

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC INSTRUCTION, ASSESSMENT,
AND THE BLOCK SCHEDULE

by

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B.A., Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1998

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Music Degree

Department of Music
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
August 2006

UMI Number: 1437506



UMI Microform 1437506

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THESIS APPROVAL

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Music
in the field of Music Education

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July 5, 2006

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

DANNYEL M. NORRINGTON, for the Master of Music Degree in MUSIC EDUCATION, presented on July 5, 2006, at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

TITLE: INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC INSTRUCTION,
ASSESSMENT, AND THE BLOCK SCHEDULE

MAJOR PROFESSOR: DR. ERIC MANDAT

This study explored two issues that are prevalent in music education today. The first was a look at the state of curricular instruction and assessment in band performance classes. The second was the controversial topic of block scheduling and its implications for band directors. The goal of this study was to take these two areas of weakness in instrumental music education and provide a positive outcome. Through a review of literature, a wealth of both teaching and assessment strategies have been coordinated. With this information, a model has been developed for scheduling instruction that fosters a comprehensive music education within a block schedule. This model also addresses the concerns that many directors express when dealing with this type of schedule. In addition, focus has also been placed on student-centered activities. Many of the assessment strategies center on activities to provide more educational freedom and motivation for the student.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
LIST OF TABLES	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
PRACTICES IN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC CURRICULA	3
Weaknesses in Secondary School Music	3
National and State Standards	5
Assessment and Accountability	7
BLOCK SCHEDULING	11
The Beginning of the Block Schedule	11
Forms of the Block Schedule	12
Implications for Band Directors	16
METHODOLOGY	20
Review of Literature	20
Application of Literature	24
Band literature as the curriculum	24
Implementing curriculum into a block schedule	28
Assessment strategies	32
SUMMARY	40
REFERENCES	43
VITA	49

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Alternate Day (Block 8) – WEEK 1	14
Table 2.2	Alternate Day (Block 8) – WEEK 2	14
Table 2.3	Alternate Day (Block 7)	15
Table 2.4	Percentage of School in the 4X4 Block with Decreased Band Enrollment (1994-1995)	18
Table 3.1	Wayne Bailey’s 5-Day Teaching Plan	21
Table 3.2	Historical and/or Background Features of a Composition to be used for Study	26
Table 3.3	Model for a 90-Minute Class Period	29
Table 3.4	Example of a Two-Week Period	31

INTRODUCTION

Instrumental music programs in many secondary schools can be characterized as performance-based. In performance-based programs, band directors' instruction time is exclusively devoted to preparation for numerous competitions, contests, and public performances. While most band directors would agree that it would be beneficial to teach students more about the music they play, most would also contend that there is not enough time to do so.

In addition to the lack of time provided to prepare for performances, the development of national and state standards requires the addition of a broader curriculum to already full teaching agendas. Directors who do not feel there is time for this type of instruction have also limited the ways to assess student learning. A critical component of instruction is student assessment, which many directors currently accomplish by recording student attendance, and making judgments based on student behavior, and attitude. An argument for enhanced instruction can be that it can provide the director with more appropriate and qualitative measures for assessment.

Many public school band directors are facing changes in their already limited instruction time due to the implementation of the block schedule. Some feel that this scheduling concept will negatively affect their programs. It is true that this change can severely alter the class schedule and has the potential to decrease the size of the music program or even eliminate elements of it. Depending on the type of block schedule being used, students often find themselves making tough decisions regarding the classes they are able to take each semester. For many students, band no longer fits into their schedules. The result is a slow decline in band enrollment, which leads to additional problems for the music program.

In addition to these troubling changes, many teachers see the lengthened class period as one of the larger problems. Directors feel that the ninety-minute class period, which is standard

in a block schedule, is too long for a group of high school students to rehearse. However, the amount of time the block schedule provides in a class period can allow for the opportunity to take on educational challenges that were once felt unattainable. A ninety-minute class period can allow time for concurrent study and application of concepts and bring band programs closer to meeting the standards that directors felt unreasonable to achieve.

The purpose of this project is to take a positive look at block scheduling and use it as a tool to better educate young instrumentalists. The final result of the study is to develop a more complete curriculum that may be applied to a band program operating in a block schedule. To achieve this, an overview of the current state of the curricula in instrumental programs in public schools will be presented as well as a look at national and state standards as they relate to instrumental music. Also, an explanation of block scheduling and its possible implications for the band director will be addressed.

In this study, a review of literature that focuses on teaching strategies for more thorough instruction in a performance-based setting will be conducted. Recommendations based on this review will be made for fitting comprehensive instruction into a block-schedule scenario. Finally, suggestions for assignments and assessment strategies for these recommendations will be provided. The hope is this study will help facilitate adding curriculum to performance-based band programs that are now placed in the block-schedule, which will provide more qualitative student evaluation and accountability.

PRACTICES IN INSTRUMENTAL CURRICULA

Weaknesses in Secondary School Music

H. Robert Reynolds (2000) states, “As music educators, our primary purpose is to help individual students receive a music education through experiences and information” (p. 31). With this statement, Dr. Reynolds seems to not only promote musical performance but also a more complete education for music students. Reynolds maintains this view by contending that, along with attention to performance goals, directors should be, “fostering a greater awareness of the deeper meaning of the music. Focusing primarily on technical skill will tend to defeat this greater purpose,” which he says, “is to present the music” (p. 32).

The essence of an instrumental music program is performance; however, more authorities are asking if it is acceptable for our curriculum and assessment to be strictly performance-based. It is becoming more widely thought that music students need to be provided a more well-rounded music education. In Paul Lehman’s “The Power of the National Standards for Music Education” found in MENC’s *Performing with Understanding* (2000), the author explains that music educators cannot continue to exist alone, outside of the rest of the academic world. He asserts, “We must understand the process that is taking place around us and participate in it effectively if music education is to survive and flourish in the twenty-first century” (p. 9).

It would be difficult to find a music educator who feels that, as a group, band directors are not teaching music students high-quality technical aptitude and the ability to perform. In fact, renowned music educator and philosopher, Bennett Reimer (2000), and other teachers such as, Dorothy A. Straub (2000) and Will Schmid (2000), all agree that school bands and orchestras are performing at an exceedingly high level. However, these and other professionals are concerned that music students are not learning about music beyond the ability to perform well. Many

contend that young musicians are not receiving the information necessary to fully understand what they are performing, therefore unable to create completely meaningful performances. Reimer explains that teaching music beyond technical skill causes the students', "singing and playing to be musically authentic, genuinely expressive, fully artistic, and thereby deeply satisfying for themselves and their audiences" (p. 12). Due to the performance expectations of school administrators, communities, and band directors themselves, many teachers, of what has become known as "performance classes" will argue that there is not enough time to add elements of curriculum to their rehearsals when trying to prepare a quality performance. Straub (2000) insists that by enhancing the curriculum, "Quality [of the performing ensemble] is not compromised but enhanced by the musical understanding and personal commitment of the students" (p. 40).

The understanding and commitment of which Straub speaks can lead to growth in other important areas. By providing students more knowledge and the experiences to apply that knowledge, music teachers can help them grow into independent thinkers. In a traditional band rehearsal, students take visual and aural cues from their band director, which ultimately lead the group to a polished musical performance. It is important and necessary for the director to be the leader to a large group of students; however, while the band members may be active performers, they may also be passive learners. If the students are simply taking cues from their director based on his or her knowledge and interpretation, the students cannot completely understand the musical path down which their teacher is leading them. This method does not help develop independent thinkers. A well-rounded music teacher aims to stimulate active musicians and musical problem-solvers. As stated by Patricia Hoy (2000),

By using an active approach to gathering, organizing, and assimilating knowledge, and by applying that knowledge toward revealing musical problems, students learn to support their own opinions intelligently and are less inclined to accept information passively and perspectives passed on through traditional diagnosis-remedy rehearsal situations (p. 94).

Hoy goes on to say that these kinds of experiences help students develop a respect for others' views and facilitate the ability to apply one's emotions to musical interpretation. The musical experiences cultivated through these means will not only develop musically independent performers but also individuals whom are more likely to maintain a relationship with music throughout their lives.

National and State Standards

Since the late 1970's, public schools have been called on to improve the education being provided to the nation's students. Because each school in the country had its own requirements for teaching and learning, national test scores were skewed. Teachers developed their lessons based on local requirements with no idea of the material or concepts that would be tested. In an effort to make improvements, high schools began, among other things, making graduation requirements more difficult. However, according to John F. Jennings (1998), by the end of the 1980's, schools had not seemed to improve. Jennings states, "SAT I scores had not increased substantially, ... college professors were still complaining that students were not ready for postsecondary education, and ... employers were asserting that high school graduates were unprepared for the workplace" (p. 3). Many states began to create or expand their own testing systems to make improvements in education. However, Jennings mentions that they did so without linking the tests to the curriculum. In fact, very few of the 45 schools that expanded their testing system had instituted any mandated curriculum that would help teachers know what would be expected of the students (p. 3). Essentially, testing began to be developed at the state level, but the decision of what was to be taught remained local. Therefore, while the state created tests to measure students more equally, there were no measures taken to insure that students were being taught equally or provided equal information.

Prior to 1989, the national government did not become involved with these problems in education. Historically, it was felt that the power of both the national and state governments

should be limited. Therefore, the content of education had been delegated to local school boards, thus creating a greatly varied education. After research in 1989 by the National Academy of Sciences and the development of standards in mathematics by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the George Bush administration caught on to this new interest and agreed that national goals for education should be adopted. In 1992, The National Council on Education Standards and Testing called for a change from education goals to education standards. President Clinton, continuing what his predecessor began, signed into law in 1994, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which as stated by Jennings (1998), “placed the national goals into law, supported the certification of voluntary national education standards and national skill standards, and encouraged the states through grant aid to develop their own standards for education,” (p. 8). The development of standards is an attempt to unify education among all students, to provide clear instruction and learning throughout. Standards can have the greatest affect by providing teachers and students the knowledge of what is expected of them. This prior knowledge can then allow students to be assessed in an even and fair system.

The development of national and state standards is important to music educators because they help to promote legislation that declares arts education significant. Helped largely by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC), the National Standards for Arts Education was developed as a result of the Goals 2000 Act, which includes the arts among the disciplines in which each child is to demonstrate competence. Even before the implementation of the Goals 2000 Act, many states were already developing their own education standards. The state of Illinois is one that has produced its own set of education standards. By using the National Standards for Arts Education, the 1985 State Goals for Fine Arts, and various other sources, the Illinois Learning Standards for Fine Arts were developed. Illinois’ fine arts standards provide goals for learning in visual arts, dance, drama, and music. There are three main goals for arts education in the state of Illinois (goals 25, 26 and 27). These goals provide specific objectives in each of the arts and are created for the various age levels, categorized as early elementary, late

elementary, middle/junior high school, early high school, and late high school. These objectives are helpful in breaking down the three main goals so teachers can more easily provide clear and valuable instruction.

Paul Lehman (1997) attests to the importance of the National Standards for Music Education. In an article in *Teaching Music*, Lehman provides ten reasons to support these standards. With these reasons, he tells music teachers that the standards do many things for them such as provide credibility to their programs, offer a better way to assess student learning, and allow them to clarify their expectations to students, the public, and administrators. The standards are also beneficial because they help to describe music programs in terms of students' knowledge, not by what they will do. Perhaps most importantly, the standards, according to Lehman, "provide a vision for music education" (p. 29).

Many music teachers have looked at the development and implementation of arts education standards with skepticism. Band directors at the secondary level seem to be the most resistant to the standards, largely because they often have substantial performing commitments. These individuals argue that there is not enough time during their regular classes to do more teaching when they must prepare for an upcoming performance. Later in this study, the author will offer strategies to implement education based on the standards into a block-scheduling situation.

Assessment and Accountability

Educational standards are now commonplace and it is important that student progress be carefully and appropriately assessed. For many music teachers, this may prove difficult. For band and choir directors, in particular, class time remains performance driven. In this situation, activities designated for individual student assessment are rare. When it comes time for grading at the end of each term, a student's evaluation is often made regarding his or her performance in nonmusical factors, such as attendance, effort, and attitude. Patricia Chiodo (2001), a music

teacher in New York State, admits to finding herself in such a situation when it came time for her grades. She states that she found herself at “a loss when faced with...report cards...at the end of each marking period” (p. 17). Chiodo also found herself in a more troubling situation when questioned by parents regarding their child’s progress in her class. Without regular personal contact with each child, between her classes, Chiodo realized, “I often forgot much of what I knew about them” (p.17).

Not being able to articulate to parents the progress of their child in class is a significant problem for any teacher. For music teachers, there are added issues. Using non-musical criteria for grading is “sharply at odds with the practices of teachers in other disciplines and is easily seen as evidence that music lacks curricular substance,” according to Paul Lehman (1997) (p. 58). Being able to discuss a child’s progress in an academic manner is important. Lehman (1997) points out, “Parents do not immediately excuse a child’s lack of achievement in math or science by claiming that it is due to a lack of talent, nor do they expect a grade of A on the basis of attendance or effort, and they should not do so in music” (p. 59). Grading solely by means of non-musical elements perpetuates the attitude that music is a non-curricular activity. This attitude is harmful to music education and it is most detrimental when parents perceive music classes as non-academic. Accepting and treating music as an academic subject provides credibility. If parents do not see music as an important part of the curriculum, it is much easier for children and parents to not choose music when certain hard choices become necessary. Without the support of parents, music education in schools cannot persist.

Edward Asmus (1999) states, “It should be understood that assessment is not an add-on to instruction. Rather, it is an integral part of the instructional process, and it can inform both the teacher and learner” (p. 19). By using assessment activities, students in music classes can be better aware of the concepts they are handling well and on those that need continued work. Assessment also helps the teacher to know just what the students are grasping with proficiency and the skills and concepts that need further instruction and practice. Just as music teachers feel

there is not enough time to incorporate mandated educational standards into their classes, they also argue that there is not enough time for the type of assessment that is necessary, with or without the standards. It would appear that providing assessment activities would be a burden on a director's time. However, Thomas Goolsby (1999) asserts that assessment activities would most likely eventually save time for the director. Goolsby explains that directors often waste a great deal of rehearsal time by repeatedly reminding students of similar elements for each music selection. He states, "This practice alone should indicate that maximum learning is not taking place." Goolsby also explains that this is an issue of "transfer of knowledge" which is one of the concerns addressed through assessment and evaluation (p. 31).

A music teacher can find many reasons to not include more complete evaluative measures into one's classes. For many teachers, the most compelling of these reasons is the practices of music educators throughout the history of school music. Music educators have a long history of grading based on attendance, effort, and attitude of students. These practices have been unofficially accepted for decades; however, educational practices have changed greatly over time. It is important that music teachers adjust to these trends, as their general education colleagues must. Standards and assessment are evolving ideals in education. Carolyn Cope (1996) provides a broad look at assessment in music education. She states,

It is essential that music educators make assessment an integral part of all music education, including general music, choral, and instrumental programs. This does not require the complete abandonment of a philosophy or a curriculum; rather, it requires a check to be sure that the philosophy and curriculum are aligned with current practices (p. 42).

To foster an environment of true music education in a school band program, one must consider the avenue of teaching comprehensive musicianship through performance. Blocher and Miles (1999) recognize that comprehensive musicianship is not a new idea, and that, "sometimes as music teachers, we think that teaching the music and teaching about the music in a

performance setting must be an *either/or proposition* – you cannot do both well.” They mention, however; that one must consider the possibility that teaching musical awareness, understanding, and application of the broad concepts during a rehearsal could improve the level of performance (p.39).

Perhaps the purpose of a comprehensive music education is best summarized by Robert Garofalo in *Blueprint for Band* (1983):

The major goal of a comprehensive musicianship curriculum is to develop a musical person: one who has an in-depth understanding of basic musical concepts related to the structural and stylistic elements of music, a general knowledge of music as a creative art form of man in a historical context, and the skills to perform musical operations. . . . The band director [who adopts a comprehensive approach to teaching music] will cultivate in his students lasting musical habits, attitudes, and appreciations that will remain with them after they leave the program, and will continue to provide them with a source of pleasure and enrichment throughout their lives (p. 100).

BLOCK SCHEDULING

The Beginning of the Block Schedule

In the 1990s, secondary schools across the United States began experimenting with a new scheduling design now referred to as “block scheduling.” This new concept involved altering the traditional six or eight period day that usually consisted of forty to fifty-five minute length periods by creating class periods that were eighty to ninety minutes long with only three or four periods each day. While there may have been many reasons for schools to begin experimenting with these changes, Richard Miles and Larry Blocher (1996) suggest that the strongest urging for this movement came from Public Law 102-62 (The Education Council Act of 1991) which established the National Commission on Time and Learning that called for a “comprehensive review of the relationship between time and learning in the nation’s schools” (p. 4).

This notion that secondary schools were showing poor organization and use of time was, according to Canady and Rettig (1996), prompted by some specific criticisms of the nation’s schools. The authors cite the following:

1. Instruction is fragmented for students attending schools having single period schedules.
 2. An impersonal, factory-like environment is created by the assembly-line, single-period schedule.
 3. Discipline problems are exacerbated by the single-period schedule.
 4. Instructional possibilities are limited in short periods.
 5. Traditional scheduling models do not provide varying learning time for students
- (p. 2 – 4).

Educators and administrators began to experiment with the schedule of the school day to address these and other problems and to focus on the following goals as listed by Canady and Rettig (1996):

1. Reduce the number of classes students must attend and prepare for each day and / or each term.
2. Allow students variable amounts of time for learning, without lowering standards, and without punishing those who need more or less time to learn.
3. Increase opportunities for some students to be accelerated.
4. Reduce the number of students teachers must prepare for and interact with each day and / or each term.
5. Reduce the number of courses for which teachers must prepare each day and / or term.
6. Reduce the fragmentation inherent in single-period schedules, a criticism that is especially pertinent to classes requiring extensive practice and / or laboratory work.
7. Provide teachers with blocks of teaching time that allow and encourage the use of active teaching strategies and greater student involvement.
8. Reduce the number of class changes (p. 6).

Forms of the Block Schedule

Since its beginnings, the block schedule has developed into a variety of forms. With each transformation, administrators and teachers attempt to correct various problems that are encountered in each previous form. Schools across the country now use a variety of scheduling concepts. While many schools choose to retain the traditional eight-period day, others have attempted the block schedule – often testing a different concept over a matter of years. In his 1998 *Instrumentalist* article, “After We Tried a Block Schedule,” Trey Reely, a band director in Arkansas, describes the attempts made by his administration during the years of 1991 through

1996 to experiment with different scheduling considerations that included forms of block scheduling and others of their own creation. Due to the lack of continuity across the nation concerning this phenomenon, there are now many forms of scheduling that are variants of two main scheduling concepts. Most professionals consider these the 4X4 block and the A/B system.

As mentioned by James Rohner (2002), the purest form of the block schedule is what many call the 4X4 block (p. 19). In this model, students enroll in four courses each semester, which are approximately ninety minutes long. Teachers only teach three classes each term. Because students have the opportunity to take more courses in less time, many states call this model the “accelerated” schedule because students may be able to graduate in three years (Canady & Rettig, p. 11).

For teachers, the 4X4 block provides many advantages. These advantages include working with and keeping records on fewer students each semester, and preparing for fewer courses each semester with generally longer planning time. There can also be several advantages for students in this model, including the opportunity to retake a failed course in the second semester, early graduation, and the less stressful chance to earn eight credits in a year without taking eight courses at one time.

While the perceived advantages for all parties are numerous, there are also several disadvantages in the use of the 4X4 block system. Of these problems, one of the more difficult is the lack of continuity it can create. Many courses need to be taken in succession, particularly courses in mathematics, some sciences, and foreign languages. For instance, because only four courses are taken each semester, a student might take Spanish the first semester and not be able to take Spanish II for another year or so, depending on when the course is offered. Because the student, most likely, has had little or no practice since taking Spanish I, the second Spanish course would become quite a struggle. Problems can also develop in the scheduling of yearlong Advanced Placement (AP) courses, such as drivers’ education and music courses. The implications for music teachers using this schedule will be later addressed.

Another type of block scheduling that many schools are using is the alternate day schedule, often referred to as the A/B schedule. The alternate day schedule can occur in six, seven, or eight course blocks that alternate each day. With six courses, the day is divided into three blocks while, in an eight-course format the day is divided into four blocks. These periods are usually ninety minutes long and each class meets for the entire year. The following is an example of two weeks of the A/B schedule, often called “Block-8”:

Table 2.1

Alternate Day (Block-8) – WEEK 1

	Monday A	Tuesday B	Wednesday A	Thursday B	Friday A
BLOCK I	1	2	1	2	1
BLOCK II	3	4	3	4	3
BLOCK III	5	6	5	6	5
BLOCK IV	7	8	7	8	7

Table 2.2

Alternate Day (Block-8) – WEEK 2

	Monday B	Tuesday A	Wednesday B	Thursday A	Friday B
BLOCK I	2	1	2	1	2
BLOCK II	4	3	4	3	4
BLOCK III	6	5	6	5	6
BLOCK IV	8	7	8	7	8

When seven courses are offered for the year, there are three blocks that alternate during the week with one single period that meets each day for the year. The following is an example of one week of a seven-course schedule:

Table 2.3

Alternate Day (Block-7)

	Monday B	Tuesday A	Wednesday B	Thursday A	Friday B
Period 1	1	1	1	1	1
BLOCK I	2	3	2	3	2
BLOCK II	4	5	4	5	4
BLOCK III	6	7	6	7	6

With the alternate day schedule, classes are held on different days depending on the week. One class may meet three days one week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) and then only two days the next week (Tuesday and Thursday). However, one of the weaknesses of this system is that the number of class meetings can be altered by holidays and snow-days. A teacher may depend on, or hope for, an upcoming three-period week for his or her class, which can easily turn into only a two-period week due to a surprise snow-day. If a teacher planned the week based on having three meetings, he or she must then change the lesson plans. Schools can also rearrange the schedule based on the days missed; however, this causes other planning problems throughout the school.

Other concerns regarding the alternate day schedule include providing daily balanced schedules for students and balanced planning time for teachers. There is also concern regarding the difficulty in maintaining students' attention for ninety minutes or more. Besides what can be an unpredictable calendar, another significant concern is the need for additional review time for

students due to the lapse of time between classes. This is of special concern for those classes that occur on Thursday and then do not meet again until Monday (Canady and Rettig, p. 9-10).

The lapse of time that occurs between classes in the alternate day schedule can also have positive effects. For example, if a discipline problem occurs during one class period, both the student and teacher have time to relax, and perhaps reflect on the situation, before meeting again. This period between classes also provides students with the opportunity to have extra time to complete an assignment or study for an exam. The remaining documented benefits of this schedule are similar to that of the 4X4 block schedule, such as increased usable instruction time and the ability to vary the instruction during one class period. Also as in the 4X4 block, there are fewer transitions during the day, which results in a cleaner school environment and fewer discipline problems (Canady and Rettig, p. 8).

There are many forms of the block schedule being developed and used in many schools nationwide. Those that are best documented are the 4X4 block and the alternate day (A/B) block schedules. These schedules, in their purest forms, provide many potential obstacles for the band director. To address some of the conflicts that band directors and other specialty teachers face, many schools have taken the purer formats and converted them, attempting to alleviate the various disadvantages that resulted in the use of block scheduling. In schools that discover that block scheduling provides too many obstacles for their desired environment, changes continue to be made and teachers continue to make the best of their scheduling situation.

Implications for Band Directors

A number of studies have been conducted and articles written regarding the negative effects block scheduling has on public school band programs. Articles titled, "When Block Schedules Begin Instrumental Music Declines" (Rohner, 2002) and "The Perils of Block Scheduling" (Benham, 1996) do not help provide music teachers working in, or about to work in, a block scheduling format with much hope for the future of their programs. Unfortunately, the

facts provided in articles such as these, and other studies, do indeed provide a dark view of situations many band directors may face.

Proponents of block scheduling, Canady and Rettig (1996) acknowledge that special considerations need to be made when scheduling music classes: “Accommodating music programs in a sensible fashion continues to be one of the most important details to address when implementing the 4/4 plan” (p. 15). Because the 4X4 schedule is rigid in its design by allowing only a few classes offered at specific times, music students may decide to replace band with another course that they may not be able to otherwise take. In the 4X4 block, taking band each semester means devoting 25% of time to music. If students choose to take other music classes such as choir and / or orchestra as well, then the conflict significantly increases. John and Stephen Benham (1996) state that, in the 4X4 plan, scheduling conflicts increase from 17% to 25%. They also contend that, “Many students who are scheduled out of band or orchestra never return” (p. 30). This unfortunate inevitability results in a quick decline in enrollment and slow depletion of the music program. The end result is the deprivation of musical experiences and education for many young people.

In Paul Lehman’s article “Do You Have Time?” printed in MENC’s *Scheduling Time for Music* (1995), Lehman asserts, “The straight, non-alternating four-period day seems to work well for most of the basic disciplines, but it does not work well for music...” (p. 19). Supporting such statements, are Rohner’s (2002) findings from his 2002 survey of schools using the 4X4 block, which show that 73% of these schools reported a decrease in enrollment in their bands and orchestras. The survey also shows that only 11% of these schools reported a decline in enrollment before the implementation of the block schedule. Richard Miles and Larry Blocher (1996) conducted a survey of schools in Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin that had introduced block scheduling to their institutions. This survey reported the decrease in band enrollment during the 1994-1995 school year due to class conflicts caused by the new schedules. The following table shows the combined percentages of all schools surveyed per state:

Table 2.4

Percentage of Schools in the 4X4 Block with Decreased Band Enrollment (1994-1995)

	Kentucky	Indiana	Michigan	Wisconsin
General Scheduling Conflicts	70%	50%	57%	75%
Advanced Placement Class Conflicts	58%	20%	43%	25%
Conflicts with Other Electives	55%	40%	57%	13%
Upper Class Students Unable to Stay Enrolled	45%	30%	57%	25%

While the 4X4 block is especially harmful to music program enrollment, the A/B schedule presents different challenges for instrumental music teachers. On the A/B block, it is now easier for students to enroll in band all year, each year. However, band no longer meets each day in the pure form of this scheduling model. A great concern for band directors in this model is consistency. Having only two to three rehearsals a week is already a point of contention with directors but becomes a bigger problem when they are faced with issues such as snow days, holidays, illness, and other events that cause them to lose already limited rehearsal time. Sometimes, bands may only meet once a week or may not get to meet for a week or more due to various class or school cancellations.

Because band is scheduled every other day with ninety-minute class periods, directors also note the weak playing endurance of their students. Teachers contend that students cannot play for an entire ninety minutes when they do not meet every day. In Rohner's (2002) article, Charles Zacharias, a director from Georgia, states, "[With] Long rehearsals only two or three times per week, students did not develop strong enough embouchures to use the long periods effectively" (p. 20). In addition to endurance problems, directors feel that the class periods are too long for students to concentrate. Also in Rohner's article, a director from Nebraska states,

“Students are mentally fried after 90-minute class periods, and they can’t wait to get out of school” (p. 24).

Another problem caused by a four-period day, in either the 4X4 or A/B block, is that it is almost impossible to schedule lessons or sectionals. With block scheduling there are usually no study halls, so the only time to see students outside of rehearsal is through “pull-outs” (Lehman, p.19). A pull-out is when a student leaves a class for a given amount of time for a music lesson and then returns to that class if the lesson is finished before the end of the period. This rarely occurs, especially at the high school level, when teachers are less willing to allow students to leave during their classes.

As mentioned before, there are many different forms of the block schedule in use. These variations appear to be the result of further modifications often resulting in what is referred to as “split-blocks.” With split-blocks, a ninety-minute block is divided into two 45-minute blocks that accommodate music and other classes where consistency is a concern. Because one block of time is used for two classes, these classes can meet every day. As James Rohner (2002) states, “In those schools that permit music classes to move even further away from the concept of four long class periods per day and hold 45-minute rehearsals each day, music programs suffer less than under the pure block form (4X4 A/B schedules)” (p. 19).

Some band directors concede that ninety minutes of rehearsal time is nice to have to be able to take attendance, do an efficient warm-up, have a thorough tuning session, and other tasks that are difficult to do in only 45-minute rehearsals. However, there are directors that feel the negatives far outweigh the positives. John and Stephen Benham state, “Any savings in taking attendance and starting each class are insignificant in comparison . . .” (p. 31).

METHODOLOGY

Review of Literature

There is much to consider when preparing for a music performance class: the literature to play, specific rehearsal goals, the rate at which the ensemble is attaining long-term goals, and how much time is available before the next performance. If directors are to create a successful program that also incorporates further elements of music study, additional planning and considerations are needed. Elements such as what educational goals are to be attained and how best to incorporate more in-depth study into rehearsal time are necessary to consider.

A variety of sources have been consulted to develop a schedule plan that enhances musical development while allowing the typical high school band to prepare for numerous performances. While most of the books and journals reviewed have contributed to the final plan in some way, there are a few sources that have contributed significantly. The first of these are two books by Robert J. Garofalo, *Blueprint for Band* (1983) and *Instructional Designs* (1995). In his work, Garofalo emphasizes using one piece of the literature to plan an entire unit of instruction. Garofalo discusses elements of the literature on which to focus when planning these units, such as musical terms, rhythms, history, theory, and playing skills. With this method, a director does not need to feel pressured to thoroughly investigate each selection the band is rehearsing, but rather focus on one composition that provides the basis of all comprehensive instruction in each grading period. In his methods, Garofalo has provided suggestions and examples of unit lessons for a few selections that are considered standards of the concert band repertoire.

Perhaps of all published teaching plans, Wayne Bailey's approach outlined in his 1990 article in the *Band Director's Guide* titled, "Teaching Music in a Performance-Based Program,"

fits most easily into the A/B schedule. Bailey outlines a curriculum plan dealing with one selection from the band's repertoire that spans five days. Bailey's five-day plan refers to the traditional fifty minute class that meets daily, but when applied to the A/B schedule, the process would take two weeks while still spanning five class periods – Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of week one and Tuesday and Thursday of the second week. The five days of instruction for one selection as outlined in Bailey's article is in the table below:

Table 3.1

Wayne Bailey's 5-day Teaching Plan

	TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
DAY 1 (Monday)	History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composer -- (dates, era, other works, importance) • Composition -- (date, purpose, importance, original instrumentation, premiere information)
DAY 2 (Wednesday)	Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form -- (description, relationship to other music known by students, importance – traditional or revolutionary for the time) • Harmony -- (major, minor, modal; relationship of keys) • Melody -- (identify source, trace modifications)
DAY 3 (Friday)	Related Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recordings of other works (same composer or same style / subject / type)
DAY 4 (Tuesday)	Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Characteristics • Specific Articulations
DAY 5 (Thursday)	Specific Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recordings of this composition

Bailey suggests using only ten minutes of a fifty-minute class period to integrate one of the above tasks. With at least ninety minutes available at each rehearsal in the block schedule, there is ample time for a lesson that focuses on one element of a selection each day.

Bailey and Garofalo's plans are similar in that they both suggest focusing on one piece of literature for in-depth instruction. While Garofalo does not provide a suggested timeline, Bailey breaks down instruction into an easy to handle format. For directors that desire to explore one piece of literature to its fullest, Garofalo's plans provide a great deal of instruction and creative assessment strategies. For directors in the block schedule who are concerned about not seeing their band every day, Garofalo's method may seem too intense. Wayne Bailey's approach allows

for smaller segments of lesson time, which may be more beneficial to the average high school band where such concentrated focus could detract from other literature. Also, by exploring one piece in two weeks, a thorough understanding of several pieces throughout the school year can be obtained.

Some concerns regarding ninety-minute class periods involve both physical and mental stamina. In their book, *Scheduling and Teaching Music* (1999), Larry Blocher and Richard Miles provide 28 ideas for creating variety in any rehearsal format. The authors refer to these ideas as “special-emphasis days,” where that activity is the focus for the whole rehearsal. Some of the suggestions include time for guest or student soloists, conductors, or critique. There are also suggestions that focus on unique instruction ideas, such as the physics of sound, stereo systems, or explaining instrument step-up choices, and more independent activities such as time for research or reading from music periodicals. In a ninety-minute class period, one of these ideas could easily be inserted into a block of time. In a daily schedule that consists of both rehearsing and curricular instruction time, a segment that allows for a new activity or focus each day can provide much needed variety and student motivation, while also enhancing student learning.

The work exhibited in *Shaping Sound Musicians* (2003) by Patricia O’Toole has been influential in all areas of the study. The majority of O’Toole’s book provides an extremely thorough explanation and application of the Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance (CMP) model. O’Toole addresses all five points of the model – analysis, outcomes, strategies, assessment, and music selection – and provides “real world” scenarios for application. The book also provides information on developing and implementing various teaching strategies, offers assessment strategies and evaluation tools, and supplies unit teaching plans from several different music educators.

The final major resource that supplied inspiration for the study is the *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* series (vol 1-4), edited by Richard Miles. These books are

developed to assist and guide band directors toward developing comprehensive musicianship during band rehearsal. Each book of the series is divided into two main sections. The first section contains chapters that are each written by a nationally recognized band director or teacher. These chapters provide inspiration and motivation in all aspects of band music and each volume has at least one chapter that focuses on teaching concepts of a specific curricular area. The second section contains in-depth analysis of 100 works. The research on each of these pieces has been performed by the authors and divided into separate elements of instruction on which the director can choose to focus. The analysis provided can be easily inserted into the five-day plan offered by Wayne Bailey. As of the date of this study, there have been five volumes published in this series. With 100 works analyzed in each volume, the director has 500 researched and analyzed works from which to create one's lesson plans.

Creating a curriculum that enriches a band rehearsal is only the first step in developing a more complete music education for students. In order to determine the usefulness and success of the curriculum, appropriate assessment strategies are needed. In addition to the above sources, several more have proved particularly useful for the development of student activities and assessment tools. Four articles that guided the direction of assessment in this study were, "Assessing a Cast of Thousands" (Chiodo, 2001), "Assessment in Instrumental Music" (Goolsby, 1999), "Music Assessment Concepts" (Asmus, 1999), and "Enhanced Assessment in Instrumental Programs" (Burrack, 2002). These articles provided the author with both, motivation and a view of the usefulness of charts, scales, and rubrics for both teacher and student evaluations.

Most of the articles in the MENC compilation, *Spotlight on Assessment in Music Education* (2001), follow the same general philosophy as the other main sources of literature for this study. However, two articles proved most useful for guidelines regarding the use of portfolios in a band setting: "Using Portfolios for Assessing Performing Ensemble" (Nelly, 1995), and "Can Portfolios Be Practical for Performance Assessment" (Nierman, 1997).

Application of Literature

This researcher has no positive or negative opinions regarding the block schedule or any of its variations. While research shows that most forms of the block or modified schedules make scheduling for performance classes difficult, it is not the purpose of this study to find solutions to scheduling conflicts. However, the ideas in the reviewed materials have guided planning to make the best use of the class time that results in a block scheduling situation. The goal of the study is to use the block schedule to develop comprehensive musicianship in high school band students while addressing some of the problems that are inherent with this type of schedule.

This study will result in a plan that centers on instructional units per Garofalo's concept, the divided elements of instruction provided by both Wayne Bailey and the *Teaching Music Through Performance* series, and Blocher and Miles' suggestions for creativity in rehearsal. The block schedule format called the A/B schedule, often referred to as "Block-8," is the form that will be used in developing this plan. In the A/B schedule a class will meet three days (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) one week and two days (Tuesday and Thursday) the following week. This pattern alternates throughout the year and each period is ninety-minutes long.

The literature available provides detailed means of fostering comprehensive musicianship. Upon reviewing the literature, and through personal experience as a band director and educator, the author has provided suggestions that might be most attainable for an average band program. A classification of music elements on which to focus when preparing a piece of band literature, suggestions for implementation of curriculum in a block scheduling scenario, and assessment strategies are explained in detail.

Band literature as the curriculum

The literature reviewed suggests that study and assessment for an instrumental music program should focus on the following six topics: history, theory, style, listening and evaluative skills, and performance. Each category may contain several components to complete the

instructional goals. Resources used in this study such as the *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* series and the publications by Robert Garofalo suggest that the best way to implement these concepts into rehearsal is to relate them to one or more selections that the band is rehearsing. While general education classes have text books, band directors have sheet music; therefore, the music is the text. H. Robert Reynolds (2000) explains, “The music you choose becomes, in large part, the curriculum that you and your students follow toward a sound music education” (p. 32). This portion of the study provides classification of instructional elements with the understanding that they are to be applied to the band program’s repertoire and are placed in three main categories: elements of composition, performance skills, and listening and evaluative skills. Suggestions on how to plan for this instruction will be provided in the section following.

Elements of Composition

When learning a new piece of literature, the first step is to explore the composition in detail. This phase of instruction can be further divided into three subcategories: historical/background features, theory, and style/interpretation. Each piece of literature the students are exposed to can contain both new concepts as well as review of previously learned material.

Historical/background features

Making historical or “real world” associations to a piece of music may be one of the strongest means to connect students to the music they are playing. As stated by Richard Miles (1998), “Making connections to other disciplines and cultures through historical perspective can lead to deeper valuing, understanding, and fulfillment of music making” (p. 37). When considering historical aspects to be addressed, many facets of the piece can be researched. The table below displays possible ideas to examine when considering the historical component(s) of a selection:

Table 3.2

Historical and/or Background Features of a Composition to be Used for Study

Composer	Time Period	Composition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical importance • Dates / era lived • Living or not • Nationality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When written • Time period the piece is about or refers to • Performance practices of the time • Instrumentation / instruments in use • Major world events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person, place, or event the composer used for inspiration • Compositional school or movement (nationalism, impressionism, jazz, twelve-tone, etc.) • Purpose (overture, ballet, religious, etc.)

How much or which items to be discussed, is dependant upon the composition itself and previous group instruction. Not all suggestions in the above table will be relevant to every piece of literature. The main goal of the director should be to provide the students with as much information as possible and necessary to facilitate for the students, the most effective connection to the work. As O'Toole (2003) states, "By creatively introducing the music, you create the atmosphere for performing with understanding and you have the opportunity to "hook" students immediately, which will lead to motivating and thoughtful rehearsals" (p. 57).

Music theory

To include music theory as part of study, the band director has an abundance of items to consider. The study of music theory can include many components. They include, but are not limited to; key, rhythm, time signature, melody and form, instrumentation, and harmonic elements such as chord structure. Many of these elements can be focused on early in the learning of the work, even from the first day. Those relating to key, rhythm, and time signature should be discussed even before the first playing, particularly if any of the items are new to the students. More advanced concepts can be addressed as work on the piece progresses. When focusing on music theory concepts, a vast list of terminology is available. Students need to be instructed and reminded of these music terms, which can then provide great material for written exams that are easy for the director to produce.

Style/Interpretation

Elements of style in a composition relate to the interpretive elements of the work such as dynamics, phrasing, tempo, and articulation. This is another area of the composition where a broad list of terms exists, which again, allows ease in testing. Students should be informed and / or reminded of the meaning of terms and markings related to dynamics, tempo, and articulation of a piece before playing. Research shows that most educators agree that full interpretation cannot be fully realized until more technical aspects of the music are achieved. Indeed, creating goals relating to more tangible ideas is much easier to do than creating goals focused around musical expression. However, it is important to not omit discussion of interpretation, even from the first playing. As Wayne Bailey (1990) points out, “Describing goals in the area of artistic expression is ...difficult, but should be attempted if students are to become more than mere technicians” (p. 10). Interpretive elements should be addressed in the beginning, even in the broadest of terms. Students will develop a greater appreciation for dynamics and articulations if the director brings attention to these details from the first playing.

Performance Skills

In addition to accomplishing ones own part, a student should be able to demonstrate playing of scales and arpeggios in given keys found in the literature they are learning. Performance criteria, such as tempo, can be decided based on age and ability of the student. In addition to the desired ability to play the related scales, focus in this area can also help in engaging the students’ attention to the structure of the piece, particularly when one or more key changes are present. Unless expected to recognize a key signature beyond discerning what notes to play sharp or flat, the students will most likely not take notice of this element of the music. By being expected to play the related scales and/or arpeggios, students have another tangible connection to the composition.

It is widely recognized that the ability to play one's scales is the first step in successful sight-reading as well as aiding in the technical performance of any composition. If students can exhibit knowledge of the scales a particular piece is composed of, they have accomplished the first step in accurately performing their individual parts. If a director finds that one or more scales found in a work are too difficult for the majority of his or her performers, then the work itself should be found to be too difficult.

Listening Skills

The first step in student listening is simply exposing the students to good recordings of quality literature. Perhaps the least complicated means to accomplish this is to have music playing as students enter the room before class, as they are gathering before a performance, or even as students are moving in and out of the room moving equipment or doing other such tasks. All schools can afford these recordings, for directors receive countless CDs each year from music publishers that provide examples of the most recent literature for concert, marching, pep, jazz and percussion ensembles at all levels. In addition, the author has experienced that military bands send wonderful CD recordings and video tapes to educators on their mailing lists.

The second goal to be achieved through music listening is to develop critical and perceptive listeners. A student who develops listening skills will not only improve as an individual performer and ensemble member, but may also become a discriminating patron of music as an adult. Exercises in both comparative and evaluative listening should be administered. Listening sources can relate to the music being studied as well as be independent of class activities. Suggestions for activities, assignments, and assessment of the assignments will be provided later in this study.

Implementing Curriculum Strategies into the Block Schedule

In most forms of the block schedule, directors do not see their bands every day; therefore, it is imperative that the bands rehearse at each meeting due to the number of performances for a

typical high school band. However, in addition to this concern, many directors faced with ninety-minute class periods contend that this amount of time is too long for the playing endurance and concentration of high school students. To divide each day into more manageable segments for planning, the author suggests first looking at each day in five, thirty-minute sections, which can be viewed as different “stages” of the rehearsal. Each stage should have a specific focus or goal, while allowing each thirty-minute segment to be further divided if necessary for more concise planning. Dividing the period in such a way will keep rehearsal moving and provide variety for the students.

In order to provide a format for cultivating comprehensive musicianship in the block schedule, the author has combined the instruction strategies of Wayne Bailey, Robert Garofalo, and the *Teaching Music Through Performance* series, as well as the concept of the “special emphasis day” from Larry Blocher and Richard Miles. The chart below is a model to be used in a ninety-minute period:

Table 3.3

Model for 90-Minute Class Period

	FOCUS	30-min Block	PROCEDURE
STAGE 1	Opening	5 min	Students get instruments, music, and supplies in order
		25 min	Warm-up: chorales, rhythm etudes, tuning, sight-reading
STAGE 2	Work period I	30 min	Work on literature the band is preparing for performance
STAGE 3	Work period II	10-20 min	Lesson in current unit (newest selection in the band’s repertoire)
		10-20 min	Playing / rehearsing of selection
STAGE 4	Variety Strategy	30 min	Special activity
STAGE 5	Concluding	15-20 min	Play more familiar literature
		5-10 min	Announcements, instructions, discussion

The timetable above takes into consideration some of the concerns of directors teaching in the block schedule, while incorporating rehearsal suggestions that are widely accepted in the field. In Stage 1 of the plan, there is not a time specified for attendance taking. It is suggested that either the director take attendance during the five minutes allowed for student preparation, or the director assigns the drum major or other student leader the responsibility of attendance, thus allowing the director to focus on other tasks. Also, as shown in this first stage, it is suggested that the first item of rehearsal be the warm-up. It is a widely accepted notion that each rehearsal should begin with playing and not talking.

Following the warm-up and tuning, while students are alert, the director should move on to Stage 2. This is a good time to focus on rehearsing literature that one plans to perform. This early in the class period, if the students are well-conditioned, the director can lead an intense thirty-minute session on one of the more recent additions to the repertoire. Stage 3 follows this rigorous period and allows the students some time to rest their embouchures as the teacher delves into the day's lesson. Following the lesson, playing of the new selection should be limited to sight-reading and not much further rehearsal, assuming the students have worked diligently in the previous stage.

Due to the amount of concentration the previous stages necessitate, Stage 4 should provide a focus that is different from the first part of the rehearsal. How "fun" the activity is, should be up to the director, but should allow the students to focus on a lighter, but still educational activity. The overall goal of this stage is to reenergize the students so they are ready to play for the last portion of the class period. Not only does this change in the period help the student, but can also have a positive effect on the teacher as well. Blocher and Miles (1999) quote a director as saying that, "variety (in rehearsal), the spice of life – has been the factor to keep me charged and challenged" (p. 132).

The last thirty minutes of class, labeled as Stage 5, consists of playing with little or no actual rehearsing. This time can be used for the full or partial runs of pieces that will be used in

an upcoming performance. This time can also be used to include the playing of music that the students simply enjoy, with or without the notion of having to perform it for the public. The idea is to end the rehearsal with a lighter tone and leave the students with a positive feeling. This is especially important, when in the A/B schedule it will be at least two days until the band meets again. This less demanding stage can be easily shortened to leave time for necessary announcements and instructions. An example of how this five-stage plan might look in a two-week period is below:

Table 3.4

Example of a Two-week period

	DAY 1 (Monday)	DAY 2 (Wednesday)	DAY 3 (Friday)	DAY 4 (Tuesday)	DAY 5 (Thursday)
Stage 1	Warm-up in key of new piece	Warm-up in key of new piece	Warm-up in relatable key(s)	Warm-up in relatable key(s)	Warm-up in relatable key(s)
	No sight-reading	Sight-reading	Sight-reading	Sight-reading	Sight-reading
Stage 2	Rehearse piece 1	Rehearse piece 1	Rehearse as needed	Rehearse as needed	Rehearse as needed
	Rehearse piece 2	Rehearse piece 2			
Stage 3	History/Background of new piece	Theory for new piece	Listening related to new piece	Style focus for new piece	Specific Listening (of new piece)
	Sight-read new piece	2 nd reading of new piece	Work new piece (rhythms)	Work new piece (expression)	Work/run entire piece
Stage 4	Listening Day (independent of day's instruction)	Reading Day	Stereo Day	Student Critique Day	Student Conductor Day
Stage 5	Run/work other piece(s)	Run/work other piece(s)	Run as much as possible	Run/work other piece(s)	Run/work "fun" pieces
	Announcements	Announcements	Announcements	Announcements	Announcements

The above plan provides time for variety in the rehearsal, the ability to play all necessary literature, and time to incorporate instruction that strengthens music learning. It will be necessary to modify this plan when class periods have been lost due to holidays, snow days, illness, or other circumstances; particularly when a performance is approaching. Some suggestions for this

modification are (a) combine the listening for days 3 and 5 into one day, (b) use time in Stage 5 to work what is necessary for performance, (c) shorten and combine two of the unit's lessons, and (d) limit or omit sight-reading or Stage 4 to accomplish the immediate goal.

Assessment Strategies

Student assessment and evaluation has been the focus of much writing regarding music education in the last ten years. Most of these sources show that measures for assessment can be grouped into the areas of playing tests, written work in a variety of forms, and student portfolios. In creating assignments and assessment tools, it is important to not only test the facts that have been delivered through daily instruction, but to allow opportunities for deeper thinking. In his article, "Motivational Ideas for the Musical Ensemble," Greg Fant (1995) offers ways to develop lifelong musicianship. He asks, "Scaring students into studying for a test can be effective, but does it really promote lifelong learning?" (p. 17). This section provides assessment strategies that can be used to measure student knowledge and skill regarding the units taught every two weeks and offers ideas for activities that enhance the overall education of students by encouraging creativity and independence. The final item in this section addresses age appropriate assessment tools.

Written Work

In addition to assessing learned information through a paper test, the purpose for written work is to continue the necessary practice of writing skills. These skills can be practiced through evaluation of listening and reading assignments, as well as research projects. For some of these assignments much of the work will take place outside of the music classroom. When doing this, students may need to seek help from other teachers, such as the librarian or computer teacher. When this occurs, it is made known to others that students are meeting the music standards outside of class, which helps to further indicate that music is a curricular subject. Furthermore,

doing these types of projects also demonstrates to other teachers how a music activity can meet standards in language arts and technology (Chiodo, 2001).

Quizzes / Exams

Depending on the goals and instruction plan of the director, a test that covers the information presented in each unit can be administered every two weeks or more. Format of these exams are up to the director; however, multiple choice and short answer tests provide the easiest grading, but can also take the most time to produce. To avoid taking away from rehearsal time, the tests can be administered during the activity portion of the class period.

Listening assignments

In *Instructional Designs* (1995), Robert Garofalo suggests providing a list of required selections that relate to the unit of instruction. The only verification of completion of the assignment is by a checklist. For a more thoughtful exercise, the writer suggests the students be assigned to write a reflection or evaluation of what they have listened to. The purpose of writing about the listening assignment is to help students develop a vocabulary for writing and speaking about music. The sole evaluative measures are the completion of the assignment within the set parameters, spelling, and grammar. The teacher should provide suggestions for improvement in future writing.

There can be formal and informal variations on this activity. For an informal tool, students can write down thoughts as they listen to the selections that are played during the class instruction. The teacher can either have students turn in their analysis at the end of the period, or instruct them to take their notes home and write a more organized response. These in-class assignments can consist of listening to professional recordings that pertain to the current unit of instruction or listening to recordings of the ensemble in either rehearsal or performance. Having the students critique their own performance, particularly in rehearsal, is very beneficial to the development of critical listening skills and ultimately a fine performance. The level of

completion and formality of the reflections can depend on a variety of circumstances, including the length or complexity of the selection, amount of time available both in and out of class, and the viewpoint of the director. When used during regularly scheduled listening or activity time, these in-class activities do not take away from the normal rehearsal time.

For a more comprehensive activity, students are given a required or recommended listening list. Students take their own time to do their listening and write their responses accordingly. If the band room or school has a listening lab, students can do their listening at school. If an area at school is not available, or students simply choose to do their listening outside of school, they could check out recordings with the director, school librarian, or a band student leader. These written responses are expected to be better written than the informal listening exercises, but are still meant to be relatively short assignments – about two paragraphs or 50 to 100 words. These assignments do not take time from the class period and enhance the students listening experiences.

Reading assignments

Reading assignments can occur in two ways. The first is to assign reading that connects to the current unit of instruction. O’Toole (2003) stresses the importance of connecting homework to class work so it is not looked at as “busy work” (p.153). The articles can come from a variety of sources and span many topics. Students can be assigned reading that relates to the composer; the historical period, or other background information for the piece, which can allow for great freedom in article choice; or a particular music theory element that is further explored. The director could assign the article(s) to be read or have students select their own. Students turn in highlighted copies of the articles they read to show statements or passages they felt held the most importance and should include a written summary of each article.

A variation on this reading activity is to encourage students to explore their own musical interests and allow for independent reading from music journals. It is up to the director to assign the number and/or length of the articles and the parameters of the writing assignment, but

decisions about which articles to read should be left up to the student. Allowing the students to choose the articles provides them individual freedom and ownership in the activity. Because the goal of the assignment is not to connect to the current lesson, it is important to make the assignment at an appropriate time. A possible time for the assignment is sometime after a large performance, when the rehearsal load has lessened (being careful to avoid mid-term and final exams), or an optional activity to preparing for the state solo and ensemble contest. It could also be done as an extra-credit or make-up assignment.

To help ease student selection and obtaining of these articles, the school or band program, when possible, can subscribe to even just one or two journals, which will supply an adequate amount of material from which band students can choose, particularly as the journals collect over time. Some of the publications to consider are *The Instrumentalist*, a popular choice among band directors; *SBO – School Band and Orchestra* has much of the same focus as *The Instrumentalist* and is free for schools; *DCI Today*, a drum corps publication which is also free for schools; and *In Tune Monthly*, which is a relatively new publication and is geared toward student musical interests. Assessment of the reading assignments should be done in a similar manner as the listening assignments.

Independent / Group projects

In Robert Garofalo's (1995) unit plans, he introduces the idea of two separate projects. One is the "creative project" and the other, an "optional project." For the creative project, Garofalo speaks mostly of original composition. The optional project is entirely separate from the creative project and provides a little more freedom than other assignments. The writer suggests that for a typical high school band, only one large project per term or year is reasonable to achieve. Students have almost complete freedom in these projects. Students may choose the topic, the format, and presentation. The guiding principles are: the project must relate in some way to music rehearsed during the term or year; it must have approval of the director; and guidelines set for the individual project must be met.

Playing Tests

Playing tests can happen at various times throughout the term and should allow for demonstration of ability in the areas of scales, etudes, and individual parts of music in the current repertoire. So as not to take the director away from the rehearsal, students can record their tests by the use of either audio or video tape. Within a specified period of several days, students are assigned a day on which they are to play for the exam. To make this easier, the director can assign one or more sections on a particular day, i.e. flutes and clarinets on day one, trumpets on day two, etc. When recording by audio tape, it is suggested that a student leader is present during the test to assure the proper individuals are playing. Video tape is perhaps the best means for recording, for the director can view elements such as posture and embouchure as well as being assured of whom is playing.

Portfolios

An ongoing project for the student is to keep a portfolio. The initial materials needed are a three-ringed binder and clear photo pages to help keep all documentation in good condition. The portfolio serves a number of functions, although may not be used in exactly the same manner as seen in general education settings. The broad goal of the portfolio is to have a record of the student's time in the program. Depending on the amount of material kept and displayed, a student may keep one binder during all four years of high school or may need, or wish, to create a new portfolio each year. The items to keep in the portfolio can be endless. Examples of possible items and how to assess the portfolio are below.

Personal goals

At the beginning of each year, students should make a list of specific goals for themselves. These goals could be anything from behavior modification, to a performance goal, or other musical accomplishments that are important to the student. Students who have listed goals exceedingly high will need assistance in listing more attainable goals, while others may need

guidance in making more creative goals. The band student's portfolio can keep the list of goals for the year (each year) and a personal log of his or her work towards improvement. The evaluation of this activity is based on the accomplishment of the goal(s) and / or the degree to which the student worked to attain the goal. Evaluation need not be based entirely on if they completely reached their goal(s), but that they have worked to the best of their ability and have improved in the designated areas. The assessment may come from teacher, student (self and / or classmates), or a combination of these sources.

Performance history

Students should keep programs and other evidence of any performances of which they were a part. This can include: full band performances; school choir performances; performances in musicals; solo performances, such as solo and ensemble contest; any music performances they were a part of outside of the school setting, such as community band, theater, or competitions. If available, students should keep an audio or video history of their time in the program as well. An added element to this portion could be the inclusion of both teacher and student critiques of the performances.

Class materials and assignments

Students should keep all notes from class, as well as tests and papers and other projects in their portfolios. This not only maintains a history of the student's work and progress, but when students are forced to keep informative handouts in the binders, the information will more likely be secure and available for study. By keeping the articles and written summaries from journal assignments, students will build their own database of music resources. This will prove especially useful for those that are the more serious musicians.

Expansion activities – unassigned materials

Students are encouraged to expand and enhance their own music education and experiences. Ways to document this are for students to keep programs or ticket stubs from

performances they attended of which they were not a part. Students could also write a reflection about the performance(s) they attended. Students may also choose to do additional reading and listening activities, all of which could be presented in the portfolio.

Overall assessment of the portfolio

Students will have a collection of work that encompasses a large portion of their education that they can keep past graduation, if they choose. Some students may even find that using some of the materials they have collected can help them when applying to music schools. The assessment of the portfolio can take place once or twice each year. Three elements should be considered when evaluating the overall assembly of the portfolio. The first is the presence of all required materials, such as handouts and assignments. The second is the presence and amount of unassigned materials, such as extra reading and listening assignments, or evidence of independent performance attendance. The third very important element to consider when evaluating the portfolio is its organization. The portfolio should have many clear sections that arrange what should be a great deal of material. Organization of materials is an important life skill, and preparing their portfolio is a good way for students to practice.

Age-Appropriate Assessment Tools

When assessing the writing and playing skills of students in a high school band, one must take into consideration the varying ages present. In most cases, the playing level of a freshman is not going to be that of a senior, while the writing quality of the older students should have fewer errors and be more insightful than that of the younger students. Patricia Chiodo's (2001) article, "Assessing a Cast of Thousands," provides insight and examples into assessment tools, particularly for creating rubrics in a music class. Chiodo asserts to the usefulness of rubrics and says that one of their greatest strengths is that, "students know what is expected and what they must do to improve" (p. 21). Rubrics can be especially useful when the teacher is assessing varying levels of abilities and experience on the same assignment.

Examples of items to use for criteria when assessing written work are the levels of accuracy, elaboration, the use of music terminology, and the mechanics of writing (Chiodo, 2001). Each element of criteria would have a number of levels that describes to what degree the criterion is met. To administer grades for students in each grade level, the director can develop a range of points needed to determine the score for students in each age group. To continue age appropriate assessment, the length of the finished product can be varied; for example, one to two pages for freshmen and sophomores, and three to four for juniors and seniors.

When assessing playing tests, it may be best to have a rubric for each grade level rather than have one rubric for all grade levels and varying the point totals, as in the writing assignments. If done in this manner, very specific goals can be identified for both the student preparation and in the final evaluation. In these rubrics, variances in tempos, ranges, and number of errors allowed in categories such as the playing of pitches, articulations, and dynamics can be the varying factors for each age group.

SUMMARY

Block scheduling is a concept that for some, is an unavoidable dilemma. However, others have found success with certain mutations of this scheduling trend. Block scheduling has proven to have many advantages, particularly for regular education teachers. Due to this, it is likely that alternative scheduling will continue and be common in most of our nation's schools. Regardless of the scheduling situation that a director finds one's self in, it is best to find elements that can be exploited to make the best of the schedule. While not seeing one's band everyday is a substantial inconvenience, perhaps the lengthy ninety-minute class period usually prevalent in this type of schedule can be looked at positively and creatively. This is an element that may be used to help foster a more comprehensive music environment.

For an environment that allows comprehensive music learning and the attainment of performance goals to be successful, the director must do much more curriculum planning than what he or she may be accustomed to. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that the director has a ninety-minute planning period. During this time, much of the planning for each five day unit and preparation of materials can take place. Directors will find that they need to organize more materials than usual, including notes or handouts. Due to the nature of the band classroom, complete note taking during lectures is not easily facilitated. Therefore, handouts regarding any information that the students are expected to know for the instructional units should be provided for them. While the director is providing the bulk of the information, students should still be encouraged to make their own notes along with those of the director's.

Initially, one may feel that the ninety-minute planning period is not enough time to plan for this type of instruction as well as maintain the administrative duties that are common in the job of a high school band director. However, one must remember that in the plan provided in this study, only one selection of the repertoire is thoroughly explored during a two-week period. A

director has the option of beginning a new unit every two weeks or providing this type of instruction just a few times a year. For example, if a director decides to plan only two units in each nine-week grading period, this provides eight complete units of study for the year, and leaves five weeks in each nine-week period for practice and review. This provides much flexibility for the director when planning the rehearsal needs of the ensemble.

It is understood that implementing a stronger curriculum into the traditional band program will initially require more planning and, possibly, more work for the director. However, once established, the comprehensive learning environment becomes that which is desired and both the planning and the instruction become easier. The author contends that all band directors should make an attempt to enrich their rehearsals with information that will help to make their students more complete musicians. Directors may argue that they do not know where to begin, or do not have time. However, the standards provide a clear outline of what is expected and directors should look at these objectives as elements of instruction that should be introduced into rehearsals. There are also several commercial sources, many of which have been utilized in this study, that have been developed to assist the director in this endeavor.

Because students do not meet each day in the block schedule, it is even more necessary that bands have quality rehearsals at each meeting. However, rehearsing for the entire ninety minutes does not necessarily guarantee a high quality rehearsal. For high school students, this may simply result in exhaustion, as directors have noted as a concern. Because it is necessary to rehearse at each meeting to prepare for performances, it is up to the director to plan accordingly, and to make students aware of the performance goals of the ensemble. By dividing up the time provided with activities that allow rehearsing, those which provide deeper musical involvement and learning, and those that allow students to recover and refresh during the period, students will be ready to make the best use of the rehearsal time provided.

To both provide a complete education for music students and to help support the ideal that music is an important part of the curriculum, quality assessment is needed. It is not

necessary, nor suggested, that one attempt all of the assessment strategies provided in this study. It is more important that a few quality strategies that support the director's philosophy are implemented. It is also important that directors are able to discuss the activities and assignments of their students in terms that non-music teachers understand. Even though arts education is a part of the National Standards, it is not the end of difficulties for music education in our schools. Band directors need to support these standards by implementing them in their classes, thus providing evidence to others that music is a vital part of the school curriculum. When band directors stray from the work of teaching comprehensive musicianship, particularly those that feel they do not have a class schedule that permits it, they need to recognize that they are doing a great disservice to both their students and the music they are performing. An asset of music education is the development of emotionally sound beings; the physical act of playing an instrument is only one component of this. It is important that we enhance a mental capacity for music as well.

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