

Empowering student leaders in a high school band classroom

by

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B.M.E, Kansas State University, 2019

A REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MUSIC

School of Music, Theatre, and Dance
College of Arts and Sciences

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2026

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Abstract

What are the best ways to give students leadership opportunities in a high school band classroom? The goal of this report was to explore this question as well as establish leadership roles and responsibilities in my high school band. I feel that this is very important for many reasons. Not only does it give students purpose, but it also helps with buy-in, personal investment, and works towards the overall development of the student. Within this report, I designed a project that involved creating a band leadership team of Band Officers and continuing to define the role of section leaders in my band. In addition to research, I also surveyed my students. My biggest takeaway is that giving students opportunities to step up and lead is a crucial part to a healthy high school band program.

Overall, the Music Master's Program has caused me to examine what I am doing as a teacher and has inspired me to continue making every area of my teaching even better. Curriculum Development and Learning Assessment helped give me a better framework for developing curriculum in my classrooms. Through the knowledge gained in this course, I have been able to better think about what I want my students to know and how to help them achieve this. This has also greatly helped me be more organized in my curriculum planning as well as in assessing my students. History of Wind Bands really inspired me as a conductor to share more history with my students. It has helped me as a teacher to be aware of different styles and historical events that have made our profession what it is today. Advanced Instrumental Rehearsal Techniques allowed me to examine how I lesson plan and efficiently structure my classes. Ultimately, this program has helped refresh my love for teaching music and has challenged me to improve in many areas of my teaching.

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Chapter 1 - Teaching Philosophy

Introduction

Music is an important part of people's everyday lives around the world. It is something that connects people from different cultures, backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, physical or intellectual abilities, and races. Music allows people to communicate, express their emotions, and connect and relate to others. Regardless of where people come from, each deserve the opportunity to create, develop, and gain an appreciation for music. As a music teacher, it is my goal for students to learn how to express themselves, learn how to think for themselves, and gain knowledge as they become contributing citizens of society and of the world.

Why Formal Education?

Having a formal education gives students the opportunity to gain and apply knowledge in all areas. It prepares students to live rich, satisfying, and rewarding lives. Paul Lehman states, "The purpose of education is the pursuit of truth and beauty, the development of human capacities, and the improvement of the quality of life" (Lehman, 2002). A well-rounded education helps students adapt to an ever-changing world. Not only does it provide them with the base-skills and knowledge needed to be successful in the workforce, but it also allows them to develop personal skills such as creativity, flexibility, discipline, and the ability to work cooperatively with others. These are all skills that are developed in the arts.

In education, an emphasis should be placed on social learning and a student-centered classroom. In a student-centered classroom, teachers are able to cater instruction with the students' best interest in mind. "Student-centered teaching philosophies encourage teachers to approach instruction from the students' perspective and are focused on meeting the students' needs" (Raiber, 2014, p. 36). It is essential for learners to interact with others. Students should be

given the chance to act as problem solvers and critical thinkers. I agree with Dewey's active approach to learning. He felt that practical interaction with real problems was more important than theoretical learning (2017). Students play an active role in their learning, and teachers should take on the responsibility for directing students' learning and maintaining the structure of the classroom. It is important to allow students autonomy in evaluation and feedback while still maintaining control of the classroom.

Why Music Education?

Music provides a level of knowledge that helps us be more fully human. I agree with Reimer's view, "Music belongs to basic education because musical experiences are necessary for all people if their essential humanness is to be realized" (Daugherty, 1996, p. 30). Music enriches our lives. Experiences both making and consuming music provide "self-knowledge, self-growth, and enjoyment" (1996). Blacking (1973) argued that music-making is fundamental to what it means to be human. "Music can transcend time and culture" (Blacking, 1973, p. 134).

Music can be used as a tool to provide a time of introspection and contemplation. Music brings wisdom to one's life through its ability to provide clarity and foster deep thinking. It can be used to influence or sway people to think or act a certain way, regardless of if there are words with the music. It has the power to evoke certain emotions as well as allow you to express emotion without the normal constraints of everyday life. Have you ever felt emotions from listening to music? Even if you don't feel this every time you listen to music, I would venture to say that there would be very few, if anyone, who could say in good conscience that they have never had thoughts or feelings after listening to any type of music. Aristotle said that "Music directly affects the passions of the soul and has the power to inspire joy" (Hodges, 2017, p. 186). Music affects each of us greatly. It has the power to change your thoughts and emotions as well

as influence who you are becoming as a person, for better or worse. It provides joy, wisdom through reflection, and strengthens character.

Nothing can replace the experience of music! Gordan Graham said that the uniqueness of music is its greatest aesthetic value. A musical performance that we attend only happens once exactly like it will happen in that moment (2017). Kania defined music as: “(1) any event [including silence] intentionally produced or organized (2) to be heard, and (3) *either* (a) to have some basic musical feature, such as pitch or rhythm, *or* (b) to be listened to for such features” (Hodges, 2017, p. 64). Although beauty is found in music itself, it is also special because we attach meaning and emotions to it from extramusical concepts.

Connection Between Education and Music Education

In a music classroom, individualized instruction that meets students where they are at and connects them is very important. Music classrooms should be student and subject centered where musical demands and student needs determine decisions being made about instruction. The focus of the classroom is based upon the students’ needs and influenced by my informed professional/musical opinions. To know what students’ needs are, you must first develop relationships with them, as mentioned earlier. Gloria Ladson Billings (1995) goes deeper into describing this relationship that is needed between music teachers and their students:

Fundamental to their beliefs about teaching was that all of the students could and must succeed. Consequently, they saw their responsibility as working to guarantee the success of each student. The students who seemed furthest behind received plenty of individual attention and encouragement. The teachers kept the relations between themselves and their students fluid and equitable. They encouraged the students to act as teachers, and they themselves, often functioned as learners in the classroom. (p. 163)

Music Education prepares students for life because it creates musicians who are confident in expressing themselves, communicating effectively, and creating not only while having an appreciation of music, but also in everyday life. The National Association for Music Education promotes the benefits conveyed by music education as consisting of: “success in society, success in school and learning, success in developing intelligence, and success in life” (2017). Music gives students a way to succeed in group development, not only in their musical skills, but also in their life skills. Students will be prepared to not only be contributing members of society, but to also be informed consumers of music. Music classrooms give students opportunities to grow in leadership, grit, determination, responsibility, trustworthiness, work-ethic, citizenship, and character. Through the life skills that we teach in our classrooms, music is an avenue that we can use to help students become successful, contributing citizens, no matter what they do upon graduating and leaving our programs.

Other Relevant Issues

It is very important for teachers to create an environment in their classroom that is welcoming, inviting, and where students feel safe. To do this, I will strive to develop relationships with my students. In making connections with students, I am also supporting them and encouraging them. Students will feel confident to try new things and empowered to strive for success.

Music education should be a core subject because of the opportunities it provides students to learn, create, and develop. The quality of the experience is not determined by the success of performances, but in the growth and knowledge of students. In talking about “The Quantum Conductor,” Corporon (2010) elaborated on the power of music:

At the very least, participation in a music program should create feelingful people who understand and enjoy music. Music creates a pathway to the center of our souls and provides a renewable resource for exploring and expressing our emotions. There is no doubt that music has the power to strengthen and enhance the human condition. In truth, music defines the meaning of being human. (p. 43)

Music holds a strong connection to mathematics, science, history, and literature. Upon the completion of their musical studies, students should understand relationships between music, other arts, and disciplines outside of the arts. They should also leave the program with a strong foundation of music history, theory, expression, and in the knowledge and technical skills needed to be musically literate.

It is important as music educators that we remain flexible in learning and growing while also recognizing what works well in our classrooms. In discussing the future of music education, Miksza (2013) clearly stated what we should focus on:

Sincere and sustained efforts to (1) increase access to music experiences among diverse populations of students, (2) increase the breadth and depth of comprehensive musicianship experiences, (3) increase the degree of individual student empowerment, (4) broaden the range of collaborative approaches to music-making that teachers and students could engage in, and (5) broaden the inclusiveness of repertoire in large-ensemble curricula would be particularly valuable at this critical juncture. (p. 48)

As we focus on the growth and well-being of our students, it is important that we also do not stop growing. This career is a journey of joy, continued growth and development, and enrichment of life due to musical moments shared with people.

How My Philosophy Informs My Teaching

Giving students leadership opportunities in my classroom allows them to further develop their life skills. This gives them opportunities to take responsibility and further develop a student-centered classroom. Students help solve problems, make decisions, and have a higher sense of accountability and input. This provides the right equation for student needs to be met and for students to use skills developed in the music classroom in their daily lives outside of band.

Chapter 2 - Lesson Plans

Introduction

It is a goal in my classroom to transfer ownership to my students. As I reflected on what I wanted this project to look like, I chose to create a framework that would enable students to get a return on their investment in my class. It is a project that allows students to take action and responsibility. This project aligns heavily with my music philosophy, as it provides students with many of the life skills that I want them to leave my band classroom with.

As I looked at my students, I saw many stepping up into leadership roles other than being section leaders. They were willing to dedicate their time and talents and go the “extra-mile.” I wanted to share the load between students and develop a band officer team that gave them designated roles. They could put these roles on a resume, and it would give them a chance to have an official job title for the work that they were already doing. I also believe that creating these roles gives students a chance to step up. My band did not have an existing leadership framework, and this project gave me a chance to develop just that.

In my first activity, it was a goal to see what prior knowledge and experiences students were bringing regarding leadership. What is important to them? Have they had good or bad experiences with student leaders, and what shaped those experiences? I wanted students to reflect on what leadership means to them, and in return, it was my hope that they were provided time to reflect on how they are being a leader. Oftentimes, I use surveys in my classroom as an assessment tool, and the survey you see in Lesson 1 was no different. I was able to use students’ answers as information to guide my decisions in selecting band officers as well as assess where my students’ understanding with leadership was. I have included many student responses that demonstrate this.

The second activity involved choosing a band officer team. In this activity, I give the framework for how I chose this team. First, students applied to be a band officer. Next, I sent a teacher-rating form out to their other teachers and coaches. This gave me information on how other adults in their life saw them demonstrating (or not demonstrating) skills in the following areas that I feel are important to be a good leader: communication, trustworthiness, peer-collaboration skills, leadership qualities, and dependability. I used this information to inform my decisions as to if they would be a band officer as well as which office they should hold. As I was selecting officers, I developed offices as well as a job description that I was able to share with students when they were selected. This process culminated in a planning meeting at the end of the school year that provided reflections on the past school year, goals for the next year, and discussions on what being a band officer would look like.

Lesson Plan 1

Music National Standards (2014) Addressed

1. MU:Pr5.3.E.IIIa Develop, apply, and refine appropriate rehearsal strategies to address individual and ensemble challenges in a varied repertoire of music.
2. MU:Cn11.0.T.IIa Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

Prior Knowledge/Skills

Students bring a knowledge of what leadership looks like from varied life experiences. They have seen leaders in their lives in many places: school, extracurricular activities, sports, musical ensembles, church, and more. Students have also had opportunities to step up and be leaders in many of these instances. They bring prior knowledge of both good and bad experiences with leaders.

Lesson Objectives

1. Students will fill out the questions on a band leadership survey, answering with examples and fully responding to each question.
2. Students will participate in a class discussion on what leadership should and should not look like.
3. Students will fully define in their own words what top traits are important for a leader to have.

Assessment of the Lesson

1. Class Participation
2. Completion of Leadership Survey

Relevant Contextual Factors and Modifications/Accommodations Needed

1. Class Size: 48 students in High School Band (9-12th Grade)
2. Survey is filled out unanimously (without their name listed)

Instructional Materials, Resources and Technologies

1. Paper
2. Pencil

HS Band Leadership Survey 2026

Who is a leader that you look up to and aspire to be like?

What are the top traits that you feel are important for leaders to have?

Talk about a time where you had a good experience with a peer or student leader in a sport, extracurricular, or organization.

Why was this person a good leader? What made you enjoy being around them/having them as a leader? If you haven't had a good experience, what traits and qualities do you think would make a good student leader?

Figure 1: Leadership Survey Page 1

How do you wish we did leadership in band? Do you wish we did more playing tests to establish section leaders? Please feel free to share any thoughts or ideas that you think would help make our band better in this way.

What are things that you enjoy most about band?

Is there anything you wish we did differently? What is your solution to this?

How can I be a better teacher for you? Are there leadership qualities that I can work on?

Figure 2: Leadership Survey Page 2

Activity Plan

Time	Activity	Purpose of Activity	Sequence	Assessment
10-15 min.	Fill out Leadership Survey	Students will fill out a leadership survey. The teacher will use the findings from this survey to develop leadership and gain a better understanding of students' view on leadership in the band classroom.	Teacher introduces survey and tells the purpose. Students fill out survey. Students turn survey in.	This survey is anonymous. This is so that students can be fully honest. The teacher will read through surveys and gather information from questions to inform future decisions.
5-10 min.	Class Leadership Discussion	The teacher will lead a class discussion on "qualities of a leader." The purpose of this is to engage students as they think about and reflect on the importance of good leadership in the classroom. A lot of students show leadership traits, whether they are an appointed leader or not, and the teacher would like to lead them to this realization through student-led responses.	The teacher asks the following two questions and asks for student input: "What are important qualities of a leader?" "What are qualities that a leader should not show?"	The discussion is an informal way to check for understanding of the students' reflection on the survey.

Table 1: Lesson 1 Activity Plan

What are the top traits that you feel are important for leaders to have?

- Determined. A leader needs to be able to get through adversity, & push others to do the same.
- Open-Minded. Leaders need to allow input in order to get passion, effort, & listening in return.
- Trustworthy. The people who follow you need to be able to trust you & rely on you.

Figure 3: Survey Question Response 1

What are the top traits that you feel are important for leaders to have?

Grace, accountability, humility, and not just ~~making~~ ^{glorifying} yourself over others. Loving others well. Showing team work skills not making everything about you as the person ⁱⁿ charge.

Talk about a time where you had a good experience with a peer or student leader in a sport, extracurricular, or organization.

Figure 4: Survey Question Response 2

What are the top traits that you feel are important for leaders to have?

I feel like honesty, grit, and adapting to different situations or circumstances is important for a leader to have.

Figure 5: Survey Question Response 3

HS Band Leadership Survey 2026

Who is a leader that you look up to and aspire to be like?

I don't have a specific person, but I think a lot of teachers in our school (including you) do a great job of leading, through faith, actions, and words.

What are the top traits that you feel are important for leaders to have?

I think a really important leadership aspect is showing that you're human. A lot of leaders try to be aloof, but I feel like having a personal connection of some sort completely changes how people interact with a leader.

Figure 6: Survey Question Response 4

Why was this person a good leader? What made you enjoy being around them/having them as a leader? If you haven't had a good experience, what traits and qualities do you think would make a good student leader?

She was kind, confident, listening, & willing to learn. She wanted to better herself, & not because she was selfish but because she wanted to better the group overall.

Figure 7: Survey Question Response 5

Why was this person a good leader? What made you enjoy being around them/having them as a leader? If you haven't had a good experience, what traits and qualities do you think could make a good student leader?

He was willing to go the extra mile for everyone even if it meant he didn't get to do what he wanted to do.

Figure 8: Survey Question Response 6

How do you wish we did leadership in band? Do you wish we did more playing tests to establish section leaders? Please feel free to share any thoughts or ideas that you think would help make our band better in this way.

I think section leader shouldn't be the best player, but they should be organized, kind, ready to learn, 100% effort, and willingness to try new things

What are things that you enjoy most about band?

learning new things

Figure 9: Survey Question Response 7

How do you wish we did leadership in band? Do you wish we did more playing tests to establish section leaders? Please feel free to share any thoughts or ideas that you think would help make our band better in this way.

I wish there were established officers, because responsibilities often slip through who them, so I am very glad we are getting them. I wish we did them once, but challenges can always happen @ request. Like final one then by request one would happen.

What are things that you enjoy most about band?

- > Making music with others
- > Learning instruments & how to be a better musician
- > The community it brings
- > Contests w/ peers

Figure 10: Survey Question Response 8

How do you wish we did leadership in band? Do you wish we did more playing tests to establish section leaders? Please feel free to share any thoughts or ideas that you think would help make our band better in this way.

I think having a leadership team is a good idea, and as far as playing tests I would say 1 every semester.

What are things that you enjoy most about band?

Playing music and the emotion it brings.

Figure 11: Survey Question Response 9

Lesson Plan 1 Reflection

I had several goals for this lesson plan. Students will correctly and fully fill out the leadership survey. Students will reflect on what leadership means to them, important qualities of a leader, and an experience where they had a good interaction with a student leader. I will use the information gained from these questions to assess what students believe about leadership and leaders. I will also use the knowledge gained from these surveys to analyze what is going well in my class and what I can improve on for next year. Instructional Strategies that I used in this activity included: open-ended questioning, prompting, group discussion, brainstorming, and a survey. Formative and Summative assessments were used.

Students took time to reflect on leadership during this exercise. I believe that this activity also prompted them to look inward, at their own leadership skills. It provided time and space for them to inwardly assess how they are or are not a leader. I believe that we learn from people we respect and admire, so I felt that it was important to provide questions that allowed them to reflect on leaders that they want to be like or admire, as well as not just identifying those leaders, but going the next step further and naming the traits that they had.

I plan to create some more group discussions throughout the year on student leadership. My next lesson goes into developing a student band officer team, and this is one way that I am using this instruction moving forward. I believe that teaching music also helps us teach life skills, and so I felt that it was very important to have a conversation about this with the full band as well as create space for students to reflect on what leadership means to them. This exercise was the first step in re-designing student leadership in my classroom. I will continue to use the information gained through these leadership surveys to make my teaching better as well as increase student leadership (and support for those leaders) in my classroom. Through this

experience, I was reminded of how many students demonstrate these leadership qualities. There are many students who are leaders that might not be in a traditional leadership role in band, and I reminded the band of this.

Lesson Plan 2

Music National Standards (2014) Addressed

1. MU:Pr5.3.E.IIIa Develop, apply, and refine appropriate rehearsal strategies to address individual and ensemble challenges in a varied repertoire of music.
2. MU:Cn11.0.T.IIa Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

Prior Knowledge/Skills

Students are bringing their individual and experiences of being in band into this meeting. They have expressed a desire to be on the band officer team. They have all been in high school band for at least one year.

Lesson Objectives

1. Band officers will meet to discuss the following discussion topics:
 - a.* What went well this year?
 - b.* What did not go well?
 - c.* What are qualities that you should uphold as a band officer?
 - d.* How often should we meet as a band officer team?
 - e.* Is there anything we should not do next year?
 - f.* Is there anything we should add next year?

Assessment of the Lesson

1. Informal assessment: Students are actively participating in the discussion. They are contributing ideas.

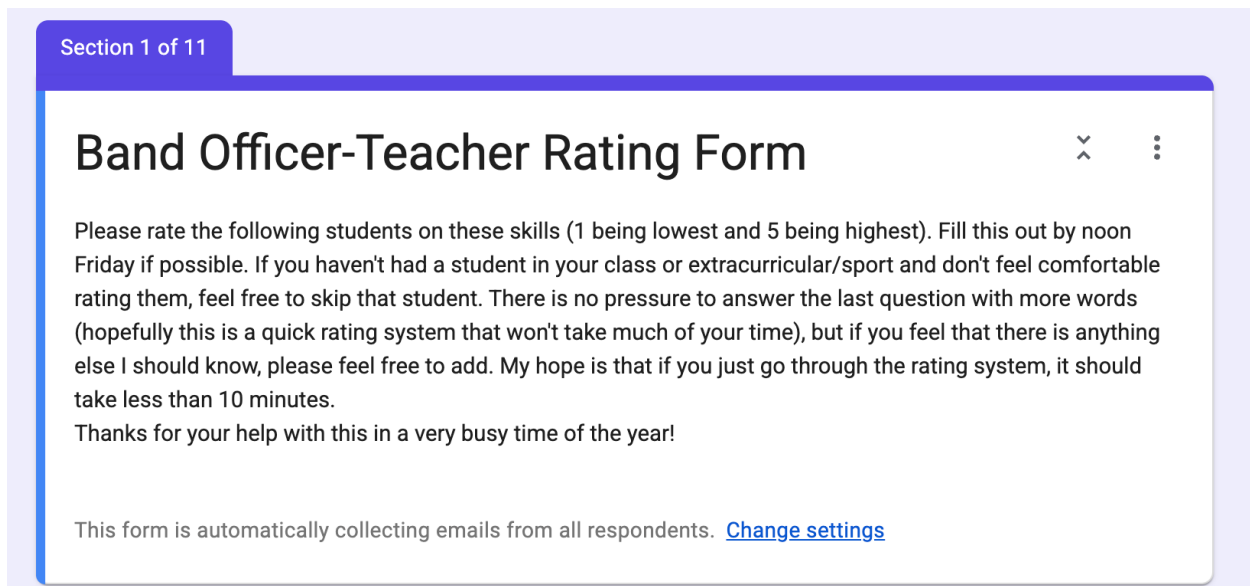
Relevant Contextual Factors and Needed Modifications/Accommodations

There are 11 members of the high school band officer team. These students applied to be on this team, and then I sent out a rating system to teachers to help me determine what their role on the officer team should be. Not all officers were able to be at this meeting due to various scheduling conflicts.

Instructional Resources, Materials and Technologies

1. Pen and Paper

Prior to having this meeting, this google form was sent to teachers, coaches, sponsors, and administrators to be used in the selection of band officers:



The image shows a screenshot of a Google Form titled "Band Officer-Teacher Rating Form". The form is displayed within a purple-bordered window. At the top left of the window, it says "Section 1 of 11". The form title "Band Officer-Teacher Rating Form" is centered at the top of the form area. Below the title, there is a paragraph of text: "Please rate the following students on these skills (1 being lowest and 5 being highest). Fill this out by noon Friday if possible. If you haven't had a student in your class or extracurricular/sport and don't feel comfortable rating them, feel free to skip that student. There is no pressure to answer the last question with more words (hopefully this is a quick rating system that won't take much of your time), but if you feel that there is anything else I should know, please feel free to add. My hope is that if you just go through the rating system, it should take less than 10 minutes." Below this paragraph, it says "Thanks for your help with this in a very busy time of the year!". At the bottom of the form, there is a note: "This form is automatically collecting emails from all respondents. [Change settings](#)".

Figure 12: Band Officer Rating Form Slide 1

Communication				
1	2	3	4	5
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

Trustworthiness				
1	2	3	4	5
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

Peer-Collaboration Skills (How well do they work with others?)				
1	2	3	4	5
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

Leadership Qualities				
1	2	3	4	5
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

Figure 13: Band Officer Rating Form Slide 2

Dependability

1

2

3

4

5

☆

☆

☆

☆

☆

Feel free to add anything else that may help me in this decision.

Your answer

Next

Clear form

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

Figure 14: Band Officer Rating Form Slide 3

Band Officer	Role
President	• Run Meetings • Communicate with Band Officers • Schedule Meetings • Send out communication to band • People go to you first with questions instead of Miss Giles
Vice President	• Check in with other officers often • Write articles for the paper before concerts/big events • Decorations for the band room (feel free to form a committee) • Design Concert Programs

	• Organize absence slips
Secretary	• Take notes at meetings • Send out any thank you notes or correspondence • Takes attendance in class daily • Help with organization around the band room (Make sure Miss Giles is staying on top of things)
Treasurer	• Assist Miss Giles with fundraising • I will plan to give you a small fund at the beginning of the year to use for parties & fun things. It is your job to manage this • Help plan and organize fundraising events
Music Librarian	• In Charge of passing out music-delegate this to other officers as well • In Charge of music turned in • Organize Music • Delegate this to others as needed! This task does not all fall on you • Comes up with ideas for songs • People come to you first if they need music or have a problem
Public Relations (2 share this position, but it doesn't have to be that way every year)	• Make social media posts (with Miss Giles' prior approval) • Take pictures and videos at events • Come up with a way to collect pictures from other band members • Assist in any other PR needed for the band
Logistics Director	• You are a person that others in the band can check in with if they have a problem with an instrument or need anything.

	• Organize loading/unloading • Helps with any other logistics for events and around the band room. • Any behind the scenes help for trips and performances
Activities Director	• In charge of activities & extra things (fun!) • Plans parties, section bonding, etc. • Assist with decorations and props for concerts and performances. Help with creative ideas! • Work with Logistics on help for trips and performances
Board Member (2 members, but this is also flexible)	• Attend meetings, be another voice of input. Similar to a “class representative.” • This job shows that I greatly value your input and want you to be a member at large of the band officers. • You are willing to assist in and help with any job.

Table 2: Band Officer Job Explanation

Activity Plan

Time	Activity	Purpose of Activity	Sequence	Assessment
40 minutes	Students will participate in a band officer meeting.	Students will discuss various questions that help them evaluate this past year in band and plan for what they want next year to look like.	Teacher will lead the discussion by asking questions, but the discussion will mainly be	Did students actively participate in the discussion?

			student-focused, with them answering questions and bringing ideas to the conversation.	
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Table 3: Lesson 2 Activity Plan

Lesson Plan 2 Reflection

My main goal for this activity was to develop a team of high school band officers prior to this meeting through a series of applications and staff evaluations. It was another goal for students to have a productive discussion and brainstorming session to help reflect on this past band year and plan for the following band year. Students communicated what they feel the band officer roles and expectations should be. I used instructional strategies such as open-ended questioning, prompting, group discussion, and brainstorming. The assessment used throughout this activity was summative.

This first meeting with band officers was very encouraging and eye-opening to me. We discussed the various questions listed above, and they had a lot of thoughts and opinions on each question. This allowed me to identify strengths and weaknesses that I have as a teacher, and we came up with several ideas as a group that we felt would help make the band better this next school year. A main focus of the meeting involved conversations that revolved about what it means to be a band officer. Students agreed that they are held to a higher standard as leaders. They want to focus on reaching out to everyone in their section. This would involve making sure others have their music parts down and feel included in the band. Students also discussed

opportunities for more bonding between band members as well as improved parameters of accountability throughout the band.

Overall Project Reflection

In the future, I am sure that edits will be made to the selection process as well as continuing to define and adjust what each job looks like. When going through the application process again, I would like to give students the opportunity to say which roles they are most interested in applying to. With the process this time, I gave them the opportunity to say where they think they might be a good fit, however the full roles were not developed yet for them to choose from. I also plan to continue to adjust and add to my leadership curriculum both for my band officers and for the full high school band. The knowledge gained from the leadership survey was insightful, and adding leadership curriculum to my band program will help to continue this conversation with students.

I really appreciated the teacher surveys. These allowed me to gain insight on how students are perceived outside of my classroom, and the input from other teachers and coaches further gave me information on students' character. I plan to continue sending these out to staff members when completing the selection process. I also enjoyed the band officer meeting. We plan to start by having these once a week at the beginning of the school year, and this will transition to once a month as the school year progresses. I led this meeting, but I plan to turn over control of meetings to our band president while continuing to be an advisor. Students seem genuinely excited to implement ideas and help the band continue to make improvements.

The process of selecting officers was just the start. Although this has taken up most of my project, they will begin their roles next school year, and we will continue to develop what being a band officer means. I truly feel that having this student leadership model in place will help

make our band better. These students are go-getters, they have amazing ideas, and they are already demonstrating great leadership qualities. I am thankful to have implemented this project in my high school band, and I am very excited to see where these students take these leadership roles.

Chapter 3 - Reflections

My time in the Master of Music Program at Kansas State University has helped to greatly refine me as a teacher. It has provided opportunity for continued growth, new knowledge, implementing different teaching strategies, and most importantly has helped further push me to develop skills and qualities that have improved my classroom and skills as a music educator. I have been blown away at how these courses have helped me think more creatively and have challenged me to reexamine why I do what I do as a teacher. I have been reminded of areas of my teaching where I am “playing it safe.” It has pushed me to take risks, try new things, and not be satisfied with the way that things are. Overall, the program as a whole has reignited my passion for teaching band. A huge part of this has been the enthusiasm and knowledge that my professors have taught with. This has also helped to remind me of the kind of teacher that I want to be for my students.

Curriculum Development and Learning Assessment was particularly an impactful course during my time completing this degree. Writing out my yearly curriculum was not something that I had been doing as a teacher prior to this course. This class has helped me be more intentional in my planning through defining my scope and sequence. It helped me concisely explain my program and course goals as well as keep in mind what I want my students to master upon completion. It is important to provide students with activities and assessments that help them achieve learning goals. By starting at what we want our students to take away from our class and where we want them to be, we can effectively structure our assessments. Assessments help us as teachers measure understanding and proficiency. They also allow insight on whether the teacher is meeting students’ learning needs. This course also helped challenge me to create

learning assessments that are beneficial to both my students and I. I was inspired by the many ideas that my classmates also presented in this course.

In Organization and Administration of the Successful Music Program, I was reminded of many ways that I would like to improve as a band director. We studied some impactful leaders such as Bill Snyder (1999) and Jon Wefald (2001). From Coach Snyder, I learned to collaboratively set goals with my ensembles and leaders at the beginning of the school year. I think the most important thing after setting goals is that you need to check your goals and provide accountability and a plan to make them happen. I was reminded of how important it is to listen well, be approachable, and have open communication be a big part of your leadership. Wefald's skill of delegating responsibility is something that I struggle with and have tried to improve upon over the last two years.

Theories of Music Teaching was a course that surprised me. Applying the different theories to music education and not just general education was very eye-opening. I have included some of the ways that I have been able to apply this course to my own teaching. It was helpful to connect how these theories apply to my own teaching. At the beginning of the year when establishing classroom behaviors and procedures, I do feel that it is beneficial to model these behaviors as well as use positive reinforcement for a positive outcome or negative reinforcement for a positive outcome. In this, I would be using the Behaviorist theory. When students are motivated to learn, it allows them to make connections between their previous knowledge and experiences. Students build knowledge upon previous knowledge, beliefs, experiences, and insights, and this also helps them retain knowledge gained. These beliefs that I agree with come from the Constructivist Theory. I want to help students become independent musicians through allowing them space to think critically (Critical Pedagogy). Ultimately, it is my goal as a teacher

to help students develop a Growth Mindset in their learning. One's intelligence and talents can be changed or improved through practice and dedication. I believe that learning in the music classroom should be social. Students work with each other to accomplish goals, and they also learn from one another. The Social Development Theory tells us that learning is a social process as opposed to an independent journey of discovery. Classrooms should be student-centered. Learning should challenge students, but you as the teacher also need to provide the support and guidance needed for students to best learn. This can mean catering to students' learning styles, being aware of their prior knowledge, and taking into consideration how their brains work.

Research in Music Education helped me accurately gather information and find reliable sources. It allowed me to think outside of the box and use the research obtained to gain new ideas. It challenged me to think with a researcher-mindset, which has proved helpful when thinking about ways that I could better my classroom. I would like to continue to build upon the skills learned in this class by implementing more action research in my own classroom. This course helped inspire me in my Master's report.

Courses such as Advanced Instrumental Conducting challenged me to examine my skills as a conductor and what I am translating to my students from the podium. Literature Analysis stretched me to think about how and why I program the music I do. It also encouraged me to evaluate my warmups as well as the skills I am teaching through the literature I select. History of Wind Bands really inspired me as a conductor to share more history with my students. It has helped me as a teacher to be aware of different styles and historical events that have made our profession what it is today. Arranging for Bands gave me the chance to push past the fear of not being good enough as an arranger and realize that I have the skills necessary to produce quality arrangements that will enhance learning opportunities for my students.

In Advanced Instrumental Rehearsal Techniques, I was once again given space to reflect on my own teaching methods as well as develop goals on how I would like to improve. I appreciated the reminder of how “A process-oriented approach must be thorough, effective, thought-provoking, enlightening, expressive, and above all, creative.” (Corporon, 2010, p. 24) It was good to be reminded of how our job as teachers is to amplify the joy that music brings. It is a goal to continue to transfer ownership to my students, and this is also something I have made an effort to accomplish through this project. Corporon (2010) continues to describe our role as conductors:

As conductors we must do more than teach band, orchestra, or choir. We must teach musicianship. Our purpose should be to take what we have made right and turn it into something significant and feelingful. A great performance is one that uses uncompromising craft to create inspirational soul-to-soul music making. (p. 34)

If I focus my mindset on putting more creative responsibility on my students, it will help us have a more musically fulfilling process and product. It is my goal for this next school year to journal consistently and reflect on how this is going in my classroom. “Great preparation will yield a great rehearsal plan. Your level of achievement will be directly related to your mastery of the score, they flexibility and effectiveness of your rehearsal plan, and your ability to communicate.” (Corporon, 2010, p. 32) I do not always spend the time in score study to have complete mastery of the score before starting rehearsals. I plan to make it a priority to be more prepared so that I can make rehearsals more effective for my students. I was also convicted by this quote, “Study is to conducting what practice is to playing. We must do our work in order to help others succeed.” (Corporon, 2010, p. 32) If I am expecting my students to practice and prepare their parts, I need to be responsible for my own first!

Studying Snyder and Wefald, who are two great leaders, provided inspiration to establish more student leadership, which is what I based this master's report on. This is a project that has given me the chance to improve upon Wefald's skill of delegation in my own classroom. In reflecting on which theories of teaching I used in this project, this project enables my students to make strides in developing a growth mindset, both in the band classroom as well as outside of the classroom as they plan and develop ideas. This project also continues to implement the Social Development Theory as students are working collaboratively with one another towards a common goal. Most of all, this project helps to further achieve my goal of a student-centered classroom as I am putting responsibility on my students for their learning and experiences. Having a core leadership team of students also gives me the chance to better improve my teaching and practices through getting feedback from these students.

In Advanced Instrumental Rehearsal Techniques, I was reminded of how I want to make learning opportunities meaningful and worthy of my students' time. This project does this through the buy-in and investment that students are putting in. It continues to expand upon their passion and give them room and space to serve. Through this, I am transferring ownership to my students. Finally, through my Philosophy of Education course, I was able to reflect on and implement my view of how important teaching life skills to students is in this project. In composing my Philosophy of Music Education, I was reminded of how much this project aligns with why I do what I do. My students will continue to gain the life skills needed to be successful citizens outside of my classroom through the experience of being a band officer.

As teachers, I think it is important to model the idea of "never stopping learning or growing." This experience has helped me become more introspective and proactive as a teacher, and, as such, it has allowed me to continue to push myself to further growth in all areas. Due to

this program, I am a better teacher for my students, and I am confident that this growth will continue throughout the rest of my teaching career.

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