

An Exploratory Study of Community Band Members'
Impressions of Skills and Behaviors Successful for Band Directing

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine conductor skills and behaviors important to community band members. The researcher compared members with no formal post-secondary music training to those members with one or more years of post-secondary music training. Members from both sub-groupings were asked, "What skills and behaviors are important to successful music directing in a community band?" Participants (n=71) completed a 42-question, four-point Likert-type scale survey developed and validated by Teachout (1997). The original survey developed by Teachout (1997) inquired about opinions of skills and behaviors important to successful music teaching of preservice and experienced teachers. Through the survey, two research questions were answered: (1) Which top-ranked skills and behaviors were equally ranked, if any between both groups? (2) Which items were ranked differently?

Data indicated a band director who can easily communicate to all members, regardless of experiences and age, enables a fluid rehearsal where everyone is successful. Participants' responses also suggested having a deep set of skills within a conductor's field and being likeable became more important than other behavior and skills. Out of the remaining thirty-one items that were not identically ranked, one was found by a two tailed t-test as statistically significant, "Involve band members in the learning process." Members who held post-secondary music experiences ranked having an educational experience at band rehearsals as highly important, while members who did not have post-secondary training ranked having an educational experience as somewhat important at band rehearsals. Based on these results, it is possible educational experience may be a factor in why each group chooses to participate in the community band.

Applications to Teaching

- Data can provide insight for community bands, and school bands alike, when considering what type of music director skills and behaviors encourage musicians to stay involved in large ensemble playing throughout life.
- Music teacher education programs may consider highlighting skills and behaviors in their training courses which can strengthen their undergraduate success in band directing in many types of ensemble settings.
- It is important to consider the motivation of band members. Community band member participants in this study who have post-secondary training participate in community bands to further their educational development in music. Members who do not have post-secondary music training participate in the community band for other social and emotional reasons.

Selected References

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