

Incorporating chamber ensembles in the middle school instrumental music program

by

Heidi Drennan

B.M.E, Central Methodist University, 1996

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

2020

Approved by:
Major Professor
Dr. Frank Tracz

Copyright

© Heidi Drennan 2020.

Abstract

As a band director, I recognize the learning opportunities that are presented by participation in chamber music ensembles. But ensemble playing is often confined to the small window of time during spring contest season for high school students. The ability to participate in small chamber ensembles can also be limited to students who are already excelling musically. Casual observations in my program have shown that students are motivated by their participation in these one-to-a-part groups, and the learning that takes place in the student-led rehearsals can benefit the larger ensemble. The feeling that students of all musical levels will benefit from participation in chamber ensembles led me to implement a chamber music program for my middle school students. The program began with a small ensemble project involving 8th-grade band members in the spring of 2020. The goal of this project is to expose students to the benefits of chamber ensemble participation and transfer their musical growth to the large ensemble experience.

My teaching philosophies and practices have changed in several ways during the process of obtaining my master's degree. One of the most significant areas of growth has been in literature selection for my ensembles. The coursework exposed me to a variety of unfamiliar composers and has encouraged me to seek out different styles of music to share with my students. I have clarified many of the organizational aspects of my program, such as rehearsal design and sequence, assessments, and day to day management of the band. Reflecting on my personal music teaching theory and reviewing the work of significant music educational philosophers has allowed me to refine and focus my teaching goals and processes.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	v
Chapter 1 - Teaching Philosophy.....	1
How My Philosophy Informs My Teaching	2
Chapter 2 - Lesson Plan(s).....	4
Class makeup for lesson plan.....	4
Sequence of instruction.....	5
Week 1	5
Tracz graph analysis	7
Weeks 2 thru 5	8
Week 6 Performance Week.....	11
Adjustments and Reflections	12
Chapter 3 - Reflections	16

List of Figures

Figure 2-1-General rehearsal outline for Week 1	6
Figure 2-2-Daily sequence of ensemble project activities for Week 1	6
Figure 2-3-modified Tracz graph analysis (Tracz, 2013, pg. 149)	8
Figure 2-4-General rehearsal outline for Weeks 2 thru 5	9
Figure 2-5-Chamber Music Rehearsal Log.....	11
Figure 2-6-MSHAA Small Ensemble Adjudication Form	12

Chapter 1 - Teaching Philosophy

I believe the role of a music teacher is to create an environment where all students have the opportunity for learning, to develop an appreciation of music, and to optimize their musical talents. I have a goal of guiding students to be creative and independent musicians who have a life-long love of music. The classroom is a continually changing environment, and student's educational needs are ever-evolving. My theory of learning and teaching continues to expand to meet the needs of students while providing a structure to achieve the goals of the curriculum and the music program.

To be effective in the classroom, I consider the learning styles of my students as outlined by different learning theories. A critical aspect of this is to recognize students' different learning styles and design my teaching to reflect on how various students learn effectively. Lesson plans can be created and differentiated to appeal to students with various preferred styles of learning. I use the framework of Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983) to create a variety of teaching strategies to meet the needs of all learners. A concept as basic as "quarter notes receive one beat in 4/4 time" can easily be explored mathematically, kinesthetically, linguistically, and spatially in the same lesson and provide an in-depth learning opportunity for the students by engaged their differing intelligences.

Another fundamental aspect of my teaching philosophy involves moving students from basic skill levels to a more advanced level of critical and analytical thinking. I have based much of my teaching in beginning band classes on the levels of Remembering and Understanding from Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). Primary skill building happens at the Remembering level with further learning building on that first level. Motivating student's advancement from basic levels of the Taxonomy to higher levels of Evaluating and Analyzing presents challenges for

both student and teacher. But this higher level of processing the music creates a more meaningful musical experience. My expectations of students' ability to apply critical thinking skills and independent analysis increases as they grow and develop as musicians. Expecting a beginning clarinet student to remember the correct fingerings for various notes is developmentally appropriate. Still, an advanced student goes beyond basic remembering to differentiating between chromatic fingerings suitable for a specific musical passage.

Most importantly, I firmly believe that students learn best when they are interacting with those around them and not in isolation. At its core, music is a social activity, and I use components of social theories in the classroom to motivate students to develop their talents and musical knowledge. The Theory of Social Learning, designed by Albert Bandura (Bandura, 1977) and Lev Vygotsky's Social Development Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), are essential to my teaching. The concept of scaffolding, as described by Vygotsky, is crucial to the goal of educating students who can become independent musicians. The combination of behavior reinforced by the learning and learning that is enhanced by social contexts is a compelling dynamic in the classroom that is rooted in Bandura's Social Learning theory.

How My Philosophy Informs My Teaching

My teaching philosophy was a consideration in designing the Chamber Ensemble project and the various lesson plans used in this project. The goal of students developing into independent musicians and optimizing their talents was a primary motivator for implementing chamber music projects with my middle school students. From selecting their performance piece and ensemble to analyzing the musical score and performance, students can display their musical knowledge and advance their musicianship. Social Learning Theory steps of attention,

retention, reproduction, and motivation are all critical components of the chamber music project and in the success of the students.

Chapter 2 - Lesson Plan(s)

The chamber ensemble project was developed for middle school bands to allow students to participate in a chamber ensemble early in their musical career. Our program's traditional chamber music activities have taken place during the spring semester with our high school students. High school students commented that they enjoyed participating in small ensembles and felt their musicianship increased through their participation. Changes in the middle school class structure has created space for an increased focus on small ensemble playing. The consensus among the middle school band staff was that students would benefit musically and socially from incorporating planned chamber music activities into the spring semester rehearsal plan.

Specific activities designed for each grade level were appropriate for the class's developmental and musicianship levels. 6th-grade beginners focused on duets that were learned during class instruction and performed on a volunteer basis during rehearsal. The 7th-grade class schedules made it possible for a woodwind choir and brass choir to rehearse during the class periods and for those ensembles to perform on the March Music in Our Schools Concert. 8th-grade students were involved in a six-week small ensemble project, which is the focus of the following lesson plan.

Class makeup for lesson plan

The chamber music project focuses on the 8th-grade woodwind section. The 8th-grade band rehearses every day for 55 minutes during the regular school day. Scheduling all members of the 8th-grade band into the same class period presents the ability to occupy three different rehearsal spaces plus a practice room. The options for rehearsal spaces allow for an extreme amount of flexibility in rehearsal configurations. Three of the four program's band directors are

assigned to the 8th-grade band, with the fourth director being available to assist with rehearsals two days a week. The brass section will also be working on a chamber music project with another one of the directors. The instrumentation of the woodwind section is

8 flute
18 clarinet
2 bass clarinet
1 bassoon
7 alto saxophones
2 tenor saxophones
38 total woodwind students

The 38 students will divide into 12 trios and one duet pair for the chamber music project.

Sequence of instruction

Week 1

8th-grade students will be introduced to the small ensemble project during a regular class rehearsals the first week of March. Each day of the introduction week will be devoted to one organizational activity for the small ensembles. Student choice and involvement are a primary focus in organizing the small ensembles. Approximately fifteen minutes of rehearsal time will be devoted to the ensemble project during this first week. Week 1 activities will allow students to form their ensembles and to select their performance piece. Ensembles will be trios with one duet pair. Students are encouraged to think about instrument timbre and traditional trio instrumentation of soprano, alto, tenor/bass voicing.

Students will select their performance piece from three ensemble pieces found in the Excellence in Chamber Music, Book 2, published by Kjos Music. I chose these pieces based on range considerations, previously studied rhythmic elements, and presenting a variety of styles that would appeal to students. Each musical selection will be presented to the students during group rehearsal time through recordings and by displaying the musical score on the

smartboard. Trios will meet to discuss their options and select their performance piece. Because of the number of trios, there will be some repeated selections among the ensembles. The planned repetition assists in addressing technique questions from the ensembles and allows for the trios to expand into larger woodwind ensembles later in the project time frame.

Figure 2-1-General rehearsal outline for Week 1

Time	Activity	Considerations
10:00	Warm up-daily drill	Remingtons Flow studies Registers-octave flexibility Oppermans
5:00	Scale of the Week	Continue with district scale options-major, melodic minor
5:00	Rhythm Chart Work	Review rhythm charts with rhythms found in ensemble music.
10:00	Method Book Work	Three review lines each day, focus on technical and scale pattern lines
20:00	Chamber Ensemble project	Follow Week 1 daily sequence of activities Extra time allotted for activities
5:00	Wrap up-Pack up	Review what we worked on Reminders for the next day

Figure 2-2-Daily sequence of ensemble project activities for Week 1

	Activity	Considerations
Monday	<p>Introduction and Goals Improving musicianship Fun with friends Cooperation Getting ready for HS band</p> <p>Be thinking about who you would like to be in a trio with-how we are going to select trios, what instruments work best together.</p>	<p>Student-directed and rehearsed</p> <p>Odd combos of instrumentation because of numbers</p> <p>Mixed ability because of student choice</p>

Tuesday	Students sign up for trio on signup sheet that passed during rehearsal and posted on the board No switching ensembles. No signing up for more than one ensemble. Think about instrumentation	Check signup sheets for double assigned and missing students. Need to have one duet because of class numbers
Wednesday	Music choices played in class and displayed on the smartboard. Music distributed-all students get all three trios Sight read through ensembles during class,	Allow 20 minutes in rehearsal plan for listening to pieces and sight-reading Emphasis group consensus and thoughtfulness in the decision-making process of selecting music
Thursday	Ensembles meet to decide on a performance piece, assign parts, rehearsal time, and possible performance opportunity. Sign up for rehearsal times-on board	Remind students that all parts are equally important Thoughtfulness in scheduling rehearsal. Communicate with Jacket Time teachers about rehearsal schedule and involved students
Friday	Fill out modified graph analysis Review expectations and procedures for the project	Each group fills out one graph analysis Display graph on board-small group and full class work Check for understanding and questions about

Tracz graph analysis

The Tracz analysis grid offers a tool for in-depth score study and a greater understanding of a specific musical work. The original grid includes details of form, phrasing, tempo, dynamics, meter/rhythm, tonality, harmonic motion, orchestration, general character, means for expression, conducting concerns, and rehearsal considerations (Tracz, 2013). By following the grid from the top left corner to the bottom right corner, the conductor can develop strategies for successful teaching and rehearsals. I simplified the original Tracz analysis grid to meet the needs of the chamber music project, and to fit the knowledge base of an 8th-grade musician. I have

used the graph analysis in 8th-grade rehearsals previously as a whole class activity. The chamber music project will be the first opportunity that students have to work independently on a grid analysis. Students will work with their ensemble partners to fill out a grid analysis for their piece on Friday of week 1. Paper copies of the graph will be provided to the groups to complete in class with guidance from the teacher. By studying the functional elements of the piece, students will be able to have a guide for their rehearsals during weeks 2 thru 5

Figure 2-3-modified Tracz graph analysis (Tracz, 2013, pg. 149)

Measure #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Tempo	List metronome markings or tempo marking such as "Allegro" or "Andante". Note tempo changes like "rit" or "accel".							
Dynamics	Dynamic markings, including crescendos and decrescendos.							
Meter	The time signature of the piece. Note changes in the time signature							
Rhythms	Essential or primary rhythms of the section							
Key signature and tonality	Key signature of the piece. Is it major or minor? Watch for changes in the key signature							
Orchestration	Who has the melody? Who has the accompaniment? Are you playing in unison or harmony? Which parts match up rhythmically?							

Weeks 2 thru 5

Starting week 2 of the chamber music project, students will begin rehearsing in their groups using the signup schedule. Rehearsals will take place before school, during Jacket Time or band class in practice rooms and other available spaces. Before school rehearsal times will begin at 7:15 am and will have the ability to rehearse until 7:35. Jacket Time is a study hall/remediation time for all students during the last 35 minutes of the school day. Groups that select to rehearse during class will move to the practice room following Daily Drill and can rehearse for the remainder of the class period. A signup sheet will be posted on the previous

Thursday on the front marker board for students to sign up for the following week's rehearsals. Each ensemble will be allowed to sign up for a minimum of 1 rehearsal and a maximum of 3 rehearsals a week. I will be available to listen and coach ensembles that rehearse before school or during Jacket Time. One of the other band directors assigned to the 8th-grade band will provide feedback to groups that meet during class time.

Instructional support for musical concepts found in the ensemble music will be a focus of the daily class rehearsal. Reviews of rhythmic motives and key signatures found in the ensemble music occur during the daily drill and scale of the week. During class time, 10 minutes will be set aside for playing through small sections of the ensembles to help students identify technical challenges and strategies to improve. Discussions between the groups will be encouraged so students can share ideas, struggles and successes with other groups. Students will make connections to achievements and struggles that the small ensembles are encountering with similar issues that we face during full-band rehearsals. Groups will be able to volunteer to play a brief section of their ensemble for the class as a pre-performance and to receive feedback from their peers

Figure 2-4-General rehearsal outline for Weeks 2 thru 5

Time	Activity	Considerations
10:00	Warm up-daily drill	Remingtons Flow studies Registers-octave flexibility Oppermans
5:00	Scale of the Week	Focus on scales found in ensemble selections
5:00	Rhythm Chart Work	Focus on charts that include rhythmic patterns found in ensembles
5:00	Method Book Work	Limited method book work to allow for focus on new concert pieces and ensembles

10:00	Concert Piece #1	Introduce new concert pieces for the spring concert, listen to recordings, sight-read new pieces
10:00	Chamber Ensemble project	Questions and concerns from chamber rehearsals Volunteer groups to play small sections of ensembles Reminders about rehearsal logs
5:00	Wrap up Pack up	Review what we worked on Reminders for the next day

. Students will be provided with a weekly rehearsal goal log to help them organize their rehearsals and use their time effectively. The purpose of the rehearsal log is to provide students with an outline to follow during their rehearsals and eliminate the middle school mentality of "running" a piece top to bottom instead of working in sections to fix mistakes. Student ownership over the rehearsals is an essential aspect of this project, and the rehearsal logs can help direct students to a more effective use of time. The rehearsal logs used are based on a Chamber Ensemble Weekly Goals Log published in the December 2008 issue of Music Educators Journal (Berg, 2008). Rehearsal logs will be filled out by each ensemble during their ensemble rehearsal time and turned into the director. The directors will use the previous week's rehearsal logs to check for understanding, progress, and identify ensembles that may be struggling.

Figure 2-5-Chamber Music Rehearsal Log

Chamber Music Rehearsal Log

Members of ensemble

Performance piece

Week	Goals	Activity
Week 2	Read through piece Identify challenging sections Set practice tempo Goals for the ensemble	List measure numbers, describe challenges, and metronome markings
Week 3	Rehearse rhythm challenges Other tricky spots work Adjust practice tempo to performance tempo	List measure numbers, describe challenges, and metronome markings
Week 4	Articulation Phrasing Other problem spots Run through the entire piece at performance tempo	List measure numbers, describe challenges, and metronome markings
Week 5	Balance Dynamics Other problem spots Run through entire piece 2 times	List measure numbers, describe challenges, and metronome markings
Week 6	PERFORMANCE!! Post-performance chat	Success, struggles, improvements that could be made, favorite experience with the ensemble

Week 6 Performance Week

Week 6 of the chamber ensemble project will be performance week. Groups will select to perform their trio for a music appreciation class, a 6th-grade band class, or for a 5th-grade general music class. Including the 5th-grade general music classes as a performance choice provides a recruiting opportunity to encourage signing up for the 6th-grade band. Several different assessment and reflection tools will be used with the trios during performance week. Directors will provide written comments on the performance using the MSHAA Small Ensemble Adjudication Form. The goal of directors providing written comments will be encouraging the players instead of giving contest level critiques. The performances should provide a comfortable opportunity for students to perform in a small group for their peers and not a competitive contest

style rating. Students will meet with their ensemble following the performance to complete the post-performance chat section of the rehearsal log.

Figure 2-6-MSHAA Small Ensemble Adjudication Form

INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE ADJUDICATION FORM

Rating

Festival: _____
 Time of Performance: _____ Name of School: _____
 Ensemble: _____ Event: _____
 Selection: _____ Accompanist: _____

(See reverse side for additional information)

EXEMPLARY	OUTSTANDING	SATISFACTORY	DEVELOPING	INEFFECTIVE
<i>Consistently</i> Demonstrates Proper	<i>Frequently</i> Demonstrates Proper	<i>Sometimes</i> Demonstrates Proper	<i>Infrequently</i> Demonstrates Proper	<i>Seldom</i> Demonstrates Proper
Fundamental Technique	Fundamental Technique	Fundamental Technique	Fundamental Technique	Fundamental Technique
___ Intonation	___ Intonation	___ Intonation	___ Intonation	___ Intonation
___ Tone Quality	___ Tone Quality	___ Tone Quality	___ Tone Quality	___ Tone Quality
___ Breathing	___ Breathing	___ Breathing	___ Breathing	___ Breathing
___ Articulation/Bowing	___ Articulation/Bowing	___ Articulation/Bowing	___ Articulation/Bowing	___ Articulation/Bowing
___ Rhythm Accuracy	___ Rhythm Accuracy	___ Rhythm Accuracy	___ Rhythm Accuracy	___ Rhythm Accuracy
___ Note Accuracy	___ Note Accuracy	___ Note Accuracy	___ Note Accuracy	___ Note Accuracy
___ Position/Posture	___ Position/Posture	___ Position/Posture	___ Position/Posture	___ Position/Posture
___ Tempo	___ Tempo	___ Tempo	___ Tempo	___ Tempo
Musical Effect	Musical Effect	Musical Effect	Musical Effect	Musical Effect
___ Interpretation/Style	___ Interpretation/Style	___ Interpretation/Style	___ Interpretation/Style	___ Interpretation/Style
___ Phrasing	___ Phrasing	___ Phrasing	___ Phrasing	___ Phrasing
___ Dynamics	___ Dynamics	___ Dynamics	___ Dynamics	___ Dynamics
___ Ensemble Precision	___ Ensemble Precision	___ Ensemble Precision	___ Ensemble Precision	___ Ensemble Precision
___ Balance	___ Balance	___ Balance	___ Balance	___ Balance
___ Blend	___ Blend	___ Blend	___ Blend	___ Blend

Fundamental Technique Comments:	Musical Effect Comments:
Strengths:	Areas to Improve:

Adjudicator's Signature _____

Adjustments and Reflections

The Chamber Music Project began with the 8th-grade woodwind players during the second week of March. This time frame was selected because the students would be performing a home concert the previous week and would be ready to start a new cycle of concert music and technique work. The start date of the project also considered that performances for the 5th general music classes would occur during the time the 5th graders were signing up for 6th-grade electives. The first week of introducing the project to the 8th graders went smoothly and with very few adjustments to the planned schedule. Since the introduction week was occurring following a concert, I was able to use the rehearsal time that is usually devoted to concert pieces for increasing the time allowed for the chamber music project. Wednesday's activities of listening to recordings and sight-reading through sections of the music required nearly a full

class period and pushed the students' limits of tolerating sight-reading. I would allow more time for this section of the process and would spread the sight-reading out over three days instead of reading through all the pieces during the same rehearsal.

During the introduction week, I spent a lot of time making sure that students understood the purpose and goals of the chamber music project and going over the procedures. The 8th-grade woodwind class is a group that thrives on structure and does exceptionally well with detailed expectations. Even though it took extra time during rehearsals, my explanations of goals and procedures helped to avoid problems with the students selecting their musical groups and performance pieces. This specific group of woodwind players get along well socially and are exceptionally supportive of each other, so students choosing ensembles did not create issues within the group. Other groups might not show this level of maturity when tasked with organizing into small groups and would require more teacher involvement. Using a different option for forming the ensembles like counting off numbers, random generators, or teacher assignments would be effective.

The graph analysis created a surprising amount of difficulty for many of the ensembles. Even though we have used the graph analysis in class as a full band or as a woodwind section before, students struggled to fill out the graph for their ensemble. I feel this speaks to the importance of having more in-depth conversations with students about the structural elements of the pieces they are playing. Usually, discussions about the key signature, time signature, and other fundamental aspects of the music are limited to the sight-reading process or to address an issue in rehearsal. Those discussions are also usually teacher-driven in the form of quick comments like "remember we are playing in 6/8 time so we are giving 8th notes one beat" or "clarinets, please play B natural and not B flat". When students independently

analyzed the music, many of them struggled with expressing their observations. Students understanding the music in a more in-depth manner that takes them beyond the notes on the page is a critical skill and one that I want to develop in my students. Moving forward, making sure that I am asking depth of knowledge questions about the music and encouraging students to analyze their music individually is going to be an increased focus in my rehearsals.

As we finished up the introduction week, students were excited to begin their rehearsals the following week. That excitement turned to disappointment over the weekend with the announcement that Monday would be our last day of school for an extended period because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Two trios were signed up to begin rehearsals on Monday, and both of those groups met before school. Since both of these trios had selected the same performance piece, we met as a larger group in the band room instead of meeting separately. We spent most of the rehearsal time discussing the impending school closure and what that meant for students and the remainder of the school year. Band classes that day focused on making sure students could access the band Canvas page and that their band binders contained everything that students might need to continue practicing at home. The day finished with lots of unknowns and the reality that this would be the last time we met together as a band for the 2019-20 school year.

As I have navigated the eight weeks of online teaching, the chamber music project has continued to develop and change. Even though students weren't able to rehearse together in the band room, I have been able to create online teaching tools that have allowed students to continue learning their parts of the trio. Students were assigned a section of the music each week and were encouraged to send videos back to me so I could offer suggestions and encouragement. Based on emails from students, I was able to develop short videos to answer specific questions on the performance pieces that students could access on YouTube. While

these videos can't take the place of in-person instruction, they created a situation where students were still able to have their questions answered, and the music explained. I also was able to record videos of myself playing each of the parts of the trios so students could play along. Students were able to select to play along with the video of their part or of the other parts to create duets from home.

Students have also developed their own twists to the chamber music project during their at-home learning. Older siblings that play an instrument have been recruited by the 8th graders to participate in playing an ensemble part. A few of these sibling ensembles have performed front porch concerts and living room recitals. Another popular activity with the students has been creating split-screen music videos. Students have used a variety of online apps to merge videos of them playing all three parts of the trio or of them playing along virtually with friends. One challenge during the time away from school has been the loss of human connections that are such a vital part of the music experience. Through these virtual ensembles, students have been able to maintain contact with friends and fellow band members. These personal connections, along with the advantages of continuing to grow musically during this odd semester will continue to benefit the students and the band program as we return to the band room in the future.

Chapter 3 - Reflections

My teaching has changed and developed in many ways since starting the Masters' program at Kansas State University. The coursework each summer has helped me refine my teaching methods, introduced me to new rehearsal techniques, and exposed me to a broad range of ideas. Each course gave me practical activities and information that I could take back to my students to create meaningful lessons. My teaching has become more innovative and confident because of the skills I learned during my course work at Kansas State.

The theory, philosophy, and research classes motivated me to examine the how and why of my teaching. The statement "music education is important for every child" deserves a deeper level of thought and rational than just a simple comment. It is especially crucial in this time of changing school landscapes to be able to justify and advocate for music education. Writing my philosophy of music education caused me to think through what makes music education so important in schools and to examine how I can express that clearly to administrators and parents.

Studying the significant philosophers of music education and their theories exposed me to many new and different ideas. Many of the methods examined in the classes were ones that I was unfamiliar with from undergraduate courses and expanded my thoughts on the process of student learning. I was encouraged that my methods in the classroom are supported by solid educational theory. I had begun to explore the concepts of sound before sight in my beginning woodwind classes, and studying Edwin Gordon's music learning theory (Gordon, 1997) inspired me to include more audiation and rhythmic pattern activities. Beginning band classes now start the year with rhythmic and tonal patterns presented aurally instead of reading from the band method book. My middle school students have enjoyed having a tune of the week challenge where they learn a familiar tune through audiation. 8th-grade students are encouraged to extend

the basic tune of the week to different key signatures to match scales we are working on in class. I have begun to do more research on using tonal drones and the Yamaha Harmony Director keyboard with audiation and improving intonation. I am looking forward to continuing to expand these ideas into my rehearsals and to improve my students' musical knowledge.

Teaching in the same program for the past fifteen years had created some organization elements that needed an update. Because of the Organization and Administration of School Music Programs class, I created a new leader manual for the marching band section leaders and updated the middle school band handbooks. I was able to use ideas that were shared during our on-campus class time and adapt them to meet the needs of my program. The same type of in-class discussions during Marching Band Techniques gave me some fresh ideas about teaching marching fundamentals that I was able to take back to my teaching team and implement with the students.

Discussion and assignments from History of the Wind Band and Literature Analysis classes have made me seek out new and unfamiliar composers and compositions for my band students. I want to provide my students with quality music from a diverse group of composers, which can be extra challenging at the middle school level. Through the assignments, I discovered several new composers whose music was unfamiliar to me. I have been able to introduce my students to the music of Michael Markowski and Kimberly Archer. I also have been able to locate several quality arrangements suitable for middle school students of wind band classics like the movements of Lincolnshire Posy and Trittico. These arrangements allow me to introduce great works of the wind literature to my middle school students through playing opportunities instead of just listening to recordings.

The Literature Analysis class also has had a dramatic effect on my techniques for studying scores. Over time, I had fallen into a pattern of handing out a rotation of concert band music that required very little in the way of score study. Expanding my literature selections has also meant that I needed to learn how to teach and conduct new pieces. I had attended a presentation by Dr. Tracz at the 2017 Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, where he discussed his process for score study, including the unit study and the graph analysis. The ideas from the clinic were presented more in-depth during our Kansas State class, and I have started to use this method of score study very successfully. My 8^h grade band has worked on the graph analysis as a class with a new piece of concert band music and during their chamber ensemble project. Using the graph analysis and unit study templates has assisted me in being better prepared for the presentation and rehearsal of new music. My students benefit from my deeper understanding of the technical aspects of the music, and we can cover more music in rehearsal because of my more organized presentation.

The conducting class and symposium during my second summer of study was a highlight of the Masters' program. The rehearsal day with Dr. Tracz and Richard Saucedo yielded a vast amount of ideas, techniques, and resources that I have implemented in my rehearsals. Earlier in the school year, I had received a sample edition of *Ensemble Concepts - Essential Musicianship*, and I was curious about how I could use the book in my rehearsals. Richard Saucedo used examples from this book extensively in his presentation during the symposium, and it was easy to see that these exercises could be easily incorporated. I have used the 3 levels of listening concept with my groups, and have seen improvements in the ideas of tone and intonation. Expanding the warmup portion of a rehearsal to include concepts found in concert band selections was also discussed during the symposium session. I have begun to incorporate this type of daily

drill warmup sheet into my district and state audition preparation lessons. Breaking down the audition etudes into warmup patterns and rhythmic exercises has assisted the student's learning and has made learning the etudes more manageable.

Completing my Masters' degree at Kansas State has improved my rehearsal technique and challenged me to develop new ideas for my students. My teaching is more grounded in educational theory and based on research and has a stronger sense of organization. I have been able to model to my students the importance of continuing to learn and challenge myself. I hope that can be a catalyst for them to continue to grow individually and as a band program. I am grateful for my time at Kansas State and look forward to continuing to develop my skills as a teacher and band director.