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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE USE OF DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES AND  
SCORES OF A COMPETITIVE MARCHING BAND

CASEY HOUNSELL  
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Reviewed and approved\* by the following:

Darrin Thornton  
Assistant Professor of Music Education  
Thesis Supervisor

Linda Thornton  
Associate Professor of Music Education  
Honors Adviser

\* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.

## Abstract

The need for understanding democratic practices in education and their role in our classrooms has been discussed for many years within music education. Frances Elliott Clark, nicknamed the “Mother of MENC” and the first president of MENC in 1907, recognized that teaching and learning through democracy is a commitment that requires an acceptance of the changing world and a focus on learning from one another (Allsup, 2007). As educators, it is our role to serve as ambassadors for providing students more “musical leadership with respect to increasing the breadth, depth, and vitality of students musical experiences so that they can contribute to the democratization of musical culture” (Woodford, 2005, p. 29). Through democratic practices in our music classrooms, teachers can begin to provide students with an educational environment that allows for independent thinking, appreciation for the common good, and the ability to become promoters of change (DeLorenzo, 2003). This study looked at democratic practices on the marching band field. The purpose of this study was to find the relationship between the use of democratic practices and festival scores of competitive marching bands.

For this study, a questionnaire was devised to determine teachers’ perceptions of how frequently they use democratic practices within their competitive marching band. The survey solicited complete responses from 42 band directors within the Cavalcade of Bands and Tournament of Bands marching band circuits. The survey was divided into three sections: general information, leadership team responsibilities, and student responsibilities. Leadership and student responsibilities were analyzed according to the frequency certain activities occurred within the competitive marching band using a Likert Scale (Never - All the Time). Analysis revealed that there are many examples of democratic practices found within competitive

marching bands that are used to meet the individual needs of the students and the band as a whole. However, the frequencies of these practices differ between the Leadership Team, Student Involvement, and Overall Democratic Scores of high and low scoring competitive bands. This observable difference shows the need for a better understanding of how democratic practices influence competitive marching band success. Further research needs to be conducted to look at the quality of these democratic experiences within a marching band and how student happiness may affect the differences in competitive marching band scores.

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## Chapter 1

**Introduction**

Education has continually been placed on a scale to determine how “Democratic” the learning environment is for students. While there seems to be no correct answer as to what is the best way to teach, educators are not afraid to voice their own opinion about what the teacher and the students’ roles within the classroom environment should be. Traditionally, classrooms were rigid and ignored the capabilities of the students. They focused on the obedience of adult standards, subject matter, and methods by those who were only growing in maturity. Teachers would traditionally ignore the interests of the child while creating a gap between the educators and the experiences the young learners already possessed. As a result, this gap caused teachers to impose their ideas on the students without giving them a say in the educational process (Dewey, 1938).

However, time progressed, and today’s schooling tends to focus on the other extreme of teaching- “inchoate curriculum, excessive individualism, and spontaneity, which is a deceptive index of freedom.” This progressive way of thinking bases education upon personal experience while increasing the intimate contact between the mature and immature, ultimately removes any external authority. This, in turn, lines up with many of the democratic ideals that people gravitate toward (Dewey, 1938)

However, John Dewey believed that neither the “new” nor the “old” ways of viewing democratic practices within education were correct. He saw flaws with both types of thinking and suggested that it is not the specific type of education experienced, but rather a combination of the two kinds that promotes experiences that “live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences” (Dewey, 1938, p. 17). He stated more importantly that “straitjacket and chain-gang



procedures had to be done away with if there was to be a chance for growth of individuals in the intellectual springs of freedom without which there is no assurance of genuine and continued normal growth” (Dewey, 1938, p. 70). The question then surfaces, what does this freedom mean and how do teachers make this a realization for their students (Dewey, 1938)?

The aim of democracy within a democratic society is to assist all citizens, regardless of gender, class, ethnicity, or culture, to develop their own ideas without the pressure or influence from another source (Woodford, 2005). Within music education, democracy provides students with an environment that allows for independent thinking, appreciation for the common good, and the ability to become promoters of change. Democracy has the ability to create opportunities for examining social issues but also developing sensitive musicians rooted in values such as principles of freedom, access to knowledge for all, promoters of social fairness and justice, and abstract reasoning (Delorenzo, 2003).

Liberals, like John Dewey, believe the teaching of abstract reasoning should be a crucial part of current education because it gives the students freedom to critically think about music. Abstract reasoning is “the making of moral, ethical, and aesthetic distinctions with respect to what is of value to self and society” (Woodford, 2005, p. 43). It leads to a democratic community that enables the participation, recognition, and solidarity of students. Abstract reasoning promotes changes that are shaped by standards, goals, and practices of a democratic society and most importantly the ideas of the students (Woodford, 2005). John Dewey believed that once students learn how to think for themselves, they could then learn how to create new thoughts and pedagogical ideas within music education.

One approach that ultimately emerges when students think for themselves is an emphasis on student-centered learning. This approach involves letting the students think for themselves

and allowing them to contribute to how and what they study. It begins the shift of control away from the teacher and allows for the students to explore, experiment, and discover learning on their own. They become active participants within the learning process rather than simply observers. This ownership of learning allows for students to become actively connected to what they learn and how they learn. The students come up with the ways in which they best learn the material that they want to learn (Brown, 2008).

The benefits of this type of learning are tremendous. Student-centered learning encourages the students to become self-sufficient, creative thinkers and learners who appreciate and sometimes love the subject they are being taught. Through the teaching of other students, students create their own sense of community as they try to help one another to become better students. Within music, students become a catalyst for conversation and shared analysis of music while the teacher becomes more of a coach that promotes a quality-learning environment who never gives defined boundaries for their students (Brown, 2008). No matter the age or ability level, both the students and the teacher ultimately learn from each other.

However, giving up control to the students can be difficult for many teachers and many become reluctant to give students more ownership of their own learning. The role of the teacher is to serve as an ambassador for helping students make informed decisions without giving them every answer. Although teachers have intense training and knowledge in their specific field, it is their responsibility to remain passive and promote others to take the lead within the classroom. Providing strong support through leadership while still giving students an opinion will increase the emotional and intellectual experience for all involved (Woodford, 2005, p. 29).

Frances Elliot Clark, MENC President in 1907, recognized teaching and learning through “democracy are, above all, social undertakings that require us to embrace a changing world and

see that all participants grow while learning from each other” (Allsup, 2007). Maintaining these values allows for classrooms to become more democratic and idea “societies” for developing students’ abilities and individual contributions to the classroom (Allsup, 2007). However with new ideas come philosophical conflict and an array of support and criticism for these new ways of thinking within the classroom

Within music education there is an array of theories and many approaches that have circulated for years. Debated and defended, every idea is either supported or rejected by music educators. However, composers like Leonard Bernstein, one of the most prolific composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, said we need to look beyond proving others wrong and begin to come to a closer understanding of our “respective philosophical agendas in response to a dilemma that has plagued music education for the longest time” (Woodford, 2005, p. 52). For the most part, music educators have the same values when it comes to promoting equality and musical expression to all students yet teachers spend much of their time critiquing other pedagogical ideas and as a result music educators alone have created philosophical conflict (Woodford, 2005, p. 51). Music educators and students alike need to understand the values we are all striving for through a comprehensive philosophy taking into account all opinions and criticisms rather than resolving them (Woodford, 2005, p. 52). Working against differences, teachers need to come together to create an image of what equality and democracy look like within music and music education. Once we do that, students and teachers will be able to reap the benefits of a democratic classroom where students become productive, perceptive, and reflective within their musical education (Brown, 2008)

As mentioned above, the democratic practices within the music and learning environment has been debated for the longest time. While there is research out there that looks into student-

centered learning within the classroom environment and music (Allsup, 2003; Dimartino, Clarke, & Lachat, 2002). , there is very little research of its role within the marching band. As an extension of the music education program of many schools, it seems natural that the effects of student-centered practices within the marching band also be understood. By assessing music director's responses, this study aims to find the nature of the relationship between democratic practices within marching bands and the effects it has on success, defined here as competition scores.

I expect to find an inverse relationship between competitive marching band scores and democratic practices. For example, the lowest scoring competitive marching bands will have the highest overall democratic score, the middle scoring competitive marching bands will have the lowest overall democratic score, and the highest scoring competitive marching bands will have an average overall democratic score. I also expect to find that most competitive bands will incorporate democratic practices within their bands by allowing the students to have an active voice within rehearsals and performances.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate how democratic practices are used within marching band. This study aimed to gain understanding of how democratic techniques are currently used within marching band and how these practices influence the success of competitive bands.

### **Research Questions**

1. How often are democratic practices used within a competitive marching band?
2. What possible relationship exists between the frequency of using democratic practices and competitive marching band scores?
3. What are band directors doing to meet the individual needs of each student?

## Chapter 2

**Literature Review**

In this chapter, an area of literature and research pertaining to democracy within the classroom and music education and the benefits it has on the development of students are analyzed. The research is categorized into three areas: classroom dilemma, student-centered learning, and democracy within music. Each area will provide additional understanding into the status of student-centered learning within the classroom and how music educators can benefit from incorporating these ideas into the classroom.

**Classroom Dilemma**

The following research provides clarity into the dilemma that education has faced in regard to the classroom environment and the forces that influence students to lose ownership of their own learning experience. These articles provide an understanding of opinions from opponents of traditional educational practices.

**Safford (1930)**

Although this article is extremely dated, it gives great insight into the dilemma faced by educators. This dilemma, progressive versus traditional education, was present back then and is extremely real right now. A. L. Safford, superintendent within Reading, Massachusetts, describes two things that influence the procedures within a classroom: tradition and the objectives of the classroom (p. 471). Caught up in the practices of past generations, superintendent Safford describes these traditional practices modified by trial and error to be “useless” and emphasizes teachers’ commitment to formulas, memorization, and achievement

tests. She highlights a few key procedures needed in order to change the traditional classroom environment.

- Pupil is working rather than the teacher teaching
- Motivation and creative effort need to come from within the student's own personality
- There is a need to understand the student's determination, appreciation, ethical idealism
- Teachers need to adjust the rate of learning and simplify or amplify subject matter
- Development and integration of the personality of the individual with the material (p. 472)

By comparing these new ideas to traditional ideas, Safford highlights the magnitude of this dilemma. Looking at the thoughts of educators back then can help shape educators' decisions now.

#### Dewey (1938)

John Dewey wrote that educators do not merely choose between progressive and traditional classrooms, but rather what is the role of the teacher and how do we promote the development of the immature. He states that because education is based on experiences, educators need to select experiences for their students that "live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences" and not merely experiences that promote slack, carelessness, or disconnect from subsequent experiences (p. 17). As an educator "they should know how to utilize their surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them (students) all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worth while" and within an ever-present process (p. 35).

Goodman (1966)

While extreme in nature, Paul Goodman's account of the state of education gives insight into the thoughts of some of the most radical critics of our education system. He criticizes this one world source of knowledge that is our education system. What he calls "brainwashing," Goodman says the components of this flawed system are (a) a uniform world- view, (b) the absence of any viable alternative, (c) confusion about the relevance of one's own experience and feelings, and (d) a chronic anxiety which causes children to cling onto the accepted world view as a blanket of security (p. 83). As a result it is "hard for an American child to grow towards independence, to find his identity, to retain his curiosity and initiative, and to acquire a scientific attitude, scholarly habits, productive enterprise, poetic speech" (p. 83).

Summary

The educational systems of this country have been criticized for many years. While the severities of these critics' ideas are different, they all speak to the fact that students need to take more ownership for their learning. According to Safford (1930), education needs to move away from the traditional classroom and progress toward students incorporating their own personality into their learning and teaching towards the students' needs and not the test scores. Dewey (1938) goes even farther to say that education should not be a matter of traditional versus progressive but rather giving students worthwhile experiences they can use later in life. Finally, Goodman (1966), the most radical, says that education is brainwashing students and they need to search for independence.

### Student-Centered Learning

One way to give ownership to the students is to support student-centered learning within the classroom. As described by Brown (2008), student-centered learning creates active learning where students are engaged and involved in what they are studying. This section looks at research that supports student-centered learning within the classroom and visible ways teachers are incorporating it into their teaching environment.

#### Dimartino, Clarke, & Lachat (2002)

Issues of revolving dropout rates, education attainment, and student performance are problems for most adolescents completing high school. However, while it is easy to blame the students, traditional high schools tend to not respond to “the multiple demands for accountability in the face of new demographic and economic realities” (p. 45). In a national survey conducted in 1994, nearly 40 percent of 20,000 high school students said they were “just going through the motions” in school (p. 45). According to the authors, this attitude can be attributed to a narrow curriculum, basic facts, no connection/application to their lives, isolation from adults, and difficult social situations within the school setting (Dimartino, Clarke, & Lachat, 2002).

The challenge, or solution, is forcing educators to connect the developmental needs of students to the structure and requirements of the existing system. This can be accomplished through the development of six dimensions.

- Voice: the need to express a personal perspective.
- Belonging: the need to create a unique identity and a group identity among peers and teachers.
- Choice: the need to examine options and select a personal path.
- Freedom: the need to assume increasing accountability for personal actions and their



effects.

- Imagination: the need to create a projected view of self.
- Success: the need to demonstrate mastery of adult skills and knowledge (p. 46)

Faced by many challenges, high school students respond actively to learning opportunities when they can provide their own career and learning paths. Teachers will not motivate their students to achieve at the level they expect unless they personalize the learning experience for students.

#### Stuart (1997)

Through an understanding of the multiple intelligence theory, teachers “can help students understand how they learn best and see that each person has a unique set of strengths and abilities” (p. 53). Students begin to understand areas within the Blooms Taxonomy (evaluation, synthesis, analysis, application, comprehension, and knowledge) in which they are strong and areas that they need support (p. 54). By sharing understandable components of learning theories, “you’re putting them in the driver’s seat. They understand how they learn best, and they are in charge of their learning leaving them better prepared to learn even more” (p. 55)

#### Allsup (2007)

Within the current educational system, there is an overall confusion and lack of understanding as to how the teacher is supposed to provide for the students. Many schools are set up with an end goal in mind (e.g.. test, college, grade point average) and educators view the child as “incomplete adults, little products to be filled for future knowledge” (p. 54). Resembling an assembly line as stated by Allsup and earlier supported by the works of John Dewey, teachers should prepare students for “a process of living and not a preparation for future living” (p. 55). While the future is important, education can not only prepare students for one test or one career.

Educators in all subjects need to ask themselves, are they teaching their students to “live” for learning or are they simply “preparing” them to learn?

### Democracy within Music

Applying student-centered learning within the classroom can be tough for any teacher. This section provides current and future music teachers examples of how to incorporate democracy within the classroom and the benefits of a commitment to this form of teaching.

### Brown (2008)

Two successful types of programs that incorporate student-centered learning are Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance (CMP) and Arts PROPEL. The goal of CMP is to encourage students to truly understand the music they are playing rather than just learning it for a concert. It creates a wide, encompassing experience that is extremely student-centered. The CMP model considers the following five points.

- Music Selection- Open discussion of what to play and why they will play it
- Analysis- Discussion about form, melodic content, texture, orchestration
- Outcomes- Goals for the ensemble
- Strategies- Techniques created to achieve outcomes
- Assessment- Done throughout the process through journaling or rubrics (p. 31)

The Arts PROPEL model focuses on the intersection of ideas and concepts from music, visual art, and imaginative writing. There are three main approaches that come from Arts Propel.

- Production- Perform and create music
- Perception- The studying of other works in comparison to their own
- Reflection- How effective is the work and what can be done to improve (p. 32)

Both of these examples provide tangible models for incorporating student-centered learning within the classroom. Within music, it can be seen as difficult to incorporate the students' ideas and reflections within the process however, it is possible and the results should create a more worthwhile experience for the students.

Blair (2009)

This article highlights many of the ideas by John Dewey and focuses on activities that “require students to join in and activities that engage students in experiences that require them to think musically, solving musical problems” (p. 42). Teachers give students the opportunity to “do” rather than engaging them within the musical environment for active and consistent engagement.

Consider a situation where students are engaged in creating and arranging their own compositions of “Che Che Kooly.” As described by Blair (2009), the students learn the piece through an image representation of the melody and add percussion and native African instruments to the song. Next, they are asked to listen to the music and visually represent the texture of what they hear. After, they would be asked to transcribe the music, visually or with standard notation, with a partner or group of students. Finally, the class creates its own arrangement and performs its own rendition of the song (Blair, 2009). This experience creates the act of experiencing for the students, rather than doing, and allows the “students’ interaction with music to be meaningful and challenging, stimulating musical growth” (Blair, 2009). They are then able to take this process and apply it to other musical concepts, other classrooms, and other learning situations.

DeLorenzo (2003)

DeLorenzo (2003) makes the point that music should not be a subject all by itself, but rather it should be “embedded in a social political context where democracy and its moral underpinnings play a key role” (p. 35). In order for this to occur, music programs and teachers need to reflect on how their program is promoting “lifelong musical as well as knowledgeable participation in a democratic society” (p. 36). Questions to consider within a music classroom according to DeLorenzo include:

- Do we maintain our classrooms in such a way that students have some decision making in musical problem solving or classroom policies?
- Do we present a global picture of the arts rather than only a traditional Western practice?
- Is our music program and performing ensembles accessible to all students-even those with disabilities-in the school?
- Do we ask that students substantiate their musical opinions with thoughtful criteria? (p. 38)

Johnson (2011)

Peer interaction allows for the students to have a voice and develop individual ownership within an ensemble (Johnson, 2011). Traditionally conductors hold the power and the ensemble members receive the information given to them. However, through a participant structure students feel proud of their opinion. Rather than have a right or wrong answer, the students are encouraged toward “participation and active learning, with far reaching beneficial effects on the students’ playing and overall approach to music” (p. 51). This occurs through peer relationships, conversations, and students becoming active listeners of themselves, others, and their ensemble.

### Chapter 3

## **Methodology**

### **Overview**

This study explored how democratic practices are used within competitive high school marching bands. The focus of this study was the frequency of student-centered techniques as indicated by marching band directors. The participants of this research were current band directors of competitive marching bands within the Cavalcade of Bands and Tournament of Bands marching circuits.

### **Sample**

Participants were selected based upon two factors: participation in either the Cavalcade or Tournament of Bands Marching Band Circuit, and their ability to answer all questions presented to them through the online questionnaire. While there were many returned questionnaires, many directors submitted incomplete questionnaires. In order for a director's complete results to be used, they needed to fill out the Leadership Team Responsibilities and Student Involvement portions of the questionnaire as well as provide their Final Competitive Marching Band Score for the 2013-2014 Season. Since many directors forgot or were not able to obtain their final scores from the previous year, only 42 responses were used out of 300 band directors initially invited. Additionally, responses were only analyzed if band directors voluntarily consented to participation within the study. In all, 59 participants filled out the survey (42 full participants and 17 incomplete participants) and participated in this study.

### **Data Collection**

Questions in the survey were created to gain an understanding of the frequency and type of responsibilities, deemed democratic, that occur within certain competitive marching band programs. The questions were divided into three sections: questions containing basic information about a program (demographics), questions relating to a leadership team's responsibilities, and questions relating to student involvement within the marching band rehearsal. Participants were asked these questions through an online questionnaire that was created in advance and sent to possible participants. Band directors were instructed before taking the survey that they may choose to discontinue their participation in the study at any time and exit the questionnaire. They were also free to skip any questions they preferred not to answer. Participation in this research was completely voluntary and it took roughly 10-15 minutes to complete. Band directors were directed to the survey, completed through Qualtrics, via a link emailed to the band directors. Questions within the survey consisted of multiple choice, free response, and fill in the blank questions. Once submitted by the participants, all information was reviewed and analyzed solely by the researcher. The online questionnaire can be viewed at Appendix C.

### **Analysis of the Questionnaire**

The online questionnaire was open to band directors for roughly three weeks. Once the survey was closed, no band director was able to take or finish the questionnaire. Their answers to the questions were then analyzed and documented. All information remained completely confidential during the data analysis portion. The information remained within the Qualtrics website as well as on the Primary Investigators computer. No one outside of the research saw this information.

The data was analyzed in two distinct ways. The first looked at the multiple-choice

responses given by band directors. The band directors were asked to rank the frequency their leadership team and students' participation in democratic practices. The possible answers (never, rarely, sometimes, often, all of the time) were given numeric numbers to represent the responses. The numbers included: Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4), and All the Time (5). Based on the answers given in the frequency questions, each band director was given a Leadership Team Responsibility and Student Involvement number for their marching band programs. These two numbers make up an overall number that all participating marching bands were given. The overall democratic score is a combination of the Leadership Team Responsibilities and Student Involvement number (Leadership Team Responsibilities + Student Involvement = Overall Democratic Score). Finally all of these numbers were compared to the Band's Final Competition Score for the 2013-2014 Season. This number was self-reported within the survey.

Table 1: *Example*

High School Marching Band	Competition Score	Leadership Team Responsibilities	Student Involvement	Democratic Score
XXX	87.45/100	20/30	33/85	55/115

After recording all given answers, trends and commonalities were analyzed. Based on the purpose of the research, I examined the data for any visible relationships between the Final Competitive Score for the 2013-2014 Season and the Overall Democratic Score.

Second, Each open-ended question was analyzed individually and examined for themes, similarities, and differences within three separate groups. Those groups were created based on competitive scores of 90 and above, 85-89.9, and 79.03-84.9. For example, a few responses from competitive bands with scores 90 and above were "Drill is written with their ability level in mind," "Our show music and drill is custom made for the members of our band," and "All music

is customized and arranged based on ability levels of the individual students.” Using these responses it is clear that a common theme among competitive bands is specialized drill/music to fit individual ability levels. These themes were created within these three separate groups and then compared across groups.



## Chapter 4

**Results**

The purpose of this study was to investigate how democratic practices are used within high school marching bands. Through analysis of information provided through an online questionnaire, this study aimed to gain understanding of how democratic techniques are currently used within marching band and how the frequency of these practices are related to the success of competitive bands. Band directors were asked to fill out an online survey developed by the researcher. The answers were then assessed and analyzed by the researcher, looking for common themes, possible correlations, and patterns within the data. The data was recorded in the data tables described in Chapter 3: Methodology.

After the questionnaire results were analyzed, the responses were recorded in Table 2. The following numbers were recorded for Competitive Marching Band Scores for the 2013-2014 Season, Leadership Team Responsibilities, Student Involvement, and Overall Democratic Score for each Competitive Marching Band.

*Table 2: Frequency of Democratic Practices within Competitive Marching Bands*

High School Marching Band	Competition Score	Leadership Team Responsibilities	Student Involvement	Democratic Score
1	96.9	23	31	54
2	96	22	60	82
3	95.4	17	41	58
4	95.15	13	35	48
5	94	14	25	49
6	92.9	15	28	43
7	92.17	26	43	69
8	92	15	27	42
9	92	19	30	49
10	91.6	13	46	59
11	91.4	18	40	58
12	90	18	53	70

13	89.9	14	43	57
14	88.95	17	40	57
15	88.9	21	52	73
16	88.85	17	33	50
17	88.15	20	32	52
18	87.85	15	35	50
19	87.7	18	45	63
20	87.6	12	30	42
21	87.45	20	33	53
22	87.45	22	36	58
23	87.35	23	55	78
24	87.2	18	57	75
25	86.4	6	36	42
26	86	21	53	74
27	86	21	39	60
28	85.6	16	45	61
29	85.05	10	46	56
30	85	18	47	65
31	84.9	25	48	73
32	84.85	24	45	69
33	84.5	21	46	67
34	84.1	20	45	65
35	83.55	17	45	62
36	82.1	17	46	63
37	82	20	48	68
38	81.7	19	50	69
39	81.2	20	32	52
40	80.7	21	37	58
41	79.1	21	44	65
42	79.03	19	41	60
Average	87.59	17.98	40.56	58.66
Maximum	96.9	26	60	82
Minimum	77	6	25	42
Possible Range		6-30	17-85	23-115

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Table 3: *Data Analysis of Frequency Question within Score Categories*

	Number of Bands	Average Leadership Team Responsibilities	Average Student Involvement	Average Democratic Score
High Score (90 and above)	12	17.75	38.25	56.75
Middle Score (85-89.9)	18	17.17	43.89	61.06
Lower Score (79.03-84.9)	12	18.92	43.92	62.84

Table 4: *Common Themes of Short Answer Responses*

	Additional responsibilities given student leadership team	Ways in which you meet the needs of <i>all</i> your students?	List specific ways you teach students social skills, organizational skills, and discipline?
High Score (90 and above)	Social Continuity, Role Models, Logistical	Music/Drill created specific to individual, Suggestion/Collaboration (drill, practices, shows), Interactive staff with students	Social Community, Accountability/Organization, Professionalism
Middle Score (85-89.9)	Logistical, Role Model, Coaching	Open Communication (musical and non musical), Accommodations	Self Discipline, Group Discussion, Organization
Lower Score (79.03-84.9)	Equipment, Managing, Morale	Check for Understanding, Accommodations, Communication	Self Discipline, Ownership

## Chapter 5

**Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate how democratic practices are used within high school marching bands. This study aimed to gain understanding of how democratic techniques are currently used within marching band and how the frequency of these practices influence the success of competitive bands. I predicted that the relationship between competitive marching band scores and the frequency of democratic practices would be as follows: the lowest scoring competitive marching bands will have the highest overall democratic score, the middle scoring competitive marching bands will have the lowest overall democratic score, and the highest scoring competitive marching bands will have an average overall democratic score. After analyzing the results, competitive marching bands with the highest competitive marching band scores scored the lowest overall democratic score, the middle competitive marching band scores scored an average overall democratic score, while the competitive marching bands with the lowest competitive marching band scores scored the highest overall democratic score. However, as predicted all marching bands incorporated some form of democratic practices within their rehearsals and performances. Although they were specific to the program, each marching band used forms of democratic practices and techniques.

After analyzing and recording the data, there was an observable inverse relationship between competitive marching band scores and the frequency of democratic practices. As the marching band directors focused less time on creating democratic experiences, the marching band scores increased. Marching bands with competition scores of 90 and above had an average overall democratic score of 56.75 while marching bands with competition scores of 84.9 and below had an average overall democratic score of 62.84. However, with a possible overall

democratic range of 115 points, a difference of 6.09 points between the lowest and highest scoring groups may be insignificant. The group that scored 85-89.9 and averaged an overall democratic score of 61.06 supports the likelihood that differences are insignificant. While this group shows a difference in marching band scores, their overall democratic score is extremely close to that of the low scoring marching bands.

After understanding the Leadership Team, Student Involvement, Overall Democratic scores as well as the free responses, it is clear that all competitive marching bands within Cavalcade of Bands and Tournament of Bands use democratic practices. While the amount of time spent on these techniques and the types of practices differ, it is still clear that they spend some time within rehearsals and performances devoted to democratic, or student-centered, techniques. The length of time and the type of activities these marching bands use is dependent on many things such as the values of the marching band circuit, student prior experience, schools climate, community, parents, band directors, and a multitude of other factors (Hickey, 2014). Clearly there is not one factor that contributes to the frequency or type of democratic activities practiced.

Given this unclear relationship between competitive marching band scores and the frequency of democratic practices and finding that all marching bands within Cavalcade of Bands and Tournament of Bands use democratic practices, I came to the conclusion that success on the field is determined by the quality of experiences students have, not the mere quantity of democratic experiences. My questionnaire looked at the frequency of democratic practices within a band and not the quality of those experiences.

### **Relation to Literature**

John Dewey (1938) continually emphasized the importance of quality experiences over

quantity of those experiences. He says, “the belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative” (Dewey, 1938, p. 13). I believe this to be true and applicable to the competitive marching band setting. For example, in marching bands scoring 90 and above in competition, students may lead sectionals or reflect on their performances less than highly democratic ensembles but the student-centered experiences they use may be much more educational and significant. I can infer from the results I received and existing literature that the quality of democratic experiences is much more of a contributing factor to a band’s competitive marching band score than the quantity of democratic experiences. This is confirmed in the ideas of Blair (2009) who emphasized students’ “living” compared to just “doing.” Within marching bands, students will be more engaged in the process when they start to live for the music rather than acting with misunderstanding and engaged in “uninformed doing” (Blair, 2009).

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

This research presented a few issues that should be considered for further research. One limitation of this study was the use of competitive marching band scores. Scores measure one form of success within a marching band. While a score is objective, the process that occurs to create a score is subjective.

In order to become a competitive marching band judge, you are required to learn from an experienced caption head. Caption heads are experienced judges, usually 15 to 20 years of experience, who specialize in a specific category of the marching band score, or caption. Specific captions include individual and ensemble for music, individual and ensemble movement, ensemble general effect, and specialty captions (color guard, drum line, woodwind, brass). Judges are required to go through a mandatory clinic where they learn directly from these

caption heads about what to look for and which comments and scores are appropriate and inappropriate to give. Once the competition season starts, prospective judges begin to make trial tapes, which they send to their caption head. A judge has the ability to specialize in a variety of different aspects of a performance. Once the caption head deems a perspective judge capable of making appropriate comments and scoring accurately, they begin judging competitions (Hickey, 2014).

In Tournament of Bands, the competitive marching band score is made up of two parts, the top score a band can possibly receive for a show (overall difficulty) and then how well they achieved within a performance. Scores start at an overall difficulty and then as a band performs, points are taken away from that overall difficulty score. These two scores are added together to get an overall score for a performance. While seemingly simple, there are a lot of factors that go into the initial difficulty of a show. Factors like instrumentation, drill, music, props, and choreography all influence the difficulty of a show. All these factors either increase or decrease in complexity based on factors many directors cannot control like size of band, funding, support, prior student experience, musicianship, and many other factors. Scores show a good individual representation of the marching band, however comparing ensembles of different sizes and within different classes with scores is extremely difficult (Hickey, 2014). This limitation was evident in my study because I looked to compare bands based on scores and democratic practices while never taking into account size of band or other factors that would influence the success of a band.

Another limitation I faced is my definition of success. Scores are the most objective information I could gather about a band. I considered marching bands with the highest score to be the most successful. However, after conducting my research, I found that especially within marching bands, success is seen in many different forms. While scoring high is important to

some bands, others found that discipline or teaching life skills was success. Either way, no matter what they saw as success, band directors would always attempt to meet the needs of their students through a filter of what they considered to be success.

As discussed previously, there are many factors that influence the score of a competitive marching band. One of those factors that I would like to research in the future is the type of experiences the students are having. My research focused solely on the frequency of democratic practices and not the quality of those experiences. More research would need to be done to understand the type of experiences marching bands are providing for their students and how that translates to success on the field. I would also like to consider student happiness as a factor that influences a marching band's success. If a student is happier while in the marching band, does that mean they will do better within performance? All these questions could be analyzed through further research.

### **Application to Music Education**

As previously stated, democratic practices within the classroom are often analyzed to ascertain the benefits of a more progressive classroom environment. This study confirms that even within a marching band, democratic techniques can be used and success is not created merely by how many times one does one thing but rather the quality of those experiences. Students need to become invested and engaged in what they are doing which will increase the chances they will apply concepts beyond that class or that rehearsal and apply them to a performance or life.

Marching band directors need to understand that they can achieve "success" through the use of democratic practices. No matter their end goal, competitive marching bands can find different ways to individualize instruction for each student and leader within the band. This will



allow effective learning for all.

Finally, although this study focused on competitive marching bands, many of the ideas that emerged can be applied to other music teaching settings and all areas of education. With invested students who care about their learning, teachers can help foster incredible student learners within education.

**Appendices**

**Appendix A**

**CONSENT FOR RESEARCH**  
The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Relationship between the Use of Democratic Practices and Festival Scores of a Competitive Marching Band

Principal Investigator: *Casey Hounsell*  
Address: *255 E. Beaver Avenue State College PA, 16801*  
Telephone Number: (630) 624-0304  
Advisor: *Dr. Darrin Thornton*  
Advisor Telephone Number: 814-863-4403

**1. Why is this research study being done?**

We are asking you to be in this research because you are a band director within Pennsylvania that is in charge of a competitive marching band.

This research is being done to find out the relationship between student-centered learning within a marching band and success on the field.  
Many band directors from around Pennsylvania will be taking part in this research

**2. What will happen in this research study?**

For this study, you will fill out a fill in the blank, multiple choice, and fill in the blank survey to be analyzed for research purposes. You may choose to discontinue your participation in the study at any time by not submitting your survey. You are also free to skip any questions that you would prefer not to answer

**3. What are the risks and possible discomforts from being in this research study?**

There is a risk of losing confidentiality if your information or identity is obtained by someone other than the investigators, but precautions will be taken to prevent this from happening

**4. What are the possible benefits from being in this research study?**

**4a. What are the possible benefits to you?**

Subjects may gain an increased understanding of how to incorporate ideas of student-centered learning to your marching band

**4b. What are the possible benefits to others?**

The education profession and marching band directors can benefit from the information learned in this study, to help understand how to promote a democratic environment for marching bands and how student-centered practices can promote success.

**5. What other options are available instead of being in this research study?**

You may decide not to participate in this research.

**6. How long will you take part in this research study?**

If you agree to take part, it will take you about 15 minutes to complete this research study.

**7. How will your privacy and confidentiality be protected if you decide to take part in this research study?**

Efforts will be made to limit the use and sharing of your personal research information to people who have a need to review this information.

In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared.

We will do our best to keep your participation in this research study confidential to the extent permitted by law. However, it is possible that other people may find out about your participation in this research study. For example, the following people/groups may check and copy records about this research.

- The Office for Human Research Protections in the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services
- The Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies) and
- The Office for Research Protections.

Some of these records could contain information that personally identifies you. Reasonable efforts will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private. However, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

**8. What are the costs of taking part in this research study?****8a. What will you have to pay for if you take part in this research study?**

Participation in this study will not incur any cost to you

**11. What are your rights if you take part in this research study?**

Taking part in this research study is voluntary.

- You do not have to be in this research.
- If you choose to be in this research, you have the right to stop at any time.
- If you decide not to be in this research or if you decide to stop at a later date, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

**12. If you have questions or concerns about this research study, whom should you call?**

Please call the head of the research study (principal investigator), *Casey Hounsell* at (630) 624-0304 if you:

- Have questions, complaints or concerns about the research.
- Believe you may have been harmed by being in the research study.

You may also contact the Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775, ORProtections@psu.edumailto: if you:

- Have questions regarding your rights as a person in a research study.
- Have concerns or general questions about the research.
- You may also call this number if you cannot reach the research team or wish to talk to someone else about any concerns related to the research.

**INFORMED CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN RESEARCH**

*Your participation implies your voluntary consent to participate in the research. Please keep or print a copy of this form for your records.*

## Appendix B

### Email to Band Directors

Hello Band Directors!

My name is Casey Hounsell and I am a senior music education major in the Penn State School of Music. As part of my graduation requirements for the Schreyer Honors College, I am required to complete a honors thesis and your assistance in completing this survey for would much appreciated.

The research I am conducting, under the advisement of Dr. Darrin Thornton, looks at the relationship between the use of student-centered practices and the festival scores for competitive marching bands. You have been invited to participate in this survey research project because you are a band director in charge of a competitive marching band. For this study, you will fill out a questionnaire that will be analyzed for research purposes. You may choose to discontinue your participation in the study at any time and exit the questionnaire. You are also free to skip any questions that you would prefer not to answer. Participation in this research is completely voluntary and there is no cost except for the 10-15 minutes it will take you to complete the questionnaire.

Precautions will be taken to maintain confidentiality. Although this study presents minimal risk to you, there is a small chance of losing confidentiality if someone other than the investigators were to obtain your email identity. Efforts will be made to limit the use and sharing of your personal research information to university governance authorities that may need to review this information for research regulation purposes.

In the event of any publications or presentations resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared. Contribution to this study will benefit education and marching band directors as information learned about student-centered practices and competitive marching band success are disseminated.

Click the link below to access the research questionnaire

[https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_9MpEmX2kt2x4GI5](https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_9MpEmX2kt2x4GI5)

Please call or email me (principal investigator), *Casey Hounsell* at [\(630\) 624-0304](tel:6306240304) or [clh5497@psu.edu](mailto:clh5497@psu.edu) if you:

- § Have questions, complaints or concerns about the research.
- § Believe you may have been harmed by being in the research study.

You may also contact the Office for Research Protections at [\(814\) 865-1775](tel:8148651775) or email [ORProtections@psu.edu](mailto:ORProtections@psu.edu) if you:

- § Have questions regarding your rights as a person in a research study.
- § Have concerns or general questions about the research.
- § You may also call this number if you cannot reach the research team or wish to talk to

someone else about any concerns related to the research.

Thank you in advance for your participation,

**Appendix C**

## Questionnaire

Qualtrics Survey Software

2/23/15, 1:02 AM

**Default Question Block**

Your participation in the study is voluntary consent to participate in the research. Please keep or print a copy of the consent form for your records. By selecting yes you consent to participation in this study.

- Yes  
 No

**Name of High School****City of High School (eg. State College)****Location of High School**

- Rural  
 Suburban  
 Urban

**About how many students attend your high school?****How many years have you been a music teacher?**

- 1-3 years  
 4-7 years  
 8-12 years  
 13-19 years

20+ years

**About how many students are in the marching band?**

- 1-25
- 26-50
- 51-75
- 76-100
- 101- 150
- 151-200
- 201+

**How many paid/volunteer members are on your marching band staff?**

**Your marching band competes in which competitive circuit?**

**What was your marching band's final competition score at the end of the 2013-2014 season?**

**Does your marching band have a student leadership team (eg. section leaders, drum majors, instrumental captains)**

- Yes
- No



**Who selects the student leadership team?**

- Students
- Staff
- Both

**How many students are on your leadership team?**

- 1
- 2-4
- 5-9
- 10-15
- 16+

**Leadership Team Responsibilities: Please rank the following activities based off the frequency that they occur in your marching band.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All of the Time
Leadership team meets with staff members to discuss the marching band	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership team meets without staff members to discuss the marching band	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students of the leadership team lead music sectionals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students of the leadership team lead warm-ups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students of the leadership team lead marching fundamentals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students of the leadership team handle administrative duties (eg. announcements, attendance)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**List additional responsibilities given to members of the student leadership team..**



**Student Involvement: Please rank the following activities based off the frequency that they occur in your marching band.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All of the Time
Students choose music for the marching band	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students arrange music for the marching band	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students choose drill for the marching band	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students write drill for the marching band	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students create choreography for the marching band	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students create goals for themselves and the marching band	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students discuss their goals for themselves and the marching band	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students create the rehearsal schedule for the day (ie. lesson plan, daily agendas)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time is allotted for students to collaborate with other students about musical suggestions during rehearsal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time is allotted for students to collaborate with other students about marching fundamentals during rehearsal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff members implement musical or marching suggestions given by their students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students learn about the historical background, context, or composer of a	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

new piece of marching band music

Students learn about the theory (eg. chords, form, motives) of a new piece of marching band music

Assessment used within the band (eg. memorization checks)

Time is allotted for students to journal or reflect with other students about a performance or rehearsal

Student's individual interest (eg. socially, academically extra-curricular activities) influence decisions made within the marching band

Student's cultural backgrounds influence decisions made within the marching band

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**List ways in which you specifically meet the needs of all your students within the band?**

**List specific ways in which you teach students social skills, organizational skills, and discipline to your students?**

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## Academic Vita

### Casey L. Hounsell

255 East Beaver Avenue, Apt. 804 State College, PA 16801  
Phone: (630) 624-0304  
E-Mail: clh5497@psu.edu

#### Objective

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To obtain a music teaching position that utilizes my proven performance competencies in music performance and my successful completion of a degree in music education, including student teaching, research, and summer teaching.

#### Education

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**Schreyer Honors College, The Pennsylvania State University, *University Park, PA 16802***

Bachelor of Music Education  
Music Scholarship from University  
Matthew M. and Geraldine S. Fenza Music Scholarship  
Deans List 2011-2015

**Neuqua Valley High School, *Naperville, IL 60565***

#### Performance Experiences

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- Senior Tuba Recital, *University Park, PA 2014*
- Small Chamber Ensemble, *University Park, PA 2011-2014*
- Symphonic Wind Ensemble, *University Park, PA 2011-2014*
- Penn State Tuba and Euphonium Ensemble, *University Park, PA 2011-2014*
- International Tuba and Euphonium Conference, *Bloomington, Indiana, 2014*
- Pennsylvania State Blue Band, *University Park, PA 2011-2013*
  - Sousaphone Section Leader, 2013
- Northeastern Tuba and Euphonium Conference, *Ithaca, New York, 2013*
- Tuba Euphonium Army Conference, *Washington DC, 2013*
- International Tuba and Euphonium Conference, *Linz, Austria, 2012*
- Campus Orchestra, *University Park, PA 2012*
- Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic, *Chicago, IL 2009*

#### Work Experience

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**Hollidaysburg Area Junior High, Student Teacher**

*Hollidaysburg, PA, Spring 2015*

- Instructed student concert bands, lessons, jazz bands, and wind ensemble for grades 7-9
- Created and implemented lesson plans for each class aligned with the state and national standards.
- Developed and implemented a unit plan that revolved around a single musical piece and objective. This unit plan facilitated thoughtful conversations, class discussion, cross-curricular learning, and student assessment.
- Provided differentiated instruction to accommodate the varying skill levels within the classroom.
- Encouraged an engaging classroom environment that fostered hard work and thoughtful music making.
- Instructed growth in individual and ensemble techniques, reading skills, and musicianship during lessons and ensemble rehearsals.
- Coached chamber music ensembles, emphasizing ensemble techniques, ensemble discussion, and individual skills.
- Helped organize, prepare, and run county band festivals, concerts, choir festivals, and auditions in a timely, organized, and professional manner.
- Generated formative and summative forms of assessment to track and report individual and ensemble growth.

# Casey L. Hounsell

## **Longer C. Elementary School, Student Teacher**

*Hollidaysburg, PA, Spring 2015*

- Taught general music, instrumental lessons, band and mixed choir to students in grades 1-6
- Created and implemented lesson plans for each class aligned with the state and national standards.
- Developed and implemented a unit plan that revolved around musical objectives. This unit plan facilitated student understanding of rhythm, melody, harmony, and many other musical concepts.
- Created an engaging classroom environment that fostered respect, hard work, and encouraged the students to always try their best.
- Instructed growth in individual and classroom techniques, reading skills, and musicianship during weekly lessons and general music classes.
- Encouraged thoughtful conversations, class discussion, cross-curricular learning, and student assessment while learning new songs, teaching new dances, and introducing new composers.

## **State College Elementary Band Experience, Elementary School Intern**

*State College, PA, Fall 2014*

- Taught beginning instrumentalist important principles of playing within a band. I emphasized learning new repertoire, improving musicality, developing student listening, and improving tone production to local elementary students during a five-week program.
- Developed effective lesson plans, led rehearsals, and conducted *The Tempest*, by Robert W. Smith for the final concert.

## **State College Marching Band, High School Intern**

*State College, PA, Fall 2013 - Fall 2014*

- Provided instruction for marching fundamentals and music sectionals during rehearsals and football games.
- Collaborated with State College High School Marching Band staff on and off the field about ways to improve the band's music and marching fundamentals as it relates to their pregame and halftime show.

## **Neuqua Valley High School Summer Band, Summer Intern**

*Naperville, IL, Summer 2014*

- Planned, conducted, and rehearsed large and small musical ensembles of elementary, middle, and high school students with a focus on dynamics, rhythm, articulation, style, tone quality, and musicality.

## **Research Experience**

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### **Honors Thesis, Schreyer Honors College**

*University Park, PA Fall 2013-Current*

- Determined whether democratic practices (i.e., student leadership, student involvement) in a high school marching band relate to competitive marching band scores.
- Poster presentation, *Relationship Between the Use of Democratic Practices and Festival Scores of a Competitive Marching Band*, at the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Conference 2015 (PMEA) in Hershey Pennsylvania and NAJME Eastern Division Conference 2015 in Providence Rhode Island.

### **Research Assistant, Bennett Family Center**

*University Park PA Fall 2013-Spring 2014*

- Assisted Dr. Joanne Rutkowski with her research that looks at the effects of male or female teaching voices on the development of a child's singing voice. Findings were presented at the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Conference in 2014.
  - Co-taught a 40-minute kindergarten general music class every week, which included using a variety of strategies for vocal, rhythm, and movement development.
  - Completed a case study that analyzed a single student's progress over the course of a year.
-