

Transforming Young Musicians: Investigating the Impact of a State College Musical Band Education Project

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ABSTRACT This study examined the perceived effects of a Music Enhancement Training Program implemented at a state college in Naga City, Philippines, on musical skill development, engagement, and retention. A descriptive mixed-methods design was used. Thirty student participants completed two five-point surveys, while students, educators, and administrators participated in semi-structured interviews. Descriptive statistics showed moderate perceived improvement in musical skills (overall mean = 4.21) and agreement that the program supported engagement and retention (overall mean = 4.40). Thematic analysis identified gains in proficiency, motivation, creativity, collaboration, and intention to continue, together with constraints involving instruments, practice spaces, and institutional support. The findings indicate that structured, collaborative training was positively perceived by stakeholders; however, the self-reported, cross-sectional evidence does not establish causal effects. Sustained resourcing, targeted theory and sight-reading instruction, and longitudinal monitoring are recommended.

INTRODUCTION

Music education can support musical, cognitive, social, and personal development when learning experiences are sustained and instructionally coherent. Hallam (2010) identified broad intellectual, social, and personal benefits associated with active music making, while recent evidence has refined this claim by showing that outcomes depend on relationships, programme design, and learning context. De Bruin (2025), for example, found that instrumental learning and ensemble participation may strengthen accomplishment, belonging, resilience, and social connection, but also documented the fragile and context-dependent nature of these experiences. Goopy and MacArthur (2026) similarly concluded that music learning is commonly associated with individual, social, and educational well-being, although the evidence base remains dominated by small case studies and qualitative designs.

Engagement and persistence in music education are therefore not automatic consequences of participation. Gamboa-Kroesen (2025) linked inclusive instructional practices in school ensembles with students' sense of belonging, and Cabedo-Mas et al. (2025) reported that active participation and collaborative music making were highly valued in a year-long music-social project. At the in-

structional level, Xu and Li (2025) showed that autonomy-supportive teaching was associated with collective learning, flow, and well-being. Together, these studies suggest that technical development, motivation, peer relationships, and institutional conditions should be examined as interconnected rather than as separate programme outcomes.

The recent studies cited above were conducted mainly in school, community, or tertiary settings outside the Philippines. Less is documented about how a state-college music extension initiative is perceived simultaneously by student participants, educators, and administrators, particularly with respect to skill development, ongoing engagement, retention, and resource constraints. This context-specific evidence is needed because a programme may generate strong short-term participation while still facing weaknesses in theory instruction, peer collaboration, access to instruments, and long-term continuity.

Accordingly, this study examined the perceived effects of the Music Enhancement Training Program implemented at Bicol State College of Applied Sciences and Technology in Naga City, Philippines. It integrated survey and interview evidence to assess perceived musical improvement, engagement and retention, stakeholder views of the training, and the institutional conditions that

supported or constrained implementation. By triangulating the perspectives of students, educators, and administrators, the study sought to provide locally grounded evidence for improving college-based music extension programmes.

Objectives of the Study

The study sought to determine students' perceived improvement after the Music Enhancement Training Program; assess the perceived influence of the program on student engagement and retention; and analyse the perceptions of students, educators, and administrators regarding the value of the training in music education.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A descriptive mixed-methods design was used to examine stakeholder perceptions of the Music Enhancement Training Program at Bicol State College of Applied Sciences and Technology, Peñafrancia Avenue, Naga City 4400, Philippines. Quantitative survey data were used to summarise perceived musical improvement, engagement, and retention, while qualitative interviews were used to explain participants' experiences, perceived benefits, implementation challenges, and recommendations.

Student participants completed two five-item instruments. The first used a five-point improvement scale ranging from Declined to Significantly Improved, and the second used a five-point agreement scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Semi-structured interviews with students, educators, and administrators explored skill development, motivation, creativity, teamwork, continued participation, and institutional support. The same core topics were used across groups, with follow-up questions adapted to each role.

Thirty students from various grade levels who participated in the Music Enhancement Training Program were surveyed and interviewed. The qualitative sample also included two educators directly involved in programme delivery and one program administrator responsible for programme oversight. Participants were selected purposively because of their direct experience with the training. Student participants represented different instruments and levels of prior musical experience.

Survey responses were analysed using means and verbal interpretations for each indicator and

for the overall scale. Interview and open-ended responses were analysed manually through thematic coding: responses were read repeatedly, initial codes were assigned, related codes were grouped, and recurring patterns were consolidated into six themes. All participants were informed of the study's purpose and participated voluntarily. Parental consent was obtained for minors, anonymity was maintained, and identifying information was removed during analysis and reporting. Data were stored securely and used only for the purposes of the study.

RESULTS

Perceived Improvement in Musical Skills

Students rated five indicators of perceived musical improvement on a scale from 1 to 5. Table 1 presents the mean score and verbal interpretation for each indicator.

The overall mean was 4.21, interpreted as Moderately Improved. Ensemble performance received the highest mean (4.50), followed by instrumental technique and accuracy (4.40) and creativity and improvisation (4.33). Sight-reading (3.93) and understanding of music theory (3.90) received the lowest means, although both remained within the Moderately Improved range.

The distribution of scores shows that students reported stronger improvement in practical and ensemble-based competencies than in notation reading and theoretical understanding. No indicator reached the Significantly Improved range.

Perceived Influence on Student Engagement and Retention within Music Programs

Students rated five indicators of engagement and retention using a five-point agreement scale. Table 2 presents the mean score and verbal interpretation for each indicator.

The overall mean was 4.40, interpreted as Agree. Consistent participation and attendance obtained the highest mean (4.63). Increased involvement in school music activities and the desire to pursue further music education each obtained 4.53. Collaboration and peer interaction obtained 4.33, while perceived long-term retention obtained the lowest mean (4.00).

Table 1: Perceived improvement of the students after undergoing the program

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Mean score</i>	<i>Verbal description</i>
Ability to play assigned instruments with technical skill and accuracy	4.40	Moderately improved
Proficiency in reading and interpreting musical notation on sight	3.93	Moderately improved
Understanding of music theory concepts such as scales, chords, and time signatures	3.90	Moderately improved
Ability to perform effectively in a group or ensemble setting	4.50	Moderately improved
Demonstration of creativity and improvisation in music	4.33	Moderately improved
Average	4.21	Moderately improved

Legend: 1.00-1.50 - Declined; 1.51-2.50 - No Change; 2.51-3.50 - Slightly Improved; 3.51-4.50 - Moderately Improved; 4.51-5.00 - Significantly Improved

Source: Author's field data

Table 2: Perceived influence on student engagement and retention within the music program

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Mean score</i>	<i>Verbal description</i>
Extent to which students have become more involved in music-related activities and performances at school.	4.53	Strongly agree
Influence of the program on students' desire to pursue further musical education or participate in music programs.	4.53	Strongly agree
Consistency in student participation and attendance in music classes and rehearsals.	4.63	Strongly agree
Level of collaboration and peer interaction in music-related activities, fostering a sense of community.	4.33	Agree
Influence of the program on students' long-term retention in music programs and their likelihood of remaining involved.	4.00	Agree
Average	4.40	Agree

Legend: 1.00-1.50 - Strongly Disagree; 1.51-2.50 - Disagree; 2.51-3.50 - Neutral; 3.51-4.50 - Agree; 4.51-5.00 - Strongly Agree

Source: Author's field data

The responses indicate stronger agreement about current attendance, participation, and interest than about long-term continuation. Collaboration and retention therefore emerged as the comparatively weaker dimensions of the engagement results.

Perceptions of Educators, Students, and Administrators Regarding the Value of the Training

Thematic analysis generated six recurring themes: skill development and proficiency; engagement and motivation; creativity and expression; collaboration and teamwork; long-term impact and retention; and institutional support and resources. Table 3 summarises the perspectives of the three stakeholder groups.

Theme 1: Skill Development and Proficiency

Educators, students and administrators collectively highlighted the importance of the training in

improving technical skills and musical proficiency. As one educator remarked, "*The training has significantly enhanced students' ability to perform with precision and understand complex musical theory.*" This aligns with students' perception that they "*felt more confident in their ability to play instruments and perform in ensembles*" following the training.

Across the three groups, improved technical competence was described as visible in rehearsals, ensemble performances, and school competitions. Participants nevertheless distinguished practical performance gains from continuing difficulty with theory and notation.

Theme 2: Engagement and Motivation

All groups agreed that the training increased student engagement and motivation. Educators observed that "*students are more eager to participate in music classes and rehearsals*", which is echoed by students who noted they "*felt more involved in performances and motivated to participate in mu-*

Table 3: Thematic analysis of the perceptions of educators, students and administrators regarding the value of the training in music education

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Educators' perceptions</i>	<i>Students' perceptions</i>	<i>Administrators' perceptions</i>
<i>Skill Development and Proficiency</i>	Educators observed significant improvements in students' technical skills and musical proficiency, particularly in instrument performance and theory. Training is seen as crucial in developing well-rounded musicians.	Students expressed that the training improved their ability to play instruments, understand music theory, and perform in ensembles. They felt more confident in their technical abilities post-training.	Administrators noted that the training enhanced student skill levels, which was evident in school performances and competitions. They view the training as an essential component of the curriculum to boost student proficiency.
<i>Engagement and Motivation</i>	Educators noticed that students were more engaged during music classes and rehearsals. The hands-on nature of the training kept students motivated and actively participating.	Students reported higher levels of engagement and interest in music after participating in the training. They felt more involved in music-related activities and performances, which increased their motivation.	Administrators perceived the training as a key factor in maintaining high student engagement in music programs. They noted improvements in class attendance and participation in school music events.
<i>Creativity and Expression</i>	Educators valued the emphasis on creativity and improvisation in the training, which allowed students to explore their musical identity. They noted that students became more comfortable expressing themselves musically.	Students felt that the training encouraged them to be more creative and explore their improvisational skills. They enjoyed having the freedom to experiment with music beyond technical exercises.	Administrators acknowledged the importance of fostering creativity within music education, and they saw the training as helping students develop unique musical expressions, which benefits the overall program.
<i>Collaboration and Teamwork</i>	Educators emphasised that training in ensemble performance fostered teamwork and collaboration among students. They believed that these social skills were critical for students' overall growth.	Students reported improved collaboration and a stronger sense of community during group performances and rehearsals. Working with peers was a valuable part of the learning experience.	Administrators recognised the value of teamwork in music education. They believed that collaborative skills learned through the training would have long-term benefits for students, both musically and personally.
<i>Long-term Impact and Retention</i>	Educators believed the training would have a long-lasting impact on students, fostering a lifelong interest in music. They saw retention of students in music programs as a direct result of the training's effectiveness.	Students expressed a desire to continue pursuing music, either through further education or by remaining involved in school music programs. They saw the training as instrumental in shaping their future musical paths.	Administrators viewed the training as a critical factor in student retention within the music program. They believed that the skills and experiences gained would encourage students to remain involved in music for the long term.
<i>Institutional Support and Resources</i>	Educators raised concerns about the need for more resources and institutional support to maximise the training's effectiveness. While they appreciated the program, they saw room for improvement in terms of access to instruments and materials.	Some students noted challenges in accessing instruments and practice spaces, but overall felt the training was valuable. They suggested that more resources could further enhance the learning experience.	Administrators acknowledged the resource constraints and indicated that while they recognised the value of the training, additional funding and support were necessary to sustain and expand the program.

Source: Author's field data

sic-related activities". Administrators, similarly, saw the training as "*a key factor in improving class attendance and participation in school music events*".

Participants attributed increased motivation to hands-on rehearsals, performance opportunities, and visible progress. Educators and administrators

also linked the programme with more regular attendance and participation in school music events.

Theme 3: Creativity and Expression

The training emphasised creativity, which educators valued as it allowed students to explore

their musical identity. One educator stated, *“The focus on creativity and improvisation has allowed students to express themselves musically with greater confidence.”* Students felt similarly, with one commenting, *“I enjoyed the freedom to experiment with music beyond the technical exercises.”*

Students valued opportunities to improvise and experiment beyond technical exercises, while educators and administrators regarded creative expression as an important outcome of the training.

Theme 4: Collaboration and Teamwork

The training’s impact on collaboration and teamwork was noted across the board. Educators remarked that *“ensemble performance training has significantly improved students’ ability to work together, fostering essential social skills”*, and students highlighted that working with peers during group performances and rehearsals helped build a stronger sense of community.

Participants described ensemble work as a setting for communication, mutual adjustment, shared responsibility, and community building. At the same time, the quantitative collaboration score was lower than the scores for attendance and participation.

Theme 5: Long-Term Impact and Retention

Educators, students and administrators, all agreed that the training had a long-lasting impact. Educators believed it would *“foster a lifelong interest in music”*, while students expressed a desire to continue their musical pursuits, either through further education or by remaining involved in school programs. One student noted, *“The training shaped my future musical path and made me want to keep learning.”*

Students expressed an intention to continue music learning, and educators and administrators believed that the training could support continued involvement. These statements concerned anticipated future participation rather than observed long-term retention.

Theme 6: Institutional Support and Resources

Despite the positive perceptions, all groups raised concerns about resource availability. Educators pointed out that *“more resources and institutional support are needed to maximise the train-*

ing’s effectiveness”, while students noted challenges in accessing instruments and practice spaces. Administrators acknowledged these constraints, with one stating, *“While the training is valuable, additional funding and support are necessary to sustain and expand the program.”*

Resource concerns were consistent across stakeholder groups and centred on insufficient instruments, limited practice space, instructional materials, and the need for sustained institutional funding.

Taken together, the qualitative findings show broad stakeholder agreement about perceived benefits in proficiency, motivation, creativity, and teamwork, alongside a shared concern that resource limitations could restrict programme quality, access, and continuity.

DISCUSSION

The skill-development pattern is internally coherent: ensemble performance (4.50) and instrumental technique (4.40) were rated above sight-reading (3.93) and music theory (3.90). This pattern is compatible with Hallam’s (2010) account of the broad benefits of active music making and with Woody’s (2023) emphasis on the cognitive skills used in purposeful musical practice. However, the present study measured perceived improvement rather than observed performance change; without a baseline assessment, external rubric, or comparison group, the scores cannot establish that the programme caused improvement. The lower theory and sight-reading ratings also suggest that performance-centred workshops should be complemented by explicit literacy instruction. Barbieri and Varvarigou (2025) found that learner-centred theory resources become more meaningful when they integrate composition, performance, singing, collaboration, historical context, and diverse repertoire, offering a practical direction for strengthening these weaker areas.

The engagement results likewise require a differentiated interpretation. Strong agreement about attendance (4.63), involvement (4.53), and interest in further music education (4.53) indicates immediate programme appeal, but the lower long-term retention rating (4.00) shows that current participation should not be equated with sustained persistence. This distinction is consistent with Awang

Hassim and Mazlan (2023), who identified interest, task value, self-concept, prior experience, and current satisfaction as interacting influences on continued music learning. Woody (2021) likewise reported that intrinsic and extrinsic motivational orientations coexist among music education students, reinforcing the need to connect participation with personally meaningful goals and visible opportunities. Gamboa-Kroesen (2025) and Cabedo-Mas et al. (2025) further show that inclusive instruction, active participation, and collaborative music making can strengthen belonging and satisfaction. Xu and Li (2025) add that autonomy-supportive teaching is associated with collective learning, flow, and well-being. The present programme may therefore support retention more effectively by combining performance opportunities with student choice, differentiated goals, mentoring, and visible pathways for continued study.

The qualitative evidence clarifies why ensemble work was valued while collaboration received a comparatively lower quantitative mean (4.33). Students described teamwork and community, but the score suggests that these benefits were not equally strong for all participants. De Bruin (2025) found that instrumental music participation can support belonging and resilience while remaining sensitive to teacher support, peer relations, and the wider school environment. Knutsson (2025) similarly identified a continuing tension between musical progression and social inclusion in small-group instrumental teaching. Olsen (2026) showed that peer-devised ensemble agreements can improve communication, accountability, trust, and collective agency, although uneven adherence and blurred responsibility remain possible. Structured rehearsal roles, rotating leadership, peer feedback, and explicit ensemble agreements could therefore make collaboration more systematic rather than leaving it to emerge informally.

Institutional support was not a peripheral issue but a condition shaping the programme's likely sustainability. Students, educators, and administrators all identified limitations in instruments, practice spaces, materials, and funding. Goopy and MacArthur's (2026) scoping review emphasised both the context-specific nature of music-learning outcomes and the need for stronger, longer-term measurement, while also noting the broader tension between the reported benefits of music learning and threats to programme resourcing. In the

present study, resource constraints offer a plausible explanation for weaker theory provision and uncertainty about retention, but this remains a stakeholder interpretation because no resource inventory, expenditure analysis, or longitudinal participation record was collected.

The principal contribution of this study is its context-specific, mixed-method account of a Philippine state-college music extension programme and its triangulation of student, educator, and administrator perspectives. It connects perceived skill development with engagement, collaboration, retention, and institutional conditions rather than treating these outcomes independently. Nevertheless, the single-site, purposive sample, reliance on self-report, absence of pre-programme measures and a comparison group, and lack of follow-up data limit generalisability and causal inference. The findings should therefore be interpreted as evidence of perceived programme value. Future evaluations should use objective performance assessments, validated engagement measures, documented participant counts for every stakeholder group, resource indicators, and longitudinal retention data.

CONCLUSION

The Music Enhancement Training Program was perceived to support students' musical development, engagement, creativity, collaboration, and intention to remain involved in music. Students reported the strongest gains in ensemble performance and instrumental technique, while music theory and sight-reading remained comparatively weaker. Attendance, participation, and interest in further music education were rated highly, but long-term retention and peer collaboration received lower ratings.

Stakeholder interviews reinforced these patterns and showed that hands-on learning, ensemble participation, and performance opportunities were central to the programme's perceived value. The same interviews identified insufficient instruments, practice spaces, materials, and sustained institutional support as constraints. The study therefore concludes that the programme has clear perceived value, but its long-term effectiveness requires balanced instruction, stronger resourcing, and systematic monitoring.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The college should allocate stable funding for instruments, maintenance, practice spaces, and

instructional materials, and should develop partnerships with public agencies, private organisations, alumni, and community stakeholders. Professional development for music educators should prioritise differentiated instruction, music literacy, creativity, technology-supported learning, and collaborative rehearsal strategies.

Programme delivery should retain ensemble performance, improvisation, workshops, and community presentations while adding targeted modules in sight-reading and music theory, structured peer roles, mentoring, and progression pathways. Monitoring should include baseline and post-programme performance assessments, attendance and continuation records, stakeholder feedback, resource indicators, and follow-up studies involving larger and more diverse samples.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

Emily J. Berja conceptualised the study, developed the instruments, collected and analysed the data, interpreted the findings, and prepared and revised the manuscript.

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