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# Perceptions of Beginning Teachers Regarding Brass and Woodwind Instrument Techniques Classes in Preservice Education

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of four beginning teachers regarding their secondary instrument class experience at the University of Michigan. Research questions for the inquiry included: (a) What has been most valuable for beginning teachers from the brass and woodwind instrument courses? and (b) What suggestions do beginning teachers have for the improvement of the brass and woodwind instruments portion of preservice education? Data included observations and an individual interview with each beginning teacher; a focus group interview; an email survey response for each beginning teacher; and self-study teacher-researcher logs from the secondary instrument course instructors who are also the researchers. Categories of findings include: Role of specific course content in the larger conceptual framework of the degree program; the need for different knowledge in high school versus beginning band; use of notebooks, handouts, and resources from the course; who should teach the courses?; playing the instruments; and on the job training. Suggestions for restructure of secondary instrument courses and discussion of issues in teacher education are included throughout.*

## INTRODUCTION

The National Association of Schools of Music requires that instrumental music education students have “[k]nowledge of and performance ability on wind, string, and percussion instruments sufficient to teach beginning students effectively in group”

(NASM, 2005, p. 83). A variety of past research studies have examined teaching strategies and models for the brass and woodwind instruments classes specifically (Ambrose, 1989; Jennings, 1989; Lethco, 1999; Martin, 1982; and Sebald, 1982). Austin (2006) provides a comprehensive review of this and additional literature and suggests:

Research reveals that novice and experienced music educators generally view secondary instrument classes as an important component of pre-service music teacher education, but also rate their training in these classes as moderately effective at best and express concerns about course format, content, and instructors (p. 4).

The Austin (2006) paper also reports the results from a recent survey of 25 instrumental music education faculty members from around the country regarding the content and configuration of secondary instrumental methods courses. He concludes by suggesting:

Given the importance of secondary instrumental training in the preparation of K-12 music teachers, it behooves music education faculty to carefully consider the philosophical, curricular, and pedagogical bases for configuring secondary instrumental methods classes and comparing various models. On some level, as we gain collective professional wisdom about “what works” greater coherence and/or uniform expectations across secondary instrument classes may be viewed as desirable and appropriate (p.11).

Conway (2002) examined beginning teacher perceptions of their preservice preparation. Although not a goal of that study, much of the information collected in the study focused on the experience of beginning teachers in their preservice secondary instrument classes. Findings suggested that participants were concerned about a lack of consistency in the secondary instrument courses and suggested that instruments be combined (i.e. brass class) and taught at least in part by a music education professor. Participants expressed a desire for more focus in the classes on teaching and less focus on performance skill as well as increased attention to instrument repair. In Winter 2002 the secondary instrument courses at our institution were structured to address those specific issues.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of beginning teachers regarding their brass and woodwind instrument class experience at the University of Michigan. Research questions for the inquiry included: (a) What do beginning music teachers perceive as the most valuable components of the brass and woodwind instrument courses? and (b) What suggestions do beginning teachers have for the improvement of the brass and woodwind instruments portion of preservice education?

## **METHOD**

As a replication and follow-up to Conway (2002) this study used a phenomenological framework (Patton, 2002) to perform a self-study and a “qualitative formative program evaluation” (Conway, 2002) of the teaching of brass and woodwind instrument tech-

niques classes. We sought to improve the preservice music teacher education program at the University of Michigan for the students and faculty involved in that program. In addition, we sought to gather information regarding preservice music teacher education that may have relevance for preservice preparation programs that are similar to the one provided by the University of Michigan.

Patton (2002) suggests that phenomenological inquiry focuses on the question: "What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?" (p. 104). He states that the phenomenon may be an emotion, a relationship, a program, an organization, or a culture. For purposes of the study described here the "phenomena" were the preservice brass and woodwind instrument classes and "these people" included beginning teachers in their first, second, or third year of teaching instrumental music (band) and the teacher-researchers for the brass and woodwind instruments courses.

### ***Participants***

The four teacher participants (referred to in the paper as Laura, Christine, Evan, and Nate) were all graduates of University of Michigan in 2003, 2004, or 2005. They are currently teaching instrumental music (band) within 50 miles of the University. This allowed accessibility for the researchers to observe and conduct interviews as well as easy access by the participants if they had questions. Teacher-researcher participants included the professor and three music education PhD students who were all working with the Woodwind Methods class during the research study period (Winter term 2006). All teacher-researchers had taught brass and/or woodwind instruments to children in schools.

### ***Sampling***

Our choice of these four participants represents what Patton (2002) would call "typical case sampling." Patton defines typical sampling as providing a "qualitative profile of one or more typical cases to describe and illustrate what is typical to those unfamiliar with the setting...When the typical site sampling strategy is used, the site is specifically selected because it is not in any major way atypical, extreme, deviant or intensely unusual" (p. 236). We knew all four of these beginning teachers well. They had all been students in methods courses and student teaching while at the University. These four teachers came from diverse educational backgrounds and had traveled a variety of routes to their current positions. Christine and Nate had completed a music education degree while Laura and Evan completed the double major in performance and education. Nate had started his degree at another institution and had transferred to the University of Michigan. Christine and Nate were from in-state while Laura and Evan were from out-of-state. Since I had studied beginning music teachers at the University of Michigan

for the past eight years, we considered my opinion on “typical” first, second, and third year teachers to be trustworthy.

### ***Data Collection Devices***

#### *Individual interviews and classroom observations.*

Phenomenological interviewing was used as a primary data collection device because we believed that this was the best tool for exploring the perceptions of these participants. Seidman (1991) suggests:

If the researcher is interested in what it is like for students to be in the classroom, what their experience is, and what meaning they make out of that experience -if the interest is in what Schutz [Schutz, A. (1967). *The phenomenology of the social world* (G. Walsh & F. Lenhert, Trans.). Chicago: Northwestern University Press] calls their “subjective understanding”-then it seems to me that interviewing, in most cases, may be the best avenue of inquiry. (p. 5)

The beginning teachers were interviewed by one of the PhD student researchers in their school environments in April or May of 2006. Interviews occurred throughout the day, in-between classes, at lunch and after school. Teaching observations were held throughout one school day and provided a context by which to interpret the interviews of the teachers. All interviews were guided by the two research questions and included a semi-structured, open-ended interview approach. We developed a common protocol so that all researchers were addressing similar issues in the interviews.

#### *Email survey.*

In June 2006 all participants were asked to complete an open-ended “Brass and Woodwind Instruments Email Survey” including the following: (a) As you look back on your University of Michigan preparation for the teaching of woodwind and brass instruments, what was most valuable about the courses? (b) As you look back on your University of Michigan preparation for the teaching of woodwind and brass instruments, what was least valuable about the courses? (c) What would you change about the woodwind and brass instruments program that might better prepare future teachers for the experiences you faced this year? (d) Do you have any additional comments regarding your preparation for teaching woodwind and brass instruments?

#### *Focus group interview.*

A focus group interview was held in June 2006 where all study participants gathered with the researchers. Individual interviews and email surveys had been analyzed previous to the focus group meeting so the focus group provided an opportunity for a “collective analysis” and member check. Fieldnotes were taken during the focus group.

### *Researchers' self-study journals.*

The teacher researchers kept self-study journals regarding their work in the woodwind class. Each teacher-researcher provided two self-study journals (one in February and one at the end of the semester).

### ***Analysis***

All data sets were reviewed and coded for common themes. The four researchers coded data sets separately. Each of the coding schemes was compared to reach the final categories of findings. The research questions guided this coding process as answers to each of the research questions were searched for across all of the data sets. The primary techniques used to address the trustworthiness (validity) of this study were data collection triangulation, data analysis triangulation (Patton, 2002), member checks (Stake, 1995), and attention to investigator expertise (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 2006). Researchers had enough background in the content area and association with the participants to be empathetic in our interview approach and to establish the necessary rapport.

The reader is encouraged to remember that although the results of this study may not be generalizable to all preservice music programs in the commonly understood use of the word "generalizability," the reader may use "logical situational generalizability" (Schwartz, 1996, p. 7) to transfer findings to other populations. If the reader can logically assume that participants in another population are in a situation similar to the one described in this study, it may be possible that results from this study are relevant in other contexts.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Themes present in the data are included below. Evidence from interviews, email surveys and self-study journals that support the finding are included in italics. A discussion of each finding occurs with the finding.

### ***Role of Specific Course Content in the Larger Conceptual Framework of the Degree***

All participants struggled to articulate when they had taken instrument courses and how the courses were designed. It was difficult for them to describe course activities and assignments in the instrument classes. In the self-study data the instructors also commented on their sense that not much of what was being covered would be retained. *The students will never have enough time on each instrument to feel completely confident upon entering the field. It is my goal to help them be resourceful enough to be successful* (Ryan, Self-Study Journal 1). *I am amazed at the sheer amount of information that they have to process in a course like this. There are so many details pertaining to each instrument that the content/skill knowledge alone would be a lot for some students. Combine that with the*

*pedagogy information/skills and that's a FULL course. Every once in a while I remember that it's only a one-credit course and then I'm amazed all over again.* (Ann Marie, Self-Study, Journal 1)

Participants confessed that they remembered very little from the day to day experiences in the brass and woodwind courses: *I don't remember any fingerings of any woodwind instruments* (Evan), and what they did remember well was limited. Christine said she was nervous when newly hired: *I couldn't remember all the fingerings, the proper things to do. I had to really brush up on some stuff. I still would be terrified if I had to teach beginning bassoon, or flute.* Nate agreed: *Some instruments I feel much more comfortable on than others.* While Nate had difficulty remembering if he had much group practice-teaching in the methods courses, and could not recall anything about the balance between performance skill-building in group lessons versus more general information presented in the whole-class setting, he emphasized: *I feel like I had enough time to learn what I needed to learn.*

Despite their self-professed inability to remember the small details of the techniques courses, the beginning teacher participants seemed confident in what they had learned regarding the big picture of teaching instrumental music. *I don't think there's anything I had to sit down and listen to in [methods] classes that I haven't mentioned or talked about at some point in my three years [of teaching] so far. I think I picked up something from all the resources or lectures* (Nate). *For what I do, in terms of beginning band, I feel well-equipped* (Laura). Tuba major Evan said that today, several years after instrument courses, he has lost some of his woodwind performance skills; however, his subsequent and accumulated experience paired with the knowledge he retained from all music education courses has made him feel comfortable in teaching woodwinds.

The teacher-researchers and participants alike acknowledge that the amount of information necessary to teach instrumental music is vast and overwhelming, and agree that the internalization or memorization of all needed knowledge is an impossible goal. Instead, participants and teacher-researchers agreed that the goal of the techniques courses should be helping teachers learn to think as creative, independent problem solvers who are adept at finding and using resources. This is best achieved by providing a certain amount of written information for later referral, offering as much practical experience on the instruments as possible, and highlighting methods of finding solutions to common problems.

It's not a surprise that the participants were unable to specify when and where they obtained certain instrumental performance or pedagogical skills, as they seem to have assimilated all their instrumental teaching information into chunks retrievable in the appropriate situations. The participants pride themselves on their acquired ability to make decisions in the field at least partially based on the woodwind and brass instrument course curriculum but supplemented with other practical knowledge garnered in other courses, student teaching, and life experiences. This validates the course focus on resource notebooks combined with as much hands-on, practical skill-building practice

as possible. The written information serves the beginning teachers as both a secure memory back-up and a storehouse for advanced or rarely needed information, while the instrumental lessons and the group teaching experiences provide opportunities to try out techniques and skills.

The teacher-researchers are keenly aware of their responsibility to send well-prepared teachers into the field but also feel that it is impossible to anticipate and provide all the information that will be needed by beginning teachers. Thus, an approach that weds delivery of content intended for future use with modeling of problem-solving strategies seems to be successful.

### ***The Need for Different Knowledge in High School versus Beginning Band***

Laura and Christine worked with beginning instrumental students while Evan and Nate worked exclusively with high school students. There was a sense that the teachers working with beginners used the instrument class knowledge more while secondary teachers used the instrument specific knowledge less: *I have a strong feeling that Evan does not use a whole lot of instrument-specific pedagogical tools from his secondary instrumental methods class. He prefers to talk in broad language about musical concepts and does not deal with any nitty-gritty details about instrumental technique. He is lucky that his groups are full of competent performers, and they help each other a great deal. (This peer-tutoring is probably more valuable for the students, anyway!) My gut reaction is that Evan knows where to go for more information when he is stymied. He doesn't pretend to be an expert on every instrument; instead he prides himself on knowing when to concede that he needs help and knowing how to get it. He does have a tremendous amount of knowledge on what aspects of each instrument are the trickiest, and I would surmise he got that from secondary instrumental methods. (Ann Marie observation notes)*

Both Laura and Christine appreciated the focus in the instrument courses on starting beginners. *The most valuable information I gained was how to start students on each instrument. In the group lessons and full class setting we spent a great deal of time learning how to assemble each instrument and teach embouchure, breathing, hand position, etc. I use this information extensively in the fall when I start my beginning band (Laura).* Laura also suggested that the focus on “advanced techniques” for the instruments was less valuable than other elements of the course: *We spent one day learning about advanced techniques on woodwind instruments. We listened to the graduate student instructors discuss double tonguing and vibrato on flute, reeds for double reeds, and bass clarinet, etc. As a beginning band teacher, I have had little use for this information so far (Laura).*

Both Evan and Nate mentioned that they wished their undergraduate education had focused more on rehearsal technique and addressing the instruments in a large group setting: *There needs to be a class of band techniques, and it needs to be taught by an experienced high school director who will...talk about instrumentation, talk about set up,*

*talk about how to get them to do what you want them to do, methods of teaching and how to practice...they need a class that talks about band techniques, band everything (Nate).*

In reflecting on this finding as teacher educators we are reminded of the difficulty in preparing students for multiple contexts. All of the participants in this study were instrumentalists teaching instrumental music. Many graduates leave preservice programs to teach out of their area of experience. Teacher education must continue to grapple with preparation for multiple contexts.

### ***The Use of Notebooks, Handouts, Resources from the Courses***

All participants suggested that the hard copy notebooks from the brass and wind course were resources that they regularly referred to in their current position. *When [new teachers] say, 'how do I do this?' or wonder 'did we talk about this?' in the instrument classes, they can flip to their notebook and very easily be able to figure it out (Nate). I have the handfuls of information from instructors who gave us a lot. When they did not give us a handout the class was pretty useless as I did not remember much... I'm not going to remember the stuff you give me a quiz on. But the information that you give me, I'm going to take with me to the job (Evan).* Laura on the information in her notebooks: *I know right where the information is and I can go reference it without having to call somebody.*

Evan felt the most pertinent information in the handout included solo and ensemble literature, mouthpiece types, the equipment the kids should be using in high school, and the music they should be playing. Christine mentioned that some of the materials presented in class (i.e. solos for high school students, advanced performance techniques) did not need to be discussed in class, but could just be provided on the handout for future reference: *I remember spending a lot of time talking about that, and I just haven't needed that kind of [advanced literature] stuff. It was the very beginning stuff that should have been focused on in class.* Nate and Laura also mentioned in the focus group discussion that they do not refer to the advanced technique portion of their notebook.

Self-study data also highlighted the sense that the resource notebook was one of the more valuable components of the class: *After being the oboe instructor for this course, I would say that the most valuable information I gave to the students, and what probably will stick with them longest, could be divided into two categories: troubleshooting, and resources (Ann Marie, Self-Study Journal 2).*

The interview, self-study, and focus group data confirm that the woodwind and brass instrument courses are seen as resource classes in which students start to compile important information for later usage. Students' sense of ownership of the information contained seems to be important; several participants mentioned the value of self-organizing and controlling their own notebook as opposed to just collating handouts or highlighting information in a textbook. Putting together a personal collection of notes seemed to be important to the participants and fueled their sense of possession of pertinent, practical, portable information rather than having merely memorized a set of

facts from a textbook or lecture: *I'm not going to remember the stuff you give me a quiz on. But the information that you give me, I'm going to take with me to the job* (Evan).

Because having readily available, easily stored, convenient reference materials was important to all the participants, one idea for future woodwind and brass instrument courses might be to create a means of electronically storing information. However, consideration of students' individual preferences seems crucial as participants and teacher-researchers alike acknowledged the powerful personal nature of the notebook. Some students may prefer to physically compile information, and some may see a portable binder as more practical for personal use than an electronic medium.

### ***Who Should Teach the Courses?***

The data indicate a split between those teachers who adamantly felt actual classroom teaching experience is essential to be an effective instrumental methods instructor, and those for whom private or studio teaching background is sufficient. Both Laura and Christine wanted teachers for the courses who had taught in schools. Laura cited need for practical advice like "what mouthpiece do you start on" rather than information on advanced techniques. She felt that performance-oriented graduate assistants told her class what they thought they needed to know but their assumption was sometimes faulty; graduate assistants with education training seemed to know what the instrument course students needed. *Someone who doesn't have that education background, they want you to be really good on that one instrument, really fast... [that sort of knowledge] isn't as applicable to teaching later* (Laura).

Evan and Nate both appreciated the performance assistants: *I think it was great that they were performers...they knew how to play their instrument... if they had a studio of private students they were good at [teaching]. If they didn't, they were kind of clueless* (Evan). Evan added that his ideal instructor would be an MM or DMA student, an adept performer, who could ably demonstrate concepts, and who also had taught beginners through college-age instrumentalists.

While in several cases appreciating their performance skills and expectations, a strong thread throughout all the data connects performance majors with making too difficult performance demands of the instrument class students. This emphasis on advanced performance abilities was described by three participants in the focus group as "going overboard." *Some of the performance majors who taught [techniques courses] were focused on scales, scales, and scales, or other stuff I will never use* (Christine). John commented in his Self-Study journal that *the instructors of the class all being former (and recent) school music educators makes the classes much more legitimate* (John, Self-study Journal 1).

The participants were unanimous on several desired characteristics of a woodwind or brass instrument course instructor. They all wanted someone who would place a strong emphasis on the basics of the instrument and emphasize the beginning stages of

instrumental learning; someone who recognized the importance of preparing students to start beginners effectively. Interestingly, the participants voiced no criticism of music education graduate students as instructors for the class; if these instructors were not as virtuosic on all the instruments as the performance major instructors it did not seem to be a problem for the instrument course students who seem strongly concerned with getting a good grasp on the basics. It is possible that the participants in this study, being music educators themselves, more strongly identify with the music education graduate students and are less critical of their teaching.

### *Playing the Instruments*

All participants expressed at least some level of comfort in playing the brass and woodwind instruments: *I loved the ones that we played in. All the performing parts were awesome. I could make a good sound on everything except for saxophone* (Evan). Nate suggested he was better prepared to play those instruments at the completion of the class than he was now.

Laura suggested that you “get out of it what you put into it” in terms of playing the instruments and shared that she had practiced approximately 30 minutes per day on each woodwind or brass class instrument so she felt quite comfortable on all of them. She was aware, however, that most students did not put that amount of time into practicing. Laura also stated that she appreciated the sessions when important pedagogical issues and rehearsal skills were addressed in broad strokes: *That’s when it all came together. That’s when we learned everything from ‘what do you write on the board the first day of band, to set the tone for the semester?’ to ‘how do you plan each lesson... so you’re finding a good blend between the executive skills on the horn, the aural skills, and the musicality piece?... Yes, you need to know the basics [of playing the instruments]. But don’t leave out ‘how do you teach beginning band?’ That’s huge! That’s the overwhelming part.*

Ann Marie commented in her self-study report that she was surprised and encouraged that the students were focusing more on how to teach than how to play: *The students were keenly interested in how to fix problems. And what was most interesting to me was that they didn’t seem to care if they fixed their own problems, but rather, that they could talk someone else through a difficulty... My experiences helped me to know that my students had already fast-forwarded themselves into the beginning band classroom and were trying to figure out how to help their students without the aid of a resident expert* (Ann Marie, Self-study Journal 2).

In terms of actual performance, participants gave priority to fundamentals over advanced techniques, with the goal of providing good models for their students. Although achieving a certain level of performing ability was important, they placed a higher priority on studying the pedagogy of the instruments. Laura commented that: *On the horns, the most important part to me was learning how to explain the very basics; how to put it together, how to form the embouchure, how to tongue, how to use your air.*

*I can figure out fingerings by looking at a fingering chart...I needed the basics of how to produce a sound.*

Additionally, teachers discussed the concept of creating a “lab band,” in which the woodwind or brass instrument class forms a miniature concert band, with each member of the class receiving an opportunity to conduct. Laura felt that directing a beginning band in the context of instrument techniques class might help the students to make connections between teaching and playing that they would otherwise not make in this setting.

### ***On the Job Training***

All of the data pointed to the conclusion that music teachers really learn to be music teachers “on the job.” A specific “on the job” issue with which teachers felt they needed more time in techniques class was repair. In an effort to make repair a topic studied in class rather than experienced in moments of pressure in a new job, several of the participants proposed that class should include a hands-on focus on instrument repair. Laura remarked that time spent on repair was important *because that just overwhelms you, as a beginning band teacher, I mean everyday someone brings a horn to you and they want it fixed right then and you can't do it right on the spot.* Students will inevitably face repair issues, and the opportune moment for addressing them is in the techniques class with instruments in hand, rather than before rehearsals during the first weeks of a new job.

All participants were in agreement that being on the job was the most powerful teaching experience. Nate suggested: *It's all about just doing it, to start teaching and figure out what the kids need and everything else.* Evan concluded his interview with: *I remember what I seek. College is all about “getting” and I just was not going to learn it unless it was something I seek. I probably could have just skipped college. It is all about what I am learning now.*

We suggest that these findings might support continued concern for induction and professional development of music teachers. It appears that teachers learn to be teachers when they have students in front of them and may need the most support at that time.

### ***Self-Study Suggestions for Improvement***

The 2005-2006 model for the courses included a meeting with a “PhD Buddy” after the required school observations. Ryan suggested: *The “buddy” experience was an excellent addition to this course. Preservice teachers want an opportunity to voice their opinions about their observations. I set up a format where they could voice their opinions (good or bad) without it leaving the discussion. I often focused my questions around what they would like their classroom to look like. This gave them an opportunity to begin to envision themselves as a teacher. I think this is a positive process for them to do. I also found that the students wanted to “talk shop” with me about my experiences as a band director. They do not*

*always get this experience in methods classes. I had a unique opportunity to interact with the students and get to know them. Overall I thought this was a healthy experience for all of us (Ryan, Self-study Journal 1).*

*I enjoyed the PhD buddy conversations last semester. It helped me get to know them and vice versa, which is extremely helpful. Our conversations tended to last for a while, often 45 minutes to an hour. On a couple of occasions, I met with two students simultaneously, leading me to think that group discussions (two students) may be better than individual meetings, provided they're possible to schedule (John, Self-Study Journal, 1).*

The Self-Study data suggested a need for two sections of the courses due to the need for better equipment. *We do not have enough equipment. We will have students sharing some equipment. It is my recommendation to open another section of this course. (Ryan, Self-Study journal 1). My one difficulty has been the logistics of my lesson time. As the flute and clarinet instructor, I teach the students in combination, giving me 20 flutes and clarinets in the room, after 90 minutes of class time. I'll be the first to admit that this is a more common setting than a small homogeneous lesson, but for purposes of these future music educators, I think we should do our best to split the second group into two small groups (John, Self-study Journal 1).*

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH**

The teacher-researchers and participants shared a belief that the amount of content covered in woodwind and brass instrument classes is simply too much to remember. Indeed, the young teacher participants even had difficulty recalling from which preservice class they had picked up certain concepts and teaching strategies. This points to the need for aggregating course material into portable resources for in-the-field referral. The process of compiling the resources is an important instructional component of the course as well; participants valued their self-created resource notebook over other written resources, like the textbook.

The topic of who should teach the woodwind and brass instrument classes was the area in which our teacher participants diverged the most. Participants agreed that performance major graduate assistants made high—often too high—demands of the preservice students in terms of acquiring technique. They agreed that knowing the basics, and how to teach each instrument, is more important than advanced technique. The data suggest that future woodwind and brass instrument classes should give pedagogy precedence over performance. Whether or not they can model on each instrument is not as important to instrumental education students as is their level of preparedness for instructional scenarios. However, participants disagreed on whether the graduate assistants should ideally be performance majors or education majors. Some felt that performance majors are fine instructors in this context as long as they have some teaching experience. Beginning teachers seem to remember whether their instructor was “good”

or not; this indicates a need for the instrumental lesson teachers to be monitored and carefully guided, whether they are performers or educators.

Our results mirror the findings of Cooper (1994) in that the beginning teachers in our study valued the ability of instructors to make a connection between competency in methods courses and future teaching in the field. Teachout (1997), Hillbrick (1999), and Conway (2002) discuss relevancy of coursework to future teaching settings as well. Our findings further suggest that the perceptions of quality of instruction in woodwind and brass instruments classes relates to the guidance, consistency and monitoring by faculty who are in charge of such coursework.

Based on the responses from participants and the analysis of the self-study data some changes have been implemented for the 06-07 version of these courses (see Appendix A). It is our hope that sharing of the data from the woodwind and brass instruments study will inform other music teacher educators about these specific courses and encourage other teacher-researchers to examine course offerings through research. As P-12 teachers are expected by the profession to examine their teaching practices under the research lens, we in higher education can provide a useful model by researching our own teaching and making changes based on the findings.

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## APPENDIX A

### *Brass and Woodwind Courses*

Both brass 205 and Woodwinds 203 run every semester and meet at the same time. They are each one credit. Students take brass one term and woodwinds the next, or woodwinds one term and brass the next. A DMA student on the instrument teaches the lesson, a PhD student teaches the “brass” or “woodwinds” class and a faculty member teaches the “secondary instruments” class. Students take these courses in the sophomore year after strings and percussion in the freshman year. They move into elementary band, string and general methods and secondary methods in the junior year. In the interest of space we have tried to combine the two syllabi for the appendix.

### **Course Schedule for Brass Class (numbers are room numbers)**

Tuesdays 10:40 – 11:30 Small group lesson on high brass (2058, 2032)  
 Tuesdays 11:30 – 12:30 Brass Class 2058  
 Thursdays 10:40 – 11:30 Secondary Instruments Class 2058  
 Thursdays 11:30 – 12:30 Small group lessons on low brass (2058, 2044)

### **Course Schedule for Woodwind Class**

Tuesdays 10:40 – 11:30 Small group lesson on double reeds (2019, 2027)  
 Tuesdays 11:30 – 12:30 Woodwind Class 2043  
 Thursdays 10:40 – 11:30 Secondary Instruments Class 2058  
 Thursdays 11:30 – 12:30 Small group lessons on flute, clarinet and sax (2025, 2043)

### **Materials**

Colwell, R., & Goolsby, T. (2002). *The teaching of instrumental music*. New York: Schirmer.

### **Course Requirements**

#### Attendance and Class Participation:

Attendance is required. More than two absences from class will result in one full grade lower. Each absence after two will result in an additional half grade reduction.

#### Peer Teaching: 5%

Each student in the class will demonstrate skills in teaching a beginning brass or woodwind lesson on November 2, 9, or 16. Grading criteria to be developed in class.

#### School Observation: 10%

Go out to a local school and do an observation of a beginning brass or woodwind class lesson in a school setting before mid-November. An observation protocol will be developed in class. Logistics of the observation visit will be handled in class. Shortly after the observation, meet with one of the music

education PhD students to discuss the observation (see PhD “buddy” list). The PhD student will notify Dr. Conway that you completed this assignment after the meeting. Pass/fail.

Performance Exam(s): 40% (10% each) for Brass class; 50% for WW class

Requirements for each instrument to include: Description of proper instrument assembly, care, and playing position; demonstration of proper embouchure, articulation and tone production; performance of several scales; perform two or three short folk tunes from the beginning band book.

Applied Lesson Observations: 20% (must do all to get full credit)

Arrange to observe a studio lesson with each of the brass or woodwind faculty. Submit the “studio observation form” signed by the applied faculty member for each of the instruments. All must be complete by December 12.

Final Resource Notebook: 25%

Include instrument assembly and care; basic playing positions, embouchure, and posture; breathing, tone production, and articulation for all instruments studied. Additional topics to include: basic concepts of repair; issues with real kids; techniques for more advanced players; suggested equipment, and choosing literature with the brass in mind (based primarily on guest presentations). Each instrument should include a list of suggestions and tips based on small group lesson learning. Grading criteria to be developed in class. Due to Dr. Conway on December 12, 2006.

Failure to complete any of the assignments will result in a grade of “incomplete.”

### ***Calendar***

#### September 5/7

Tuesday – Course introduction and overview/development of grading rubrics and observation protocols/instrument sign-out

Thursday – Dr. Conway – “Readiness for Instrumental Instruction”

READ: Good Rhythm and Intonation from Day One and Why Wait to Start Beginning Band? (provided)

#### September 12/14

Tuesday – Brass or Woodwind Assembly and Instrument Care

Thursday – Activities for Rhythmic Readiness

READ: Assembly and Care for each instrument

#### September 19/21

Tuesday – Brass or Woodwind Instrument Posture, Hand Position, Buzzing

Thursday – Activities for Tonal Readiness

READ: Posture, Hand Position and Buzzing for each instrument

#### September 26/28

Tuesday – Embouchure, Tone production, Breathing, Articulation

Thursday – Mock Band Rehearsal – Beginning Band

READ: Embouchure, Tone production, Breathing, Articulation for each instrument

#### October 3/5

Tuesday – The Overtone Series, Brass Fingering Connections, WW Fingerings

Thursday – Getting to Notation

READ: Music Learning Theory and Instrumental Methods Curricula (provided)

#### October 10/12

Tuesday – TONE

Thursday – Mock Band Rehearsal – Middle School Band

Tuesday, October 17 – Fall Study Break - No Class

Thursday, October 19 – Band Rehearsal – Holiday Concert

October 24/26

Middle School Band Demonstrations (Elementary Band; MS Band)  
Playing Exams on Instrument #1 some time in the week

October 31/November 2

Tuesday – Issues of Range/Alternate Fingerings  
Thursday – Peer Teaching  
Small group lessons on Instrument #2 starts on Tuesday

November 7/9

Tuesday – Double-tongue, muting, stopping for brass; Piccolo, Eflat clarinet, bass clarinet, other saxophones, contra for Woodwinds  
Thursday – Peer Teaching

November 14/16

Tuesday – Recommended Instruments and Mouthpieces  
Thursday – Peer Teaching

November 21

Brass or Woodwind Instrument Repair

November 28/30

Tuesday – Choosing Literature with the Brass or Woodwinds in Mind  
Thursday – Band Rehearsal

December 5/7

Tuesday – Sectionals for Holiday Concert  
Thursday – Dress Rehearsal for Holiday Concert

December 12

Course Conclusions (10:40 – 11:30)  
HOLIDAY CONCERT (11:45 – 12:00)  
Final Resource Notebook Due