas City Philharmonic Orchestra were hired on an hourly basis to teach the beginning strings.

After Miss Miller retired in 1945, Milford Crabb became director of music and remained so until his retirement in 1976. During Dr. Crabb's leadership many programs flourished while the district was experiencing a number of previously discussed changes. Instrumental music became a valuable part of each school curriculum and added to the entire community with parades, concerts, and participation in many activities. It was also during this time a supervisor of instrumental music and a supervisor of vocal music were added to the staff to coordinate the activities in each area.

In 1976, Dr. John Albertson became director of music.

Under his capable leadership, the music program has grown despite a number of changes as a result of the desegregation mandate of the federal government. Changes have needed to be made yearly as the district accommodated the federal law with busing and the organization of cluster schools.

Instruction is currently offered in all 48 schools in band and orchestra beginning in the fourth grade for orchestra, and fifth grade for band. Instruction continues through the twelfth grade.

Although students are encouraged to buy or rent instruments personally, the district does own a large number of instruments located at each building which can be rented for a nominal fee.

Records indicate that in the school year 1980-1981 approximately 24,000 students were enrolled in Kansas City public schools, and approximately 3300, or 13.7 per cent, were enrolled in instrumental music.

#### Inner-City Teaching Differences

Although Kansas City cannot be compared in complexity to the inner-city problems that face New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles, many of the school buildings are located in an inner-city environment which presents certain problems characteristic of inner-city teaching. There requires an awareness on the part of the teacher of the particular needs of these students which many times do not exist in the rural or suburban schools. Simmons (1971) states that young prospective music teachers must be prepared by training that

deals with black culture, black environmental patterns, and black music. He continues by adding we can no longer send our middleclass, lecture-oriented teachers unarmed educationally into the inner-cities.

To fully address this problem, one could spend much time explaining many of the various aspects of inner-city living and teaching. However, this study will focus on what seems to be the heart of the problem which Fowler (1970) believes is a gap between middle class values and the particular values held by the students.

The gap between what the students find important and valuable and what the traditional music teacher feels should be taught in a normal school curriculum must be bridged to effectively teach music. A large majority of inner-city students have a very poor self image and feel trapped by their environment with not much hope of any future success or accomplishment. Music must be taught in a way that brings some degree of success and fulfillment with types of music with which the students can relate. Other problems to overcome are a high rate of absenteeism, lack of motivation, very little self discipline, prejudice often caused by being forced to attend a school where students do not feel welcome, apathy toward the need for participation, poverty, mobility causing a student to attend many schools in one year, and disruptions such as vandalism, robberies, fights, and disrespect toward other students, teachers, and administrators.

The teacher who comes to the inner-city must be aware of these problems and seek to bridge the gap to create an atmosphere for learning music. Briggs (1970) feels:

We've got to do something about the isolation by getting them acquainted with the arts. We've got to do something about getting children out of an ugly environment and getting good literature, music, and the arts into their lives.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent of the instrumental music drop-out problem in the Kansas City (Kansas) public schools. Specifically, this study seeks to:

- 1) determine the extent of the drop-outs by grade level (7-12)
- 2) analyze and categorize the reasons for dropping out by
  - a. sex
  - b. grade level at drop-out (7-12)
  - c. race (white, black, Hispanic, other)
  - d. instrument played
  - e. number of years experience playing
  - f. particular school attended when dropping out
- 3) investigate the relationship of the following factors concerning the drop-out
  - a. scholastic achievement as shown by grade point average
  - b. participation in extra-curricular activities
  - c. student-teacher rapport.

A drop-out is defined as any student participating in instrumental music during the 1979-1980 school year who did

not enroll in one of the school instrumental classes the following year (1980-1981).

At the time this study was undertaken, no investigation of the retention power of the instrumental music program of the Kansas City (Kansas) public schools had been done. Because of the great amount of money invested in purchasing and maintaining a large inventory of instruments and paying teacher and supervisor salaries, a study of this nature could be valuable in discovering and correcting some of the problems which cause students to discontinue participation in instrumental music.

## CHAPTER II

### RELATED LITERATURE

A paucity of literature pertaining to the drop-out problem in instrumental music exists. There have been a number of studies done in various cities and states throughout the country, however, which have been helpful in administering and evaluating this study.

In a study of selected Detroit Public Schools, Lax (1970) concluded that:

- 1) principals and counselors do not actively encourage students to enroll in instrumental music
- 2) the non-music teacher appears to be the strongest discouragement factor for instrumental music
- 3) the loss of interest seems to be the most important reason for dropping out
- 4) academic pressures
- 5) extra-curricular activities
- 6) poor liaison between the instrumental music teacher and music students
- 7) dislike for the instrumental music teacher.

Farruggia (1974) in a similar study of California schools substantiated many of Lax's conclusions. He added that the drop-out rate for some of the groups of students which he investigated might have been reduced had a better working relationship been developed between parents, counselors, administrators, and students.

Another California study by Long (1946), of attitudes and interests of elementary and secondary students enrolled in instrumental music in the Sacramento schools produced these results:

- 1) Of 682 students completing the sixth grade, 387 elected to continue some form of music in junior high school.
- 2) Fifty-three out of 202 ninth grade instrumental students planned to continue in high school.
- 3) A total of 123 seniors had participated in instrumental music in junior high school, 68 had played some in high school, and 28 were playing their instruments at the time of the study.

The most crucial deterrents to participation in instrumental music on the high school level were: 1) schedule conflicts, 2) dislike of the teacher, 3) loss of time, 4) fear of effect on grade, 5) dislike of instrument, and 6) loss of interest.

In reporting his findings from a study of instrumental music drop-outs in selected schools in Michigan, Bergan (1957) considered the following:

- 1) Where parents were acquainted with the teacher, student responses tended to be more positive.
- 2) A much larger proportion of the students whose fathers' occupations could be classified in the "white collar" category indicated that their parents were acquainted with the teacher more than was the case with students whose fathers' occupations were in the "laboring" category.
- 3) Directors of music in the schools studied indicated that they felt that music teachers need to have more extensive training in child growth and development, be more sympathetic to student needs and interests, and make more extensive use of audio-visual aids.
- 4) The highest incidence of drop-out followed ninth grade graduation.

- 5) There were very few orientation practices.
- 6) The majority of the drop-outs had started playing their instrument in the fifth grade and had averaged three and one-half years in the music program.
- 7) Socio-economic factors appeared to be related to quality of the instrument owned, opportunity to take private lessons and attend concerts, and parental interest.
- 8) The largest number of drop-outs was among players of string and transfer instruments.
- 9) Sixty-two per cent of the drop-outs were classified among the weaker players in their group.
- 10) More parents of non-drop-outs were acquainted with the teacher than was the case with drop-outs.

Sobieski, on the basis of a study of the instrumental music program of the Lawrence (Kansas) schools, offered these conclusions:

- 1) There is a relatively high drop-out of approximately one third of all registrants with the highest loss just before entry into high school and a similar loss just before the senior year.
- 2) Competing activities and interests appear to be a crucial factor leading to drop-out. Other reasons for drop-out vary somewhat according to age and sex.
- 3) The instrument played or the practice operated in selecting students for the particular instrument has a strong bearing.
- 4) The holding power of the instrumental program is greater for the student with higher scholastic achievement and musicality.

In yet another study done in Kansas City (Missouri) by Reckart (1965), the following results were indicated:

- 1) The highest rate of drop-out occurs during the last year the pupils are in elementary school (23.8 per cent); the next highest rate of drop-out occurs during or at the end of, grade nine (22 per cent). The lowest per cent of drop-out occurs in the high schools (6.8 per cent).
- 2) There appears to be no difference between the kind

of instrument played or the degree of difficulty involved in the playing of certain instruments and the fact that the pupils dropped out of the music program.

- 3) There is practically no difference between the intelligence quotients of the drop-outs and the non drop-outs, nor is there much difference in the number of boys and the number of girls who dropped out.
- 4) A lack of interest was the primary reason for dropping out of instrumental music. Other reasons include: a) schedule conflict, b) academic pressure, and c) preference for other subjects.
- 5) A higher per cent of the non-drop-outs were rated as being above average in musical progress and in school citizenship than were the drop-outs.
- 6) In families of non-drop-outs, both mother and father more often play musical instruments than do parents of drop-outs.
- 7) Economic factors seem to have little influence as to whether pupils drop-out or continue in the instrumental program.

The studies discussed in this chapter indicate many similar conclusions as to the reasons for students dropping out of instrumental music programs. It appears that geographic location of schools has little importance as to the retention power of the particular programs. Apparently, administrators, music supervisors, and teachers have not realized their highest potentialities in developing a well integrated music program to meet the needs of the drop-outs, and thereby hold their interests.

Understanding how a child sees himself, his attitude toward himself, and the power he has to effect his future influence learning far more than factors of teacher qualification, class size, or condition of the school plant states Morgan (1971). He also feels home-school-child

interaction is one of the most crucial and least effectively developed areas of school programs. With these concerns in mind, it may be possible to increase the holding power of music programs with more effort on the part of educators to begin to understand more about their students as persons. This insight from Morgan seems to help us understand possibly why there is such a large percentage of drop-outs in public school music programs.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE

The plan of this study was presented to the Kansas City (Kansas) Director of Music in order to obtain his approval, assistance, and suggestions. Upon his approval, it was necessary to receive permission from the Director of Pupil Services and Research to collect data in the school district.

Lists of all students enrolled in instrumental music for the school year 1979-1980 were secured from the Director of Music in the spring of 1980. In the fall, after school was in progress, lists were obtained from each instrumental music teacher of the students enrolled in instrumental music grades 7-12 in their particular building. These lists were compared to determine the number of students not participating in instrumental music during the 1980-1981 school year. After this comparison, a list was compiled with student names and grades for each building. Students whose names did not appear on the enrollment sheets in any building for the school year 1980-1981, but had appeared on the enrollment for 1979-1980, were identified.

A survey questionnaire was developed in an effort to determine the formation needed for the study. The quest-

tionnaire was presented to the Director of Music and the Supervisor of Instrumental Music for their consideration. Suggestions for changes and additions to the questionnaire which would be helpful to the school district in improving certain areas of the instrumental music program were accepted and made. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

In an effort to improve the percentage of questionnaires returned, a system for distributing and collecting the questionnaires was developed by the Director of Music in cooperation with the building principals and counselors. The lists of drop-outs for each building which had been compiled were sent to the principals with enough questionnaires for each student on the list and instructions regarding the process to be initiated. The counselors in each building would receive the lists and determine a time to call each student from class to fill out the questionnaire and return it immediately to the counselor. The lists and the questionnaires were then returned to the Director of Music who then forwarded them to the investigator for evaluation. A copy of the instructions for the counselor may be found in Appendix B.

Information concerning the racial make-up of the several schools involved in the study may be found in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
 RACIAL DIVISIONS OF SCHOOLS  
 INVOLVED IN THE STUDY

School	No. of students enrolled	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
(high schools)					
School "A"	1079	51.1	28.9	15.9	4.1
School "B"	1105	45.3	54.2	.2	.3
School "C"	765	63.0	32.4	3.5	1.1
School "D"	1538	58.6	39.8	1.2	.4
School "E"	1446	35.7	58.4	4.1	1.8
(junior high schools)					
School "A"	704	50.3	24.3	21.2	4.2
School "B"	754	55.1	43.5	1.2	.2
School "C"	942	49.7	35.8	8.7	5.8
School "D"	548	49.6	49.3	1.1	.0
School "E"	852	59.2	38.5	1.9	.4
School "F"	641	2.5	96.9	.0	.6
School "G"	743	55.7	26.5	11.2	6.6
School "H"	453	44.4	54.1	1.1	.4
Totals	11,570	47.7	44.8	5.5	2.0

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Table 2, data accumulated from the music department records, show the number and percentage of students who did not enroll in instrumental music for the 1980-1981 school year at each junior and senior high school.

TABLE 2  
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC  
DROP-OUTS BY SCHOOL

School	Instrumental music Enrollment	Number of Boys	of Girls	drop-outs Total	Per Cent of Drop-outs
(High Schools)					
School "A"	144	21	12	33	22.9
School "B"	129	21	23	44	34.1
School "C"	296	19	33	52	17.5
School "D"	216	33	41	74	34.2
School "E"	110	24	13	37	26.4
Totals	925	118	122	240	25.9
(Junior High Schools)					
School "A"	194	12	9	21	10.8
School "B"	199	17	14	31	15.5
School "C"	265	45	30	75	28.3
School "D"	205	20	21	41	20.0
School "E"	324	36	39	75	23.1
School "F"	122	19	20	39	32.0
School "G"	217	13	15	28	12.9
School "H"	153	13	9	22	14.3
Totals	1679	175	157	332	19.8
TOTALS	2604	293	279	572	22.0

Table 3 shows the number and percentage of questionnaires returned from each school.

TABLE 3  
QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED

School	Number of Questionnaires Sent	Number of Questionnaires Returned	Per Cent Returned
(High School)			
School "A"	33	25	75.0
School "B"	44	27	61.3
School "C"	52	43	82.6
School "D"	74	48	64.8
School "E"	37	34	91.8
Totals	240	177	73.7
(Junior High Schools)			
School "A"	21	9	42.8
School "B"	31	18	58.0
School "C"	75	0	00.0
School "D"	41	12	29.2
School "E"	75	30	40.0
School "F"	39	13	33.3
School "G"	28	9	32.1
School "H"	22	7	31.8
Totals	332	98	29.5
TOTALS	572	275	48.1

Cooperation from the principals and counselors in administering the questionnaires in each school was, for the most part, very good. It can be observed, however, that some schools did a better job than others. One junior high did not administer the questionnaires because of the lack of time for their counselors. There seems to be a great difference between the percentages of questionnaires returned in the senior high as compared to the junior high schools. Besides the lack of one junior high reporting, there seems

to be greater mobility of families of junior high students which in some cases made it difficult to locate a number of the junior high drop-outs.

The number of drop-outs per grade level can be seen in Table 4. It can be observed that the number of drop-outs is greatest in the seventh and tenth grades. In these grades most of the students change schools and instructors. There is also an obvious difference in the number of students who dropped out between the junior and senior high school. Table 4 also shows the number of questionnaires returned by grade level.

TABLE 4  
GRADE LEVEL OF STUDENTS DROPPING OUT

	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Number of Drop-outs	120	108	115	114	55	60	572
Per cent of Drop-outs	20.9	18.8	20.1	19.9	9.6	10.5	
No. of Drop-outs Returning Questionnaires	24	44	33	75	48	48	272

The following tables analyze and categorize the reasons for dropping out of instrumental music by sex, grade level, race, instrument played, number of years experience, and school attended when dropping out.

TABLE 5  
REASONS FOR DROPPING INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC  
BY SEX

Reasons	Male	Female	Total	Per- Cent
Conflict with other classes	49	41	90	33.0
Change of school	6	9	15	5.5
Change of instructor	12	6	18	6.6
Influenced by someone	19	18	37	13.6
Cost of owning an instrument too high	13	9	22	8.0
Did not like the instrument he/she was playing	37	43	80	29.4
Extra-curricular activities	20	20	40	14.7
Work	23	5	28	10.3

TABLE 6  
REASONS FOR DROPPING INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC  
BY GRADE LEVEL

Reasons	7	8	9	10	11	12
Conflict with other classes	8	14	9	17	21	25
Change of school	3	2	1	8	2	0
Change of instructor	0	3	1	8	4	1
Influenced by someone	2	7	4	10	8	13
Cost of owning an instrument too high	5	5	4	7	1	0
Did not like the instrument he/she was playing	13	26	12	27	8	2
Extra-curricular activities	3	9	2	7	9	13
Work	0	1	1	14	3	6

TABLE 7  
 REASONS FOR DROPPING INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC  
 BY RACE

Reasons	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Conflict with other classes	48	35	4	3
Change of school	9	6	0	0
Change of instructor	7	10	0	1
Influenced by someone	14	22	0	1
Cost of owning an instrument too high	8	13	1	0
Did not like the instrument he/she was playing	28	49	2	1
Extra-curricular activities	20	17	2	1
Work	17	11	0	0

TABLE 8  
 REASONS FOR DROPPING INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC  
 BY INSTRUMENT PLAYED

Instrument	Con- flict	Chan. of sch.	Chan. of inst.	Infl. by som.	Cost too high	Did not like	Extra curr. act.	Work	TOT.
Violin	16	0	6	5	5	23	6	3	64
Viola	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	5
Cello	6	1	0	1	2	7	2	0	19
String Bass	1	0	2	0	1	1	1	1	7
Flute	16	5	1	7	1	5	7	1	43
Oboe	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Bassoon	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Clarinet	22	2	0	7	3	12	9	3	58
Saxophone	3	0	1	2	1	3	5	1	16
Trumpet	13	1	4	5	1	7	5	6	42
French Horn	0	1	2	1	0	2	0	0	6
Trombone	4	0	2	1	1	8	3	0	19
Baritone	2	1	0	2	1	1	2	0	9
Tuba	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	3
Percussion	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>31</u>
Totals	90	14	20	37	17	80	43	21	324

TABLE 9  
REASONS FOR DROPPING INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC  
BY NUMBER OF YEARS EXPERIENCE

Reasons	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Total
Conflict with other classes	12	9	8	24	11	9	11	6	1	0	1	92
Change of school	0	6	3	5	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	17
Change of instructor	0	2	4	3	4	1	2	2	0	0	1	18
Influenced by someone	4	8	4	5	3	2	5	5	0	0	1	37
Cost of owning an instrument too high	9	6	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
Did not like the instrument he/she was playing	23	14	21	13	9	1	3	2	0	0	0	86
Extra-curricular activities	5	6	2	8	6	3	5	2	0	0	0	37
Work	1	3	4	6	4	1	1	1	0	0	1	22

TABLE 10  
REASONS FOR DROPPING INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC  
BY SCHOOL ATTENDED WHEN DROPPING

School	Con- flict	Chan. of sch.	Chan. of inst.	Infl. by som.	Cost too high	Did not like	Extra curr. act.	Work
(high schools)								
School "A"	10	1	0	3	2	3	9	7
School "B"	10	1	5	4	0	6	7	2
School "C"	18	4	2	8	1	8	4	1
School "D"	20	3	5	5	2	13	8	5
School "E"	5	1	5	4	2	8	2	5
Totals	63	10	17	24	7	38	30	20
(junior highs)								
School "A"	1	0	0	1	2	4	2	0
School "B"	4	1	3	0	0	9	0	0
School "C"	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
School "D"	1	1	2	1	3	4	4	0
School "E"	12	4	0	4	4	17	1	2
School "F"	2	0	0	0	3	8	2	0
School "G"	3	0	2	3	0	5	1	0
School "H"	3	0	0	1	1	3	0	0
Totals	26	6	7	10	13	50	10	2
<hr/>								
Totals	89	16	24	34	20	88	40	22

It appears that neither sex, grade level, race, instrument played, number of years experience, nor school attended when dropping out have any significance for the reason to drop out of instrumental music. It seems that more students drop out because of class conflict and dislike of the instrument they are playing than for any other reason.

Further investigation of the data gathered explore the relationship of grade point average as concerns the drop-out as seen in Table 11. A one is equivalent to an A, and a four is equivalent to a D.

TABLE 11  
GRADE POINT AVERAGE OF DROP-OUTS

Number of students	272
Range of grade point	1.0 - 4.0
Mean grade point	2.1

There were a number of students who dropped instrumental music to participate in extra-curricular activities. Table 12 lists the activities and the number and percentage of the drop-outs who participated.

TABLE 12  
EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES OF DROP-OUTS

Activity	Number of Participants	Percentage of Drop-outs
Choir	9	3.0
Sports	18	6.6
Debate	3	1.1
Cheerleading	6	2.2
Drill Team	3	1.1
Forensics	2	.1
Church Group	3	1.1
Other	14	5.1
Total	58	21.3

Among the activities listed by the drop-outs under other were DECA, drama, AVTS, and Auto Club.

When developing the questionnaire, a number of questions were designed to acquire some indication of the attitude of the drop-outs concerning their rapport with their teachers prior to dropping instrumental music. It is realized that the answers to these questions must be investigated cautiously since they are based on opinion rather than fact. Table 13 reflects the answers to these questions.

TABLE 13  
INVESTIGATION OF STUDENT-TEACHER RAPPORT  
AS INDICATED BY DROP-OUTS

Question	Yes	No	No Response
Did music teacher discuss decision to drop instrumental music?	71	189	12
Do you feel your teacher was knowledgeable about what he/she was teaching?	221	37	14
Would you consider your music teacher a good musician?	228	33	11
Do you feel your instrumental teacher cared for you as a person?	161	88	23
Was your instrumental music teacher someone you could talk to about problems other than music?	91	167	14
Do you believe you were treated fairly when chairs and parts were assigned?	192	68	12
Did your teacher talk to you before you attended their school?	74	187	11

It appears that for the most part, many of the students respected their teachers as musicians and teachers, but few could be considered as close friends, or someone they could talk to about personal problems apart from instrumental music.

The results of the findings of this study have been presented in this chapter in the order in which they were listed for investigation.

The data in Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate the number of students who participated in instrumental music and the number who dropped out and were sent questionnaires. Tables 4 through 13 present the results of the questionnaire responses.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine and investigate the extent of the instrumental music drop-out problem in the Kansas City (Kansas) public schools, and to seek reasons for the discontinuance of instrumental music. It was thought that an understanding of these reasons might suggest ways of improving the instrumental music program to increase its retention power.

An investigation of literature and research in the field of music education revealed a paucity of literature pertaining to the drop-out problem in instrumental music. The investigation did, however, reveal some information concerning a number of problems characteristic to inner-city teaching which seemed related to understanding some ways of improving the teaching of instrumental music.

With the aid of the Director of Music for the Kansas City (Kansas) schools, a questionnaire was developed to collect data pertaining to the drop-out problem. The distribution and collection of the questionnaire was handled through the separate building principals and counselors. Subjects were identified by comparing lists of students from the school year 1979-1980 to the list of students en-

rolled in instrumental music for the school year 1980-1981. The answers from the questionnaires were tabulated in order to determine any patterns in the reasons for dropping out of instrumental music, and to determine what might be done to increase the retention power of the instrumental music programs.

### Conclusions

When the data were organized and presented, they led to the formulation of certain conclusions.

The study revealed an instrumental music drop-out percentage of 22.0 for the five high schools and eight junior high schools. One junior high was not included in the study because no results were received from that school. The 22.0 per cent drop-out rate seems to be about normal for most school systems which have studied attrition. It must be pointed out, however, that this applies only to the school year 1980-1981. If it may be assumed that there will be the same rate of drop-out over the next three years, the retention rate for the Kansas City (Kansas) instrumental music program will be 47.6 per cent; or, the probability that a student who began the study of a musical instrument in the school year 1980-1981 will not stay with it for three years is one in two.

The highest rate of drop-out occurs in the junior high (59.9 per cent) with grade seven (20.9 per cent) in the junior high and grade ten (19.9 per cent) in the senior high having the greatest number for their respective buildings.

There appears to be no relationship between sex, grade level, instrument played, school attended, race, or number of years experience and dropping out of instrumental music.

Conflict with other classes was the primary reason for dropping out; this reason was given by 33.0 per cent of the drop-outs returning the questionnaire. Other reasons with a high percentage were dislike for the instrument played (29.4 per cent), participation in extra-curricular activities (14.7 per cent), and influenced by someone else (13.6 per cent).

Student-teacher rapport seemed to have little to do with whether students dropped out of instrumental music. It does appear that 32.6 per cent of the students dropping instrumental music were never recruited by the instructor of the new building they were to attend.

#### Recommendations for the Music Program

In view of the findings of this study, it appears that certain recommendations can be made to possibly increase the retention power of the instrumental music program.

Since the instrumental music program should be for the students' music education, teachers should seek to improve and maintain a music program that would be of interest to the students he or she is working with. Also, assuming that the students are willing to make an effort to devote the necessary time and energy to practice and participate and to make some degree of success and accomplishment possible,

the following recommendations are suggested. The teacher should:

1. Work with the administration in their building to improve the scheduling of classes so as to increase the ability of more students to participate..
2. Spend more time recruiting students for the next school year, especially those changing schools.
3. Invest more time in building a good relationship between student and teacher.
4. Try to work out some method of matching students and instruments which may keep them actively involved in the program.
5. Give students praise whenever possible, and try to make class a pleasurable and rewarding experience.

Both junior and senior high teachers might make an effort to take some of their groups into the schools, and present concerts that would enable them to make contact with prospective musicians.

#### Implications for Further Investigation

Conflict with other classes, which was the reason most given for dropping out of instrumental music, is a general problem which could be open for much interpretation. What classes and which schools had the most conflicts are answers which might enable the investigator to make better recommendations. It is difficult to assess the reasons why so

many students were dissatisfied with their particular instruments. Therefore, the investigator believes that a study of the retention power of the Kansas City (Kansas) instrumental music program conducted over a period of time might lead to a better understanding of why students drop out of instrumental music.

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## APPENDICES

## QUESTIONNAIRE

In an effort to improve the quality of music education in the Kansas City Public Schools, we would appreciate you answering the following questions concerning your past participation in instrumental music. This survey is being conducted under guidelines established by the University of Kansas. By cooperating, you will help provide answers to important questions; however, your participation is voluntary. Confidentiality will be guarded; your name will not be associated with your answers in any public or private report of the results.

When you have finished answering the questions to the best of your ability, you may return the questionnaire to your counselor.

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Answer the following questions as accurately as possible either by filling in the blank or circling the appropriate response.

1. Your sex is    Male    Female.
2. What is your present grade?    7 8 9 10 11 12
3. What is your race?    Black    White    Hispanic    Other
4. What instrument(s) do you play? 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_
5. How long have you been playing the instrument(s)? \_\_\_\_yrs.
6. What school did you attend last year? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What would you say your overall grade average is now?  
    1        2        3        4
8. How many different instrumental music teachers did you have while you were playing at school? \_\_\_\_\_(total since you began)
9. Did you drop instrumental music because it conflicted with other classes you wished to take?    yes    no
10. Did you drop because of a change of schools?    yes    no
11. Did you drop because of a change of instructors?    yes    no
12. Was your decision to drop instrumental music influenced by someone else?    yes    no  
     If so, who?    Family    Friend    Teacher    Counselor

(over)

13. Did you own your own instrument?    yes    no
14. Did you drop instrumental music because you felt the price of buying an instrument was too high?    yes    no
15. Would you have continued in instrumental music if the school had provided an instrument for you?    yes    no
16. If you could have played a different instrument would you have continued in instrumental music?    yes    no
17. Would you have continued if you owned your own instrument?    yes    no.
18. Did your music teacher discuss with you your decision to drop instrumental music?    yes    no
19. Do you feel your past music teacher was knowledgeable about what he/she was teaching?    yes    no
20. Would you consider your past music teacher a good musician?    yes    no
21. Do you feel your instrumental music teacher cared for you as a person?    yes    no
22. Was your instrumental music teacher someone you could talk to about problems other than music?    yes    no
23. Do you believe you were treated fairly when chairs and parts were handed out?    yes    no
24. Did your high school or junior high school instrumental music teacher talk to you before you attended their school?    yes    no
25. In what extra-curricular activities do you participate?  
choir    sports    debate    cheerleading    drill team  
forensics    church group    other\_\_\_\_\_
26. Did you drop instrumental music to participate in one of these activities?    yes    no
27. Did you drop instrumental music to work after school?  
yes    no

## KANSAS CITY, KANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

December 9, 1980

To: Secondary School Principals  
From: Don Moritz, Director of Pupil Services and Research  
Subject: Research Questionnaire

Mr. Martin Dunlap, instrumental music teacher at Wyandotte High School, is gathering data to complete his thesis as partial fulfillment for his master's degree at the University of Kansas. His questionnaire will survey those students who were in a music program at one time during their school career, but are not currently enrolled in an instrumental music program. His research proposal has been approved for use in the school district and we would encourage your cooperation in helping get the questionnaires to the appropriate students and also to gather the questionnaires to be returned to him.

Dr. John Albertson, Director of Music Education for the school system, has worked with Mr. Dunlap in developing the questionnaire so that not only will it be of value to Mr. Dunlap in his research, but also will supply valuable answers to the school district itself in the area of music participation. Dr. Albertson will contact you in the near future. He will have with him the questionnaires for distribution to those students designated in your building. Method and procedure for contact with the students, completion of the questionnaire, and return of those questionnaires will be left to the discretion of the principal in the building.