

Running Head: ATTRIBUTES FOUND WITHIN ACCOMPLISHED MIDDLE
SCHOOL BAND PROGRAMS

A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF ATTRIBUTES FOUND WITHIN
ACCOMPLISHED MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND PROGRAMS

Jacqueline Messinetti
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Faculty Advisor: Dr. Michael Stewart

ABSTRACT

Instrumental music education is a diverse field with equally diverse teaching methods that vary from state-to-state and teacher-to-teacher. Almost every public school music program in the country has a band program, many beginning in middle school. It is within these first few years in which a student's musical development is most crucial and provides the purpose for this research. The goal of this study is to identify specific teaching methods and organizational strategies that are most prevalent in middle school band programs deemed to be successful across the United States. These bands, identified by their selection and participation in the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in the last ten years, are considered exemplary programs at the national and international level. The Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic provides an opportunity to showcase the most prestigious ensembles throughout the world. This study will identify any trends between these programs and compare and contrast teaching methods based on the quantitative and qualitative responses of the survey. The information gathered from this study will provide extremely important information to help young directors become more successful early on in their career.

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

In the field of instrumental music education there is one major question; “How do I improve my ensembles?” As directors, we can tell the difference between a good ensemble and a superior ensemble, but we do not always know what makes certain programs more successful than others. The problem is identifying which traits of successful programs embody.

The Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic is an annual conference held in Chicago, Illinois. Since it’s inception in 1946, the “Midwest Clinic” has invited outstanding bands to perform, based upon the reputations of the organization and their directors. Today, directors can complete an application process for their ensemble to perform during March of the previous year. Along with the application, directors must provide letters of recommendation and recordings of their ensemble. The choice of music literature on the recording plays role in the audition process. According the Midwest Performance Application found on their website, a traditional military style march is required on the band audition recording because it exhibits a clear understanding of the character, phrasing, dynamic contrast, articulation, style, pitch, control and transparency of musical lines, often overlooked or under rehearsed by many bands. As stated on the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic website, “Traditional accepted quality standard repertoire would be preferred. It is probable that a more difficult selection, whether new or old, that is played well, would tip the scales in comparison to a less difficult selection played

equally well”. After performing at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, performing groups must wait four years before they can apply to perform again.¹

Since the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic has played a major role in the development of bands and performing at the clinic is regarded as one of the highest honors in music education, it is common for band directors to question what these programs do that are different from their own daily practices. The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze trends among successful middle school band programs. This study was conducted by surveying directors of successful middle school bands about different aspects of their program, pedagogy and teaching methods. The results of this study will offer concrete trends among the surveyed programs. For the purpose of this study, a common trend will be identified as a trend occurring in over eighty percent of the surveyed programs.

The subjects of the study were identified by directors who have brought their middle school, junior high, or elementary school band to the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic to perform in the last ten years (2006-2016). This study did not include any high school programs, jazz ensembles, chamber groups, or orchestras. After identifying the subjects of the study, a survey was created for the subjects. After these surveys were pilot tested, they were distributed by a link via email to the participants who had completed their informed consent form (See Appendices A). After receiving the link, participants had two weeks to complete the survey. This survey created through the Qualtrics software and was available to take either on a computer or mobile device. After the subjects

¹ Midwest Clinic Website

completed the survey, they submitted it into the program. The survey consisted of multiple choice, and short response questions. Data was collected in September and October of 2016.

We predicted that these band programs would have many similarities due to their elite status as participants of the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic. We also predicted that band programs would have many similarities due to their similar geographic locations. The null hypothesis is that these band would have no significant similarities.

Some limitations of the study included the small and specific sample size. Without a significant amount of participants, trends could not be identified between programs and this paper would then only suffice as a comparison between programs. Since this was a specific sample size, the importance of each individual response was critical to the study. In simply sending an email to each subject, their lack of participation could be attributed to the ease of discarding the email. Another hindrance to the study was the separate informed consent form, this form as per the IRB. Since the researcher had to receive the informed consent form before providing the subject with the survey, the survey was not as accessible. Another limitation of the study was the impersonal relationship the researcher had with the subjects. As an undergraduate student, the researcher's name and title do not hold the same authority as a professional colleague in the field. In order to encourage responses, the amount of questions in the survey had to be limited, thus preventing a comprehensive overview of each program. An additional limitation of the study was the effort put in by the subjects when completing the survey some responses were thorough while others left questions blank. As the researcher cannot

mandate participation or quality of participation, this limited the quality and quantity of responses. During this review of the literature, there were also many limitations because this study took a general look at each program, while most of the literature focused on very specific aspects of instrumental music education programs.

Chapter 2: METHOD

Subjects

The subjects of this study were middle school band directors who have taken their band to Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic from 2006-2016, regardless of their current position. This study included only one director for each program. A total of thirteen members participated in this study out of a possible thirty-three (39% response rate). Three subjects of the study were selected to perform at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic twice during the last ten years. Two of the three subjects performed twice with the same school while one of the subjects performed with two different schools. In order to ensure anonymity of the participants, these schools were only counted once in the research. Of the three directors that performed at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic twice in the last ten years, two responded to the survey. The subject's names were listed under "past performances" and "performers" on the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic's website. The names of the directors and their ensembles are listed in public view on the website. The director's email addresses were found through their band websites or

through their school websites. Some of the schools listed more than one director for their school, but only one director was contacted per school.

Procedure

First, a list was made of the directors and ensembles who have performed at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in the last ten years, from 2006-2016. The directors from 2016 had not yet performed at Midwest at the time of the study, but they were already accepted to perform that December. This list was created from the archives on the website of the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic organization. On their website, they listed the name of the ensemble, the directors, location of the school, and year they performed. These lists did not specify what level the ensemble was, but the name of the school allowed the researcher to determine if it was a high school, middle school, collegiate ensemble, or professional ensemble. There were a few bands that listed more than one director with their ensemble, but only one director was contacted from each school. From the school name and director's name, the researchers found an email address on their school and/or band's website as a means to contact them. There were two participants for whom a email address was not located.

A survey was created for the subjects that helped identify aspects of their program, teaching practices, and policies in the classroom. This survey was then digitized using the survey software Qualtrics. This survey was available to take either on a computer or mobile device. After the survey was created, the participants were sent an email with a message describing the study and inviting them to participate. This email also included an attached informed consent form, which they were to complete if they

were interested. The participant could either mail or scan and email the informed consent form back to the researcher. Once the completed informed consent form was received, the researcher emailed the participant an anonymous link to the Qualtrics survey. The participants then had unlimited time to complete the survey, and could only complete the survey once. Data was collected in September and October of 2016.

CHAPTER 3 RESULTS

After each director had completed the aforementioned survey, data was compiled and coded in order to identify both quantitative and qualitative trends. Each director was given a label ranging from A-M to keep their responses private. These letters were assigned randomly on the Qualtrics survey site. For the purpose of this study, a common trend will be identified as a trend occurring over eighty percent of surveyed programs.

Out of the thirty-three different participants, thirteen directors responded, completed the informed consent form, and completed the survey. The total response rate is thirty-nine percent.

The first question, “What grade levels are included in your band program? Select all that apply” had a 100% response rate. None of the programs (0%) included ninth grade; eleven programs (84.62%) included eighth grade; thirteen programs (100%) included seventh grade; thirteen programs (100%) included sixth grade; two programs (15.38%) included fifth grade; and one program (7.6%) included fourth grade. From the responses, we can gather that one program (7.6%) begins instruction in fourth grade, two programs (15.38%) begin instruction in fifth grade, and ten programs (76.92%) begin in sixth grade.

The second question “How many total students are involved in your band program” had a 100% response rate. The range of responses was 260. The mean of the total students involved in the band program was 258.615.

The third question “How many times a week do you meet with the beginning band” also had a 100% response rate. For the purpose of this question, “week” is defined as a school week, traditionally Monday through Friday. Also, for the purpose of this question, it is assumed that “daily” included only traditional school days. Ten out of thirteen programs(76.92%) meet five times a week. Two out of thirteen programs meet four times a week (15.38%) and one programs meets twice a week (7.6%) in “one rehearsal [and] one lesson.”

The fourth question “How long is each rehearsal with beginning band” had a 100% response rate. The rehearsal time for each ensemble ranged from 40-53 minutes per rehearsal. The one school that had lessons as part of their program, had one thirty minute lessons each week. It was not specified if this was an individual or group lesson. The average rehearsal length was 46.46 minutes long.

Question five, “Are your classes split up at all? (i.e. sections, family) If so, how?” had a 100% response rate. For School A, they responded “yes, homogeneous instruments in 6th grade, ability based bands in 7th/8th.” For School B: “classes are split into two forty-five minute classes. In one class, I teach the trombones, baritones, bassoons, and tubas while my co-director teaches the alto and tenor saxophones. In the other class, I teach the trumpets, horns and percussions, while my co-director teaches the flute, oboes and clarinets.” School C responded, “No, will split randomly for pass offs.” School D

responded, “woodwind/brass and percussion.” School E responded, “Beginners are split homogeneously.” School F responded, “by instrument (section).” School G responded, “Yes, all homogeneous classes. Except double reeds and tuba/euph are together.” School H responded, “No.” School I responded, “We have two beginner band classes; French horns are in one, percussion are together in one, double reeds are in one. School J responded, “Sections.” School K responded, “Seven separate classes: flute & oboe; clarinet; bassoon and saxophone; trumpet; horn; low brass (tubas begin on baritone); percussion.” School L responded, “Classes are split: Flute, Oboe/ Bassoon, Clarinet, Alto Sax, Trumpet, Horn , Trombone, Euphonium/Tuba, Percussion.” School M responded, “full rehearsal, like instruments lessons (small groups).”

From the sample, two out of thirteen schools (15.38%) did not regularly split their classes. Eleven out of thirteen schools (84.62%) split their classes purposefully. For the context of this question, purposefully means that the student were scheduled for the class based on their instrument type, rather than randomly split for scheduling or number purposes. Seven out of thirteen schools (53.84%) are split into homogeneous type classes by section, or instrument type.

Question six, “Do you practice “structured” sight reading as an ensemble” had a 100% response rate. Eleven out of thirteen (84.62%) schools responded “yes” while two out of eleven schools (15.38%) responded “No.”

Question seven, “When preparing for festival, what strategies do you use?” had a 100% response rate. Out of these responses, two answers were not viable. School L responded, “Strategies? Can you clarify the question?” School M responded, “Sight

reading is not a requirement at festival.” Neither of these answers are considered relevant to this study. School A responded, “Daily drill, technique exercise, ensemble drill, [and] sight reading.” School B responded, “We will usually listen first to our festival piece then we will sight read them. I will often look at sections of our music that will be challenging and write out some sort of exercise that will help with those sections. We will also spend a good amount of time split either by brass/wws, highs/lows, or certain sections that may have the same challenging parts. Student will have Smartmusic assignments if possible on their music as well as in class spot check and playing tests to check for understanding. Students will often be asked to analyze their current performance either by listening to recording of their group or through self reflection.” School C responded, “Careful selection of the music, student input into what we perform, sectional rehearsals, pass off of individual lines of festival music.” School D responded, “Warm up that includes long tone, scale studies, and singing and playing chorales. Sections are broken into chunks and mini chunks. Students know each week what needs to be prepared. Since the classes are divide[d] by grade level (yet the ensembles were combined) after school rehearsals were required.” School E responded, “Fundamentals and chorales for warm-ups, understanding keys and tonalities, work pieces and occasionally send small section out with the other director.” School F responded, “Sight-reading in sectional setting first with sight-reading method book, then apply to large ensemble with full piece”. School G responded, “Sectionals, highly planned rehearsals, recording test, clinicians.” School H responded, “Instruction, discussion, questions, silent play-finger-sizzle (all with 100% correct instruments skills), Director may sing.” School I responded, “We clap and count rhythms;

sing on ta and do buttons.” School J responded, “sectionals, pull outs, full rehearsals, clinics.” School K responded, “We hold before/after school sectionals for our second and third year weekly throughout the year. We focus on meeting the highest performance standards throughout the year, not just for a festival or contest performance.”

Question eight “What instruments do you start students on in beginning band? (Check all that apply)” had thirteen responses (100%). Thirteen out of thirteen (100%) programs started flute. Twelve out of thirteen (92.31%) programs started oboe. Thirteen out of thirteen (100%) programs started clarinet. Twelve out of thirteen (92.31%) programs started saxophone. Eleven out of thirteen programs (84.62%) started bassoon. Twelve out of thirteen (92.31%) programs started horn. Two of the twelve programs that started horn start both double and single horn. Eight out of twelve of the programs that start horn only start double horn and two of the twelve programs that start horn only start single horn. This means a total of ten programs out of thirteen (76.92%) start double horn and four out of thirteen (30.77%) programs start single horn. Thirteen out of thirteen programs (100%) started Trumpet. Thirteen out of thirteen programs (100%) started Trombone. Ten out of thirteen programs (76.92%) started tuba. Twelve out of thirteen programs (92.31%) started baritone. Thirteen out of thirteen programs (100%) started percussion.

Question nine “When do you have students switch to other instruments?” had a 92.3% response rate. Out of these responses, five out of twelve specified that the question did not apply to their programs because they start all instruments. School A responded that they switch “Second semester, second year.” School B responded, “We will usually

have students switch to bass clarinet/bari sax at the beginning of the seventh grade year.” School C responded, “Shortly after holidays in 6th grade, then as needed.” School D responded, “When they are physically able to control the instruments or when braces becomes an issue.” School E responded that they switch to “double horn, mid year.” School G responded that they switch during the “Second year of instructions, during sixth grade.” School J responded that they switch students to “tuba [in] January.”

Twelve out of thirteen participants responded to question ten “What to do you find are the most successful switches?” The two subjects that did not respond are likely because they do not switch students at all, so the question did not apply to their program. School A responded, “Like family woodwinds (alto to tenor/bari sax), horn to trumpet, trumpet to euphonium. School B responded, “Trumpet to horn, baritone to tuba.” School C responded, “Students who are your fourth to sixth best players within their section (that you are moving them from).” School D responded, “Alto saxophone to oboe, trumpet to euphonium T.C.” School F responded, “Euphonium to tuba, flute to oboe, clarinet to saxophone.” School G responded, “Flute to flute, oboe, bassoon, horn or tuba’ Clarinet to clarinet, bass clarinet, oboe, bassoon, or saxophones, trumpet to trumpet, horn, baritone (bass clef), or tuba, trombone, baritone or tuba, percussions stays percussion.” School H responded, “bad trumpets to euphonium,” School I responded, “trumpets to euphonium.” School J responded “baritone to tuba.” School K responded, “We will switch a student if they are struggling on an instrument and demonstrate skills that we think might make those students successful on that instrument.” School L responded, “Smaller mouth pieces to bigger mouth pieces.”

Question eleven “Which of the following do you require of students who switch instruments?” had a 100% response rate. Eight out of thirteen (61.54%) subjects said they required lessons. Five out of thirteen (38.46%) subjects required practice logs. Three out of thirteen (23.08%) participants said they required meetings with the band director. Six out of thirteen participants (46.15%) responded “other.” These responses included, “understand that they will be judged according to their peer group playing level;” “Require lessons for switch to bassoon;” “Sectionals;” “Summer band camp;” “commitment to continue band throughout middle school (students and parents sign a commitment form);” “depends on timing of a switch.”

Question twelve, “How do you grade your students?” had a 100% response rate. School A responded, “Participation, completion, individual performance assessments.” School B responded, “We grade 50% practice, 30% assessments, 20% concerts.” School C responded, “Number of songs passes off in method book per grading period, regularly-spaced playing assessment based on fundamentals, participation. School D responded, “Pass-offs and participation” School E responded, “Practice cards and performance evaluations.” School F responded, “Daily progress, weekly practice logs, recording assignments.” School G responded, “weekly.” School H responded, “Make sure every student succeeds on their skill and then record it in our computer grading program. Assessment is constant and ongoing.” School I responded, “playing tests grades; pass-offs; daily participation grades; practice records.” School J responded, “chair tests, theory tests, practice logs, participation.” School K responded “Live playing assignments as least once/week; daily grade which is basically a participation grade; weekly practice

log.” School L responded, “General Grading Guidelines, 7th/8th Students will be graded on the following scales: daily participation, tests, extension of class, co-curricular, practice records. 6th grade and Cadet band students will be graded on the following: daily participation, playing tests, written tests, practice records.”

Question thirteen, “Do you require practice logs” was responded to by all participants. Ten out of thirteen (76.92%) responded “Yes.” Three out of thirteen (23.08%) responded “No.”

Question fourteen, “How often do you require playing tests,” was responded to by all of the participants (100%). Four out of thirteen participants responded “weekly;” one participant responded, “every other week;” four participants responded, “As needed;” one participant responded, “two per semester;” one person responded, “four to six per year;” one person responded, “four to six per grading term;” one person responded, “two to three per quarter.”

Question fifteen, “Do you have students audition for chair placement?” had a 100% response rate. Eleven out of thirteen participants (84.62%) responded “Yes” while two out of eleven participants (15.38%) responded “No.”

Question sixteen “What method books do you use,” had a 100% response rate. Seven out of thirteen (53.84%) participants responded, “Essential Elements;” Four out of thirteen (30.77%) responded, “Foundations for Superior Performance;” Two out of thirteen (15.38%) participants responded, “Sound Innovations;” Two out of thirteen (15.38%) participants responded, “Standards of Excellence;” The methods books that were only suggested by one participant included “Accent on Achievement,” “Artistry of

Fundamentals,” “Essential Musicianship,” “Winning Rhythms,” “First Chorals,” “Tradition of Excellence”, “Musical Mastery,” and” Best in Class.”

Question seventeen, “What resources and technology do you use during daily rehearsals? i.e. keyboard, metronome”, had a 100% response rate. Eight out of thirteen (61.54%) participants responded, “Harmony Director,” Three out of thirteen participants responded, “Digimet;” Five out of thirteen participants responded, “Tuner;” two out of thirteen participants responded, “Smart Music;” Two out of thirteen participants responded, “projector;” six out of thirteen participants responded, “metronome;” two out of thirteen participants responded, “Ipad;” two out of thirteen participants responded, “tonal-energy.” The following resources were only mentioned once by the participants, “Recording equipment,” “acoustic piano,” “workbooks,” and “promethean board.”

Question eighteen, “Do you use any social media” had twelve out of thirteen (92.31%) participants respond. Eleven out of thirteen participants (91.67%) responded “website;” seven out of thirteen participants (58.33%) responded, “Facebook;” five out of thirteen participants (41.67%) responded, “Twitter;” two out of thirteen participants (15.67%) responded, “Instagram.”

Question nineteen “How much modeling on an instrument do you demonstrate on a daily basis?” had a 100% response rate. Four out of thirteen participants (30.77%) responded, “A great deal.” Three out of thirteen participants (23.08%) responded, “A lot.” Three out of thirteen participants (23.08%) responded “A moderate amount.” Three out of thirteen participants, (23.08%) responded “A little.”

Question twenty, “What rehearsal strategies or rehearsal techniques work best with young students (check all that apply),” had a 100% response rate. Eleven out of thirteen participants (84.62%) responded, “modeling;” ten out of thirteen participants (76.92%) responded, “pitch singing;” nine out of thirteen participants (69.23%) responded “sizzling;” eight out of thirteen participants (61.54%) responded, “other;” four out of thirteen participants (30.76%) responded, “non pitched singing.”

Question twenty one “Does your ensemble go to festival (receive a rating/score)” had a 100% response rate. Thirteen out of thirteen participants (100.00%) responded, “Yes.”

Question twenty two “Do your student participant in solo and ensemble” had a 100% response rate. Twelve out of thirteen participants (92.31%) responded, “Yes.” One out of thirteen participants (7.69%) responded, “No.”

Question Twenty three “Do you have any additional groups other than concert band? i.e. jazz band, theory, etc. if so, what are they?” have a 100% response rate” Eight out of thirteen participants (61.53%) responded “jazz band.” Three out of thirteen participants (23.07%) responded, “Chamber ensembles.” The following ensembles were only mentioned once by the participants: “brass choir,” “woodwind choir,” “pep band,” “percussion ensemble,” “Wind ensemble” and “full orchestra.” Two participants responded that they did not have any additional groups besides concert band.

Question twenty four “what is your daily warm up routine” had a 100% response rate. School A responded, “Single note, articulation of a single note, long tones down/up.” School B responded, “I start everyday with the band playing 1-1 from the

essential musicianship books. We focus on taking a relaxed breath and getting a relaxed, vibrational sound. We start this way everyday. We will focus on improving posture, breath, tonguing, embouchure, and releases everyday, all while staying tension free. As we go through our fundamentals time we will gradually start working to apply our fundamental time to our music literature.” School C responded, “varies...never routine, though...” School D responded, “Long tones, Scales, rhythm studies, sing and play 4-part chorales” School E responded, “Unison Fundamentals (Remington type), Scales, Chorales in major and minor keys.” School F responded, “Simple drills - Remington, F around the room, F descending.” School G responded, “Long tones, remington.” School H, responded “TUNE EVERYDAY. Concert F scale, rhythms (tonguing), unison matching and chord building and balance, scales applicable to that day's literature, "warm up #2" and sometimes "warm-up #2," and a chorale.” School I responded, “for which band?” School J responded, “Breathing exercises, Concert F singing and lip vibrations for brass, long tones, lip slurs/ chromatics in wws, scales, articulation drills, ensemble listening/intonation , chorale, rhythms that might need addressing for current project.” School K responded, “Long tones; flow studies; brass lip slurs paired with WW/Perc chromatics; scales; chorale.” School L responded, “It just depends on the day and the concept that is being reinforced. We use the Foundations for Superior Performance Book, do Flow Studies and Instrument Specific Warm-ups.” School M responded, “Remington Exercise and chorales.”

Question Twenty five “When and how do you introduce tuning?” had a 100% response rate. School A responded, “After the student can produce a stable characteristic

tone. Compare/contrast. Use a visual tuner. Play a reference note on a harmony director and demonstrate waves” School B responded, “I will usually introduce the idea of tuning their instrument during their 7th grade year. During the 6th grade year, I focus on doing everything without tension, using the correct amount of air, and creating a vibrant sound. During the 7th grade year we introduce how to use a tuner, what sharp and flat mean and how to tune. With our advanced 7th graders and our 8th grade groups, I will go further into the levels of listening, passed the matching tone and volume and get into how to make live/instant adjustments using air and embouchure to adjust pitch during real time. We will use the concept of sustains to help students gage what is in tune and what out of tune sound like and practice adjusting to make whatever note sound better.” School C responded “8-12 weeks into 6th grade.” School D responded, “Beginning of 6th grade with singing and matching pitch, moving to simple melodic lines!” School E responded “A few weeks into the first semester when students are in condition enough to rehearse effectively.” School F responded, “First week of school - model on my instrument with a drone (Harmony Director)” School G responded, “6th grade.” School H responded “First day of 5th grade band.” School I responded, “beginning band.” School J responded, “In beginning band, learning how to match tone between students in the section and learning about physics of sound, demonstration on ipad showing waves and frequency, talking about tuning tendencies on each instrument.” School K responded, “In the first year; tuner app to visualize; we do not use individual tuners except for double reeds.” School L responded, “4th grade, mostly try to get the kids to recognize the difference between in tune and out of tune.”

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

For the purpose of this study, a common trend will be identified as a trend occurring in over eighty percent of the surveyed groups. This chapter will discuss which results can be identified as common trends or uncommon trends. Some of the questions asked in the survey were qualitative in response so they cannot be identified as either common or uncommon trends. The results will be discussed in the following categories: common trends, uncommon trends, or qualitative data.

Questions one through four provided grade levels, number of students involved in the programs, and rehearsal schedules. While these questions fall into the qualitative category, they help give an overview of the entire program. The programs surveyed included grades four through eight.

The fifth question demonstrated a common trend since eleven out of thirteen schools (84.62%) split their classes purposefully. The common trend between these programs may show a correlation between successful programs and homogenous (purposefully split) classes. Split classes might only be possible due to scheduling and class sizes, so other factors could contribute to this trend. This question could have been more specific by asking if classes were purposefully scheduled, such as a woodwind class, a percussion class, and a brass class. This question also received answers about splitting a class between two or more directors. For further research, it would be useful to determine the amount of teachers, student teachers, and staff that interact with the program daily.

The sixth question demonstrated a common trend that the surveyed ensembles practice “structured” sight-reading; 84.62% of the ensembles displayed this trend. While this is a common trend, “structured” could be replaced with a more specific or defined term.

Question eight had many common trends in the types of instruments the surveyed programs started. All of the programs started students on flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone and percussion. There was also a common trend of schools that started oboe, bassoon, horn and baritone. Of the schools that started horn, there was not a common trend in starting double or single horn. Of the programs surveyed that started horn, 76.92% started their beginners on double horn. The remaining schools started on single horns. There was not a common trend in starting tuba. For further research, it would be important to identify if the programs that started single horns used a Bb or F horn; if percussionist started on bell kits; and what size instrument beginning tuba players start on.

Question eleven, “Which of the following do you require of students who switch instruments?” showed no common trend in any of the responses. The majority (61.54%) said they require students who switch instruments to take lessons. The “other” category offered many suggestions such as sectionals, summer band camp, and commitment to continue band.

Question thirteen, “Do you require practice logs,” did not show a common trend. Ten out of thirteen (76.92%) responded, “Yes.” Three out of thirteen (23.08%) responded

“No.” This shows that while many programs do require their students to have practice logs, it is not a common trend.

Question fourteen, “How often do you require playing tests,” did not show a common trend. This was an open ended question, so many participants responded using information we do not have, such as how long their grading terms are or whether they have a traditional school calendar or year round school. The responses to this question ranged from “weekly” to “four–six per year.”

Question fifteen, “Do you have students audition for chair placement?” showed a common trend that the programs did have students audition for chair placement. 84.62% of the participants responded “yes” to the question. While this may not relate directly to the success of a program, the competition between students to gain higher chair placements could motivate students to practice, creating more success in the classroom.

Question sixteen “What method books do you use?” showed no common trends. The most commonly used books were “Essential Elements,” and “Foundations for Superior Performance.” Since there was no common trend, we can deduct that the type/brand of method books do not have an effect on the overall success of a program.

Question seventeen “What resources and technology do you use during daily rehearsals? i.e. keyboard, metronome”, showed no common trend. Common responses included “Harmony Director (61.54%) and “Digitmet”(23.07%).

Question eighteen, “Do you use any social media” had a common trends in the choices of “website.” at 92.31%. The other choices, “Facebook,” “Twitter” and “Instagram” were not significant trends.

Question nineteen, “How much modeling on an instrument do you demonstrate on a daily basis?” did not show any common trends. While this question did not show a trend in how much modeling the participants demonstrated, it did show a common trend that 100% of the directors did model for the students.

Question twenty, “What rehearsal strategies or rehearsal techniques work best with young students (check all that apply),” also reinforced that modeling is a common trend between the surveyed programs. Question twenty did not show any other common trends in the answer choices including “pitched singing,” “sizzling,” and “non pitched singing.”

Question twenty-one “Does your ensemble go to festival (receive a rating/score)” was a common trend. All of the ensembles that participated in the survey go to festival (100%). This shows the importance of having other people judge your group’s strengths and weakness and also shows the importance of having your students work towards something other than concerts.

There were no significant trends found in the responses to question twenty-three “Do you have any additional groups other than concert band? i.e. jazz band, theory, etc. if so, what are they?” Repeated responses between the participants included “jazz band” (61.53%) and “chamber ensembles” (23.07%).

Question seven was a qualitative question and therefore did not show any common trends. Some repeated answers included in the responses included literature choices, playing tests, listening to recordings of different groups and of the ensembles progress, and bringing in clinicians.

Question nine “When do you have students switch to other instruments?” was also a qualitative question, so no common trend can be drawn from the responses. From these responses, the timing of having students switch instruments is dependent on help available, private lessons, the instrument they are switching from, the instrument they are switching to, the instrumentation of the program, the student’s physical ability.

Question ten also was a qualitative question; therefore we are unable to show any common trends. From the responses, we can gather that students can find more success going from smaller mouthpieces to bigger mouthpieces, for example trumpet to baritone. From these responses we can also draw that when switching instruments, students should stay in the same instrument family (i.e. woodwinds, brass.)

Question twelve “How do you grade your students” was a qualitative question and therefore we did not have any common trends. From the answers we can learn that the researcher needed to specify the question further. Some participants responded in reference to the frequency of assessment while others responded with the types of assessment and how grades were determined.

Question twenty-four “What is your daily warm-up routine” showed no measureable common trends because of the qualitative responses given. Some repeated responses included breathing exercises, long tones, rhythmic exercises, and chorales.

Question twenty-five “When and how do you introduce tuning” also showed no measureable common trends because of the qualitative responses given. Each response was specific to the methodology of the teacher and did not display common trends. This

is likely because of differences in when beginning band begins, the role of elementary music in the program, and the director's personal pedagogy choices.

From the twenty-five questions, fourteen had quantitative data that could measure common trends between the surveyed programs. Eight out of the fourteen quantitative questions showed common trends. Even though many of the questions of this study did not translate into quantitative results, allowing the researcher to determine common trends, the ideas and concepts shared can bring new insight and ideas to aspiring and young middle school band directors. These trends can help identify effective practices and methodology to be used by middle school directors.

CHAPTER 5 - Further Research

While this research presented many common trends, it also inspired many questions. For further study, any of the questions in the survey could be expanded upon and turned into their own study. One purpose of this study was to explore different ideas and methodology for further study in graduate work.

This study could have been improved through the use of more specific questions and a larger sample size. The format of the open-ended questions led to some ambiguity and misunderstanding of the questions; therefore, the responses varied due to question interpretation, not necessarily because of differences in programs. If the questions were written in a manner that could be answered by selecting answer choices instead of providing one's own answers, the data would have been more definitive. If there was a

larger sample size, the response rate may have been higher, creating more clearly defined trends. The larger sample size could be created by widening the parameters of the study to include programs that performed at Midwest prior to 2006, or programs that performed at state and national festivals besides Midwest. Allowing participants to complete the Informed Consent form at the same time they complete the survey would streamline the process and may lead to a higher response rate.

This study could also be improved by adding questions regarding demographics of the school and band program, which would include the number of band directors at the school, what type of elementary band programs are in place (if any), and what percentage of students take private lessons. This would allow the researcher to more accurately compare programs to one another.

While this study has lead to many more questions to be answered, the information and trends presented can serve as a guide for young directors or give experience directors new ideas on how to help build and maintain successful middle school band programs.

References

The Midwest Clinic. 2008. Accessed June 8, 2016. <https://www.midwestclinic.org/>.