Aspects of the High School Music Program and their Relationship with the College Marching Band Experience

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Aspects of the High School Music Program and their Relationship with the College Marching Band Experience

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Honors Thesis

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Abstract

A quality musical ensemble requires the director to be attentive to the needs and abilities of its members. This study examined various aspects of students’ musical and academic preparation in relation to their current experience with music in college. With more insight about the backgrounds of college musicians, and the way those backgrounds relate to their experiences in performing ensembles, music directors will be better able to tailor instruction to the needs of their musicians. For this study, a survey was distributed to members of the University of Connecticut Marching Band about their demographics, education, past musical experiences, and current attitudes toward music and marching. The study found that most participants were majoring in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics. However, participants who studied in these areas did not report any greater confidence in learning new formations than did participants in other majors. While a sizeable portion of the band comprised music, drama, and art majors, they were concentrated in the woodwind and brass sections, rather than percussion and color guard. The study also found that among the music activities participants completed prior to coming to college, the duration of private music study made a significant difference in students’ acceptance to the travelling pep band, whose members are selected based on their musical ability. The results suggest that individualized instruction is more effective than large group rehearsals for the purposes of developing individual musical ability. They also suggest that college marching bands might consider recruiting in underrepresented majors such as humanities.
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Marching bands are often a college’s largest most visible musical unit. Participation in a marching band demands a considerable amount of students’ time and energy. Band also requires a considerable amount of musical skill, which must be developed before the student joins the band.

The quality and quantity of band membership is dependent on the abilities, attitudes, and time commitments required of band members. Therefore, it is important for band directors to consider how the musicians have been prepared, how they spend their time outside of rehearsal, and how they feel about band-related tasks. By the time the band director becomes acquainted with the musicians, the season is already underway. However, a band director who has access to information about general trends in college music-making will be able to make educated guesses about these issues ahead of time, and plan instruction accordingly.

Specifically, it may be helpful for instructors to know which areas of study the members are pursuing, and how people pursuing different majors may have differing musical abilities, marching skills, and attitudes about participation in the ensemble. It may also be helpful for directors to know the types of musical experiences students have before coming to college and how those experiences translate to musical outcomes in marching band. Knowledge of these areas will help music directors to bolster membership, create a satisfying experience for members, and create a high-quality musical product.

This chapter gave several areas for study, and provided reasons to study the selected areas. The next chapter contains a review of the related literature.
CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

This chapter will examine the literature related to high school music programs and college marching bands.

The Composition of Secondary Music Programs

Abril and Gault (2008) surveyed 1000 high school principals about their perceptions of the music programs offered at their schools. They found that concert band is offered in 93% of secondary schools, and chorus is offered in 88% of schools. Other courses, including jazz band, orchestra, piano, guitar, and general music, are not offered in most schools. Principals rated cooperation, teamwork, self-esteem, creativity, and lifelong learning among the most important outcomes of their music programs. Future involvement with the arts and artistic sensitivity were both ranked lower.

Bobbett, Dorothy, Bobbett, and Scagnoli (1993) studied high school activities that impact instrumental outcome. The memberships of three college bands (Ball State University, Florida State University, and Wichita State University) were surveyed. Participants were asked questions about their high school grades, high school music activities, and perceptions of how each high school music activity improved their musicianship. They were also given Colwell’s Music Achievement Test 3 and 4 to determine participants’ musical independence, which the authors defined as the ability to use mastery of music concepts to produce and perform music.

In addition, they found most students ranked private lessons and solo-ensemble competitions (such as all-state festivals) as the most important factor in their music education. Interestingly, those students with higher Musical Independence (MI) scores gave more urgency
(a higher ranking) to private lessons and all-state ensembles. However, as Abril and Gault (2008) found in their survey of high school principals, large ensemble classes are offered with much more frequency than private lessons.

**The Musical Value of Marching Band**

Bobbett et al. (1993) also found that marching contests were activities that students of high MI did not value as much as did those students with low MI. Rogers (1985) surveyed 421 high school band directors and found that they also did not regard marching contests as musically rewarding. However, band directors did value competitions for extramusical benefits such as good publicity.

Mason et al. (1985) reviewed the opinions of music educators from across the country on the value of marching band, and whether or not it serves the goals of music education. Most of the authors agreed with Bobbett et al. (1993) that marching band can provide extra-musical benefits, but see little value in the visual aspect of marching band as far as preparing students for future musical participation is concerned. Some authors proposed that music educators devote less time to marching band and more time to activities that are more effective in developing musicianship, while others believe that marching band can be effective if extra attention is paid to musicianship.

Taylor (1973) surveyed nonmusic majors in an Eastern Kentucky University music appreciation class and found relationships between their backgrounds and their opinions of the Eastern Kentucky University Marching Band. He found that those with musical backgrounds believed that the marching aspect of marching band was more important than the musical aspect. Nonmusicians, however, found the opposite to be true. From both the football fan’s perspective
and the musician’s perspective, the visual aspects appear to be valued over the musical aspects of marching band. It would seem that the majority of teachers, performers, and fans do not value the musical aspect of marching band as much as the pageantry. This leaves open the question of whether or not prioritizing musicianship in the marching program will increase musical independence relative to marching programs that do not stress musicianship.

Young (2001) found that within college marching bands, 68% of members do not major in music. Most members who stay in marching band for more than one year participated in high school marching band for four years. Young argued that these years give students the experience to prepare for marching at the college level. Even though music educators included by Mason et al. (1985) may not value the skills taught in marching band, Young (2001) argues that there are indeed important skills, even if not necessarily musical ones, that a high school marching program must provide in order for students to be successful in a marching program.

Mills (1988) surveyed 1140 band members in 20 Florida high schools, and collected data on their perception of marching band’s impact on professional development, social enrichment, musical growth, group identity, and recreative activity. Mills found that students who participated in a high level of nonmarching musical activity reported more musical growth, personal development, and overall meaning of the band program than did students who participated in a low amount of nonmarching music. He also found that students who participated in ensembles with a high emphasis on marching rated social enrichment higher than did groups with a lower emphasis on marching. This is consistent with the opinions of Mason et al. (1985) who claimed that marching band is more valuable for social reasons than for musical ones. It may also explain Young’s (2001) data showing that students who participated in
marching band in high school had a high retention rate in college bands due to the social aspect of band.

**Nonmusical Factors Related to Musical Independence**

According to Bobbett et al. (1993), private lessons were the most valuable music activity they measured, but only the third most widely participated. The higher the students’ MI, the higher they rated their private lessons. However, the number of years they studied did not strongly affect their MI. Additionally, they found that large ensembles do not influence MI, although they may provide social and recreational benefits. In particular, they found that participation in marching contests has a negative impact on MI. Bobbett et al. believe that this is because it is a large time commitment spent on a relatively unsophisticated musical activity.

Gromko (2004) studied the sightreading abilities of 98 high school wind instrument players, and searched for correlations between sightreading ability and nonmusical cognitive abilities. The study found that sightreading ability is related to reading comprehension, mathematics, and spatial orientation. Gromko suggested that musical ability is not one area of intelligence, but draws on a variety of other domains.

Bobbett et al. (1993) found that, on average, music majors scored one standard deviation higher on the SAT and ACT, and concluded that “musicians are actively engaged in the higher level cognitive skills of application, analysis, and evaluation whenever they rehearse, practice, or perform” (Bobbett et al., 1993, p. 19). However, they also did not find a significant relationship between students’ GPAs and their Musical Independence scores on the MAT 3 or 4. There was a significant relationship between SAT scores and Musical Independence, but that was not the case with ACT scores.
Kinney (2010) studied 402 sixth-grade and 340 eighth-grade students in an urban school and found that females were significantly more likely than males to persist in band classes through the eighth grade. In a study of elementary, high school, and college concert programs, Zervoudakes and Tanur (1994) found that over the course of three decades (1964-1994), gender-based segregation had increased in band. That is, a greater percentage of players of stereotypically “male” instruments, such as the drums, were males, and a greater percentage of players of stereotypically “female” instruments, such as the flute, were females. They also found that the percentage of women in section leader roles had not increased with the percentage of women in band overall.

This chapter discussed several articles from the literature related to high school and college marching bands. These articles raised questions about how attributes of band members such as gender, academic strengths, and amount of musical experience affect their attitude toward participation in music. Chapter 3 will explain the methodology used to investigate these questions.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This study examines aspects of students’ academic and musical background and how they affect their attitude toward music-making. This chapter gives demographic information about the University of Connecticut and about the population of students who participated in the study. It then describes the methodology used in the study. The results are presented in Chapter 4.

Site of Study

The University of Connecticut was founded in 1881. It comprises the main campus in Storrs, five regional campuses in Hartford, Stamford, Torrington, Waterbury, and Avery Point, and a health center in Farmington. Total student enrollment in fall 2013 was 22,595 undergraduate and 7,879 graduate students, for a total of 30,474 students. Among the undergraduate students, 50% were female, 27% were minorities, and 4% were international students. Approximately 80% were Connecticut residents. Total revenue for the main and regional campuses was $1,095,800,000, and total expenditures were $1,126,700,000. The University of Connecticut comprises 14 schools and colleges: Agriculture and Natural Resources, Business, Dental Medicine, Education, Engineering, Fine Arts, Graduate School, Law, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture, and Social Work.

The Department of Music is part of the School of Fine Arts, which also has academic programs in art, art history, digital media and design, dramatic arts, and arts administration. Along with its degree and certificate programs, the School of Fine Arts also contains the Ballard
Institute and Museum of Puppetry, the Benton Museum of Art, the Connecticut Repertory Theater, the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts, and the Community School of the Arts.

The Department of Music offers several general education courses, along with courses leading to Bachelor of Arts degrees in music, Bachelor of Music degrees in performance, theory, and composition, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education offered in conjunction with the Neag School of Education. Ensembles within the Department of Music include orchestra, jazz band, several concert bands and choirs, and the University of Connecticut Marching Band (UCMB).

The UCMB comprises approximately 300 University of Connecticut students. It performs at home football games and university functions. The band also performs in exhibition at high school band competitions operated by USBands, New England Scholastic Band Association (NESBA), and Musical Arts Conference (MAC). No audition is required to join the UCMB, although percussion and color guard members must attend summer audition camps, which determine instrument assignments. The UCMB is led by a director, assistant director, two special assistants, and several paid and volunteer staff members for the drum line, front ensemble, and color guard. Student leadership includes director interns (one or more graduate students in music education), three drum majors, three band captains, a logistics coordinator, and between one and four section leaders in each section, depending on the size of the section.

Membership in the pep band, which performs at basketball games, is drawn primarily from UCMB members. Players may join “Husky Band,” which only plays at home games, or one of the “travel bands” (of which there were three in the 2013-2014 season), which play at home games and also have the opportunity to travel to the sites of the American Athletic Conference (AAC) and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) postseason basketball
tournaments. Membership in the pep band is by audition, and not everyone who tries out for travel band is accepted.

**Instrument**

A survey was created which contained 19 selected response questions about the participants’ demographics and previous music background. The survey also included 12 questions on a five-point Likert scale about participants’ current attitude towards music and marching band. *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree* were the possible options. See the appendix for a copy of the survey.

**Procedure**

The survey was uploaded to the Qualtrics platform. IP addresses were masked to prevent the identity of respondents from being revealed. As an incentive, participants were invited to enter a drawing for a gift card to a self-serve frozen yogurt chain. This was contained in a separate survey from the instrument used in the study.

After IRB approval and the release of pep band audition results, the survey was sent to all members and staff of the marching band via e-mail. The survey remained open for 2 weeks. After the survey concluded, the survey responses were imported to SPSS for analysis. Frequency tables were created for each question.

**Participant Population**

The survey was sent to all members and staff of the University of Connecticut Marching Band. Of the 300 members, 179 responded, for a response rate of 60%. Of those who responded
to the survey, 53% were female, 43% were male, and 4% did not indicate a gender. Approximately 73% of participants were from Connecticut, while 27% were from another state.

The mean number of semesters students spent at UConn was 3.85, with a standard deviation of 2.355. Approximately 34% of participants had been at UConn for one or two semesters, 18.5% had been at UConn for three or four semesters, 15.5% had been at UConn for five of six semesters, 24% had been at UConn for seven or eight semesters, and 4.5% had been at UConn for 9 or more semesters. About 3% of students did not indicate their standing. These may be students who study at other nearby colleges but elect to participate in the UCMB. The mean number of seasons respondents had spent in the UConn marching band was 2.41, with a standard deviation of 1.300.

Roughly 64% of respondents who identified a major were math or science majors. Roughly 15% identified as visual or performing arts majors. Approximately 12% identified as part of a pre-professional program such as education or business. About 9% identified as humanities majors.

Approximately 32% of respondents were woodwind players, 46% were brass players, 11% were marching percussion players, 6.5% were front ensemble members, and 4.5% were in color guard. About 51% of respondents had auditioned for a pep band, and 49% had not. Of those who auditioned, 94% were accepted and 6% were not. About 64% of pep band members were selected for a travel band, and 36% were selected for Husky Band.

This chapter described the research site, demographic information about the participants in the study, the instrument used in the study, and the procedures for distributing the instrument
and analyzing the results. The next chapter will describe the results obtained from the survey instrument.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

This chapter describes the results of the survey, including chi-square tests and independent $t$ tests to determine whether certain variables had significant relationships. Several groups of participants were analyzed in relation to their major areas of study, the amount of time they reported they spent practicing in high school, whether or not they took private lessons, the instruments they play, their selection for travel band, and their reported competence with learning drill.

Questions Related to Gender

There was no statistically significant difference between males and females with respect to their reported ability to learn new drill, $t(164.987)=.338, p=.920$. Males ($M=4.09, SD=.782$) did not feel they could learn new drill any easier than females ($M=4.05, SD=.993$) reported they could (See Table 1).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$n$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I can learn drill easily.”</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>.993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I look forward to marching band.”</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>.918</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>.866</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: No statistically significant differences were found.

There was also no statistically significant difference between males and females with respect to how much they look forward to marching band rehearsals, $t(165)=.338, p=.736$
(See Table 1). Males ($M=4.3$, $SD=.918$) did not report a significantly greater or lesser degree of looking forward to rehearsals than did females ($M=4.34$, $SD=.866$).

**Questions Related to Major Area of Study**

The percent of students in a given major differed by what instrument they played, $\chi^2(12)=21.495$, $p=.044$. All of the arts majors who responded to the survey were members of only the woodwind and brass sections. At least half of respondents in any given section were math or science majors, but this was as low as 50% of color guard respondents and as high as 82% of front ensemble respondents (See Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Participation by Major in Different Marching Band Sections*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major/Lifestyle</th>
<th>Woodwinds</th>
<th>Brass</th>
<th>Marching Percussion</th>
<th>Front Ensemble</th>
<th>Color Guard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math/Science</td>
<td>35 (65%)</td>
<td>47 (60%)</td>
<td>13 (68%)</td>
<td>9 (82%)</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>7 (13%)</td>
<td>18 (23%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-professional</td>
<td>7 (13%)</td>
<td>8 (10%)</td>
<td>4 (21%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>3 (37.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Travel Band component of the UConn Pep Band is selective due to NCAA size restrictions. Therefore, travel band members are selected on the basis of their musical ability. Travel band membership is mostly math and science majors. However, this reflects the fact that there are more math and science majors in the marching band. Therefore, the percentage of math
and science majors who were or were not in travel band was not significant, $\chi^2(3)=6.525$, $p=.089$. Of the 52 respondents who indicated that they were in travel band, 32 (62%) were math or science majors, 12 (23%) were music or art majors, 5 (10%) were pre-professional majors, and 3 (6%) were humanities majors (See Table 3).

Table 3

*Travel Band Membership by Major*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math and Science</td>
<td>32 (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music, Drama, and Visual Arts</td>
<td>12 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Professional (Business, etc.)</td>
<td>5 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities and Social Sciences</td>
<td>3 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, the majority of music and arts majors who auditioned for travel band were accepted (93%), while math and science majors had a 59% acceptance rate, pre-professional majors had a 56% acceptance rate, and humanities majors had a 60% acceptance rate.

There was no significant difference between math majors and non-math majors with respect to the average number of hours they reported practicing each week, $t(106.687)=1.617$, $p=.109$ (See Table 4). Math and science majors ($M=3.376$, $SD=3.27$) did not report practicing significantly more or less than non-math and science majors ($M=4.339$, $SD=3.831$).
Table 4

Hours Math/Science and Non-Math/Science Majors Reported Practicing Each Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math and Science Majors</td>
<td>3.376</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Math and Science Majors</td>
<td>4.339</td>
<td>3.831</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t(106.687)=1.617, p=.109$

There was no significant difference between math majors and non-math majors with respect to their answers to the Likert scale item, “I can learn drill easily,” $t(167)=.281, p=.779$. Math and science majors ($M=4.06, SD=.930$) did not report being significantly more or less confident than non-math and science majors ($M=4.10, SD=.863$) at learning drill (See Table 5).

Table 5

Math/Science and Non-Math/Science Majors’ Reported Ease of Learning Drill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math and Science Majors</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.930</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Math and Science Majors</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>.863</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t(167)=.281, p=.779.$

Questions Related to Musical Preparation

Travel band members were more likely than non-travel band members to have taken private lessons, $X^2(1)=13.49, p<.001$. Of the 52 respondents who indicated membership in travel band, 45 respondents (87%) had taken private lessons. This is a higher percentage than that of
the general band population. Of the 170 respondents who answered the question, “Have you ever taken private music lessons?” 118 respondents (69%) indicated having taken private lessons.

Among those members who took private lessons, there was a significant difference between members and non-members of travel band with respect to the number of years they studied privately, \( t(56)=2.172, p=.034 \) (See Table 6). Those who were selected for travel band \((M=6.2, SD=3.6)\) studied for significantly more years than those who were not selected for travel band \((M=3.86, SD=3.3)\).

Table 6

*Number of Years of Private Study in Participants who Auditioned for Travel Band*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pep band placement</th>
<th>( M )</th>
<th>( SD )</th>
<th>( n )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selected for travel band</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not selected for travel band</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( t(56)=2.172, p=.034. \)

There was also a significant difference between members and non-members of travel band with respect to the number of hours per week they reported practicing independently, \( t(78)=2.837, p=.006 \) (See Table 7). Members of travel band \((M=4.824, SD=3.892)\) reported practicing significantly more than non-members \((M=2.448, SD=3.006)\).

However, there was no significant difference between members and non-members of travel band in the number of hours they reported rehearsing each week with organized musical groups prior to attending college, \( t(66.024)=1.850, p=.069 \) (See Table 7). Members of travel band \((M=14.000, SD=8.232)\) did not report significantly greater rehearsal time in high school than did non-members \((M=10.793, SD=7.027)\).
Table 7

*Time Reported Practicing by Travel Band and Non-Travel Band Members*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of practice</th>
<th>Travel band members</th>
<th>Non-travel band members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent practice</td>
<td>4.824</td>
<td>3.892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehearsal with organized group</td>
<td>14.000</td>
<td>8.232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: While a significant difference in the number of independent practice hours was found, No significant difference was found in the number of hours spent rehearsing in organized groups.

This chapter provided quantitative information about the participants’ answers to the survey, along with chi-square and $t$-test information about select variables to determine if there were significant relationships between them. The next chapter will discuss some of these potential relationships and their implications.
CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions

This chapter will summarize the findings from the previous chapter, discuss some of their implications, and provide suggestions for future research.

Summary of Findings

There was no statistically significant difference between males and females in either their reported enthusiasm for marching band or in their reported ease of learning drill. It does not appear that one’s gender affects students’ attitudes toward participation in marching band.

There was also no statistically significant difference between math and non-math majors in their reported ease of learning drill. However, the majority of each section of the marching band comprises science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) majors. STEM majors were especially prevalent in the front ensemble percussion section at 82% of respondents.

Music and arts majors formed 15% of the band overall, but 23% of the more selective travel band. The vast majority of music majors who auditioned for travel band were selected, while roughly half of students in other majors were selected.

Most respondents had taken some private lessons, although the number of years they had taken private lessons varied considerably. Among those who auditioned for travel band, those who were accepted had studied music privately for significantly more years than did those who were not accepted. They also reported having practiced significantly more each week. However, the number of hours they rehearsed with large groups did not have a significant effect on travel band membership.
Implications

Music majors have a greater presence in the woodwind and brass sections than in the percussion and color guard. This may reflect a lack of desire among music major percussionists to participate in marching band, or those percussion instrument majors who are interested in marching may be more inclined to pick up a woodwind or brass instrument as a secondary instrument. Music education majors in particular are encouraged to pick up secondary instruments. The Director of Bands may be steering people who wish to pick up new instruments toward the brass section, which might explain why there is a relatively high percentage of music majors in that section.

College marching bands with low numbers in a particular section might consider recruiting within underrepresented majors such as humanities, social sciences, and business. They should also be attentive to the needs of STEM majors to keep their attrition level low.

Interestingly, math majors did not report being more competent with learning drill pages than did non-math majors. This means that while math and science majors may be drawn to the marching band, they do not struggle any less with the visual aspect of marching. However, there could still be a connection between math and playing music that encourages math and science majors to join marching band.

In travel band, the distribution of majors is similar to that of the brass section of marching band. This is likely because pep bands are mostly composed of brass players, with the addition of several saxophones, clarinets, piccolos, and a drum set. The relatively high percentage of music majors in travel band (23%) could indicate that music majors have either more time or a greater
desire to perform at basketball games, or it could also indicate that they are more likely to be selected for travel band by virtue of their musical ability.

It should also be noted that those who are selected for travel band tend to study privately and practice independently more than people who are not selected. This underscores the importance of independent practice and one-on-one instruction for students’ musical ability. Also noteworthy is that the number of hours spent in ensembles prior to college does not have a significant impact on entrance to travel band. High school programs might consider replacing some ensemble rehearsal time with small group and individual instruction to better prepare students should they wish to play in a collegiate ensemble.

**Results as they Relate to the Literature**

Zervoudakes and Tanur (1994) and Kinney (2010) raised questions about whether or not gender affects one’s band experience. With respect to gender, this study found no significant differences either in enjoyment of marching band or in ability to participate in marching band.

Gromko (2004) found that reading comprehension, mathematical intelligence, and spatial intelligence could predict sight-reading ability in high school wind players. This study attempted to find a relationship between participants’ major areas of study and self-reported ability to read drill pages. However, results showed that math and science majors did not rate their drill-reading abilities any higher than did non math and science majors.

Abril and Gault (2008) found that high school principals rank teamwork and social aims higher than musicianship aims in the context of large ensembles. If high school band directors take that approach to teaching, it could explain why the amount of time spent rehearsing with an
ensemble did not significantly affect participants’ musical ability, which this study determined by who was selected for travel band.

Bobbett et al. (1993) found that private lessons are the most beneficial music activities for students’ musical development, which could explain why people with more years of private instruction were more likely to be selected for travel band.

**Limitations**

Although the response rate for this study was high, it represented one college marching band whose members are mostly from Connecticut. As a result, the findings of the study may not necessarily be generalizable to all marching band participants throughout the country.

In addition, there may be some UCMB members who are less interested in the activity than others, especially during the off season when the survey was distributed. This group of people may be less likely to fill out the survey.

Finally, this study asked participants to self-report their behavior and attitudes. These reports may not accurately reflect their actual experience, and students who had similar experiences may report them in different ways.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

Future research might focus more on the characteristics of people within each section, such as practice habits, personalities, and grades. Another potential research topic might be attrition in marching band, focusing on what causes people in certain majors to leave the band, and what might encourage them to continue. The reasons why so many math and science majors join marching band should also be explored. Finally, the attributes of students’ high school
marching bands should be researched. These might include such aspects as time spent in rehearsal, types of musical exercises used, time spent rehearsing drill compared to time spent rehearsing music, and competition rankings. That data would be helpful in drawing more conclusions about the value of high school marching bands.

This chapter summarized several key findings from the study, discussed their implications, and named some limitations of the study and possibilities for future research. The marching band is an integral part not only of the University of Connecticut music program, but of many American high school and college music programs. “Is marching band music education? Does it prepare students for continuing musical experiences? The answers do not lie in marching band; they lie within us as music educators . . . Marching band is as educationally valid as we are willing to make it” (Mason et al. 1985, p. 28).

In order to boost ensemble membership and meet the academic, musical, and social needs of students, band directors should be aware of those activities that best prepare students for success. Music educators are tasked with developing musical independence, scholarship, and social skills in their students, and they should keep that in mind as they evaluate their instruction practices and recruitment techniques.
References


Taylor, T.C. (1973, February). *A study of the relationship between selected non-music major Eastern Kentucky University students’ high school musical-athletic backgrounds and their knowledge,
preferences, and opinions of the Eastern Kentucky University marching band. Presented at the Kentucky Music Educators Association Convention, Owensboro, KY.


APPENDIX

Survey

UCMB Survey

Principal Investigator: Del Siegle
Student: Glen Ullman
Title of Study: Aspects of the high school music program and their relationship with the college marching band experience.

You are invited to participate in this survey of members of the University of Connecticut Marching Band. I am an undergraduate student at the University of Connecticut and I am a member of the Marching Band. I am conducting this survey as part of my course work. I am interested in learning the ways various high school music experiences are related to students’ enjoyment and success in collegiate marching band.

Your participation in this study will require completion of an online questionnaire. This should take approximately fifteen (15) minutes of your time. Your participation will be anonymous and you will not be contacted again in the future. You will not be paid for being in this study. This survey does not involve any risk to you. However, the benefits of your participation may impact society by helping increase knowledge about music education and marching band participation. You will also be provided with a link to enter your name into a drawing for one of three $20 gift certificates to Froyoworld. The drawing is optional and your identifying information for this drawing will not be linked to your answers to the survey itself in any way.

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to answer for any reason. We will be happy to answer any questions you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact me, Glen Ullman at (203) 739-5651 or my advisor, Del Siegle at (860) 486-0616. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact the University of Connecticut Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 860-486-8802. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

Please complete the survey online by February 17, 2014.

Thank you very much for participating in this study.

What is your gender?
- Male
- Female
- Other (please specify)

Are you a Connecticut resident?
- Yes
- No

For how many semesters have you been at UConn?
For how many semesters have you participated in any type of UConn music activity?

For how many seasons have you participated in the UConn Marching Band?

What is your major area of study? Check all that apply.
- Math
- Science
- Music
- Drama
- Visual Arts
- Education
- Business
- Humanities
- Social Sciences
- Nursing
- Pre-Med
- Pre-Law
- Other (please specify.)
Check the academic subjects in which you are strong.

- Algebra
- Geometry
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Geology
- History
- Geography
- Social sciences
- Humanities
- English
- Foreign languages
- Art
- Drama
- Music

Check sports you played in high school.

- Badminton
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cross-Country
- Field Hockey
- Football
- Golf
- Ice Hockey
- Lacrosse
- Martial Arts
- Rowing
- Skiing
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Track
- Volleyball
- Wrestling
- Other (please specify)
Estimate the average number of total hours you practiced these sports each week by moving the slider below.

Have you ever taken private music lessons?
- Yes
- No

In which area(s) did you take private lessons?
- Voice
- Strings
- Brass
- Woodwind
- Percussion
- Other (please specify)

For how many years have you taken private lessons in any area? Indicate by moving the slider below.
In which ensembles did you participate in high school?

- Choir
- A Capella group
- Marching band
- Jazz band
- Pep band
- Concert band
- Orchestra
- Chamber ensemble
- Other (please specify.)

In which activities did your marching band participate?

- Parades
- Halftime shows
- Competitions
- Other (please specify.)

Estimate the average number of total hours each week you rehearsed with the above organized music groups by moving the slider below.

Estimate the average number of hours each week you practiced music outside of scheduled rehearsal time by moving the slider below.
What is your section in the UConn Marching Band?
- Woodwinds
- Brass
- Marching Percussion
- Front Ensemble
- Color Guard

Did you audition for pep band for the Spring 2014 season?
- Yes
- No

Were you accepted into one of the pep bands?
- Yes
- No

Which of the following is true?
- I auditioned and was selected for travel band. I accepted the spot.
- I auditioned and was selected for husky band. I accepted the spot.
- I auditioned for travel band but was selected for Husky Band. I accepted the spot.
- I auditioned for and was selected for travel band, but accepted a spot in Husky Band.
- I auditioned and was selected for Husky Band, but did not accept a spot in any pep band.
- I auditioned for and was selected for travel band, but did not accept a spot in any pep band.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am proud to be a musician.</td>
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<td>I get a sense of satisfaction from playing music.</td>
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<td>I am good at playing the show music.</td>
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<td>Marching comes easily to me.</td>
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<td>I enjoy playing music.</td>
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<td>The show music is easy to learn.</td>
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<td>I feel fulfilled after playing music.</td>
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<td>I look forward to marching band.</td>
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<td>I can learn drill easily.</td>
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<td>My marching skills are strong.</td>
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<td>Playing music is fun.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am good at playing my instrument.</td>
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