ABSTRACT

This teacher action research study examined the experiences of urban middle school orchestra students and their teacher as together we applied self-regulation strategies to music practice. Thirty-three string orchestra students in grades six, seven and eight participated in the study conducted in an urban middle school containing approximately 631 students in eastern Pennsylvania. Methods of gathering data included teacher observation, student work, informal and formal student interviews, and student surveys. Methods of analysis included review of student work, student surveys, student interviews and coding and theme analysis. The students were asked to analyze tasks through goal setting and strategic planning, monitor their performance for signs of progress, manage their use of time, self-evaluate and adapt their rehearsal activities using the process of self-regulation. Findings suggest that students moved through the three phases of self-regulation: forethought, performance, and self-reflection with practice and performance initiating a loop back to forethought. Forethought was not totally independent on the part of the student, but rather it required teacher motivation, student self-motivation, and collaboration. Through goal setting at the appropriate time, students were able to focus and, in turn, individually scaffold their learning. Specific practice strategies including audiation; problem isolation, extraction and reinsertion (P.I.E.R.); and the step-by-step graphic organizer enabled students to make effective diagnosis for improvement. Performance
motivated practice. Freedom promoted self-regulation in practice, yet freedom was also a distraction from self-regulation in practice at times. Reflection was a critical link in the process of self-regulation.