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## An Exploration of Team Teaching in the School Band Setting

Aaron Zane Thomas

Missouri State University, [Aaron537@live.missouristate.edu](mailto:Aaron537@live.missouristate.edu)

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**AN EXPLORATION OF TEAM TEACHING  
IN THE SCHOOL BAND SETTING**

A Master's Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of  
Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Music Education

By

Aaron Thomas

December 2021

# **AN EXPLORATION OF TEAM TEACHING IN THE SCHOOL BAND SETTING**

Music

Missouri State University, December 2021

Master of Music Education

Aaron Thomas

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the goals, structure, and director perceptions of team-teaching practices within a vertically-aligned band program. Previous research has indicated that “team teaching” can provide many benefits to both students and teachers. Since not all school districts apply such a system, the objective of this study was to explore a school band program that has implemented vertically-aligned team teaching. I wanted to understand how the directors perceived its benefits, drawbacks, and difficulties. I selected a band program with an established vertically-aligned program that used team-teaching as a pedagogical strategy. I interviewed and observed band directors and analyzed, categorized, and interpreted the findings. The overarching theme that emerged from this study was using team teaching to build continuity throughout the band program. Additional themes that I found were scheduling, teacher roles, team-teaching strategies, teacher autonomy, professional growth, staff relationships, and collaboration. I observed complexity in the implementation of team teaching and found it difficult to define in precise terms. I discuss four implications arising from the case study: (a) valuable benefits for teachers and students, (b) challenges of implementation, (c) sustaining intended educational goals, and (d) navigating context.

**KEYWORDS:** band program, team-teaching, team-teaching strategies, co-teaching, vertical-alignment, curriculum, program continuity, collaboration

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A Master's Thesis  
Submitted to the Graduate College  
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Approved:

Daniel Hellman, Ph.D., Thesis Committee Chair

John Prescott, D.M.A., Committee Member

Brad Snow, D.M.A., Committee Member

Julie Masterson, Ph.D., Dean of the Graduate College

In the interest of academic freedom and the principle of free speech, approval of this thesis indicates the format is acceptable and meets the educational criteria for the discipline as determined by the faculty that constitute the thesis committee. The content and views expressed in this thesis are those of the student-scholar and are not endorsed by Missouri State University, its Graduate College, or its employees.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

It has been observed that “a primary purpose of team teaching is to draw upon each individual teacher’s strengths to increase student achievement” (Brenan & Witte, 2003, p. 32). Throughout the state of Missouri and across the country, many public-school districts organize their band programs to align in such a way that allows for team teaching, utilizing both middle and high school directors to assist and co-teach with each other during the school day. At the same time, many other band programs are not organized in such a manner. Some districts cannot facilitate the sharing of staff between the middle and high school levels, limiting the opportunities for team teaching. For other districts, this might be a matter of preference. This research was designed to study a band program that organizes its staff vertically in team-teaching assignments. The goal was to better understand how such a teaching model is organized and practiced and to consider the perceptions of the participating directors as to its effectiveness.

A challenge to this study was that little had been written or researched regarding team how teaching is explicitly applied in the band classroom. There is, however, a substantial amount of information that addresses team-teaching as a general educational concept (e.g., Benjamin, 2000; Buckley, 2000; Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2008; Cook & Friend, 1995; Pope-Ruark, Motley & Moner, 2019).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The bandroom learning environment is a complex ecosystem (Janzen, 1985; Rush, Scott & Wilkinson, 2014). It comprises various musical instrument classifications that include woodwind, brass, and percussion, which are then split into unique instruments within those

groupings. The individual instruments require distinctive, differentiated, and highly technical instructional approaches. These distinctions include variances in embouchure development and mouthpiece placement, as well as differences in musical notation (treble and bass clef). Special instruction is required for students to address the unique instrument challenges and needs in learning to play a musical instrument. Such attention also is needed for the continued development of higher-level skills in musicianship. Managing these varied technical needs by a single teacher or multiple teachers within a single room and class period is a unique challenge compared to other classroom situations. In addition to the pedagogical concerns of the band classroom is the organization and management of the overall band program, including but not limited to relating to planning, finances, travel, recruitment, uniforms, and instrument and music inventories.

In considering the traditional classroom arrangement, Buckley (2000) explained that the one-teacher, single classroom, single-subject model is based on many false assumptions: (a) all students progress at the same pace; (b) all classes should contain 30 students; (c) all students should be taught using the same curriculum, and (d) all classes should be taught by one teacher using the same teaching method. These considerations are highly applicable to school band instruction. Band ensembles can include students in the same class period exceeding the numbers of students found in other subjects. The Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts (CEDFA) recommended class sizes of no more than 25 music students per teacher in the “Music Curriculum Framework” prepared for the Texas Music Educators Association.

There are various technical and educational challenges in the band room teaching and learning environment. Even so, there is a lack of research available to help determine the value of applying vertical, team-teaching methods specifically in the band classroom or ensemble

rehearsal. Suggestions have been made that the concept of team teaching provides many benefits for both students and teachers (Brenan & Witte, 2003; Buckly, 2000; Pope-Ruark, Motley, Moner, 2019). Unfortunately, there is a gap in the research that might help us better understand what benefits are derived from a co-teaching strategy in the band setting itself where it is currently being practiced. There is also little information regarding the professional roles and relationships between teachers in applying team-teaching practices.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Through this study, my purpose was to investigate a single, public-school band program with a well-established, vertically-aligned, team-teaching model in place. A band program was selected to investigate the intended goals of the directors for the implementation of a team-teaching structure, how it has been organized, and how team teaching is practiced. In addition, I was interested in the perceptions of the participating directors regarding the benefits and shortcomings of their team-teaching experience.

### **Research Questions**

The questions that were considered in this study included:

1. What are the driving priorities and objectives in implementing team teaching?
2. What does team teaching look like in the band setting?
3. What are the perceived benefits for both students and teachers?
4. When conflicts and challenges arise, how are they negotiated?
5. Moving forward, what improvements to the team-teaching model are needed?

### **Research Design**

In this study, I have investigated the structural and professional benefits and challenges of

a band program that utilizes a vertically-aligned, team-teaching approach to instruction. Band director impressions and insights as to how they viewed their application of team teaching played a primary role in the research. A case study approach was used to examine a band program in the greater Springfield, MO area that utilizes team-teaching methods. An additional school was initially considered for the study, but I found that the quality and comprehensive nature of the investigation would better benefit from focusing on only one program.

A qualitative approach to this study was chosen as the intent of this research was to focus on the meaning that the band directors as participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) hold regarding the team-teaching model. The information gathered was used to find and build “patterns, categories and themes” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 181) concerning how the participating band directors value the team-teaching concept.

### **Significance of the Study**

Due to the lack of previous research to specifically focus on the benefits and shortcomings of team teaching in the band classroom, there is an existent gap that invites further investigation. As many band programs do not currently utilize the team-teaching model, this research can furnish a starting point for band directors and their schools who may be interested in pursuing a team-teach structure for their band or music program. With a cross-section of collected data, this study can provide a resource of director insights, reflections, and even cautionary counsel as directors explore the team-teach approach for their program and students.

### **Assumptions**

The following were the assumptions regarding this study:

1. The participants would be truthful and answer carefully, thoughtfully, and honestly about their experiences.
2. The participants would be aware of the objectives and individual roles that they fulfill in the team-teaching model.

## **Limitations**

The following are limitations of the study:

1. There is a lack of previous research from which to build and compare the results of the study.
2. Since this is a local study, it is not a reflection of national perceptions and trends.
3. The views revealed in this study are limited to the perspectives of the participating directors. They do not include the viewpoints of administrators, students, parents, or other music teachers outside of the band program.
4. As a band director, my own experiences with team teaching provide a degree of bias.

## **Definition of Terms**

1. Co-teaching – a teaching model that involves teachers sharing equal responsibility for the instruction of a class or group of students.
2. Team teaching – a group of teachers working together in a class setting to “purposefully, regularly, and cooperatively” (Buckley, 2000, p.4) facilitate students in the learning process.
3. Vertical alignment of staff – the organization of band staff to teach both middle school and high school levels, providing a consistent progression of instruction.
4. Program continuity – The presence of consistency, overlap, and cooperation related to instructional goals, methods, and curriculum as applied by all staff in a band program.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many public schools throughout southwest Missouri and around the state of Missouri organize their middle school and high school band directors to work together in a team-teach model. In a recent survey, Prendergast (2020), found that 27% of music teacher respondents (<sup>1</sup>band, orchestra, general music, and vocal) in the state of Missouri teach in a team setting. Though the data suggest that many band directors still teach alone, there appears to be a sizable number who have gravitated towards the perceived benefits of team-teaching. Brenan and Witte (2003) concluded that an organized team-teach partnership could provide many benefits to teachers and students in the instrumental music classroom.

Anecdotally, there appear to be more team-teaching situations where there is only one high school in the district. This contrasts with communities with more than one high school and a more complex and divided feeder-school pattern. A district with only one high school would undoubtedly provide administrators with more accessible options in organizing band staff into a team-teach model. This contrasts with districts that have middle school feeders that send students to more than one high school. So, the context regarding the feeder patterns and the district's size directly impacts the necessary flexibility required for the needed collaboration to set up a team-teach model among band directors within a district.

Only a small amount of literature explicitly addresses or explores the existence and functionality of team-teaching in music or band programs (e.g., Brenan & Witte, 2003; Hanegan, Pascasio, Porter & Brandon, 2019; Kim, 2019; Purrington, 1967). In contrast, there is a notable amount of research that addresses the benefits, application, and shortcomings of team teaching in general education (e.g., Buckley, 2000; Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2008; Cook &

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<sup>1</sup> 12% of survey respondents identified their position as band.

Friend, 1995; Davis, 1995; Pope-Ruark, Motley & Moner, 2019). A significant part of my research was to assess the pros and cons of team-teaching concepts and practices in the band setting. This will address those general concepts and findings to narrow the focus on the application of team-teaching concepts and practices in band programs. Points of consideration will include defining team teaching, the elements of good team teaching, the case for team teaching regarding student impact; the disadvantages of team teaching; what team teaching can look like; and the application of team-teaching concepts to the school band program.

### **Defining Team Teaching**

Buckley (2000) defined team teaching as a “group of instructors working purposefully, regularly, and cooperatively to help a group of students learn” (p. 4). Brenan and Witte (2003) note that team teaching provides a unification of strengths in order to improve student achievement. Buckley (2000) explains that team teaching is not job sharing, nor one teacher aiding the other but both teachers filling the need for the various and unique challenges that arise in the music classroom. A quality of team teaching is that the teachers are “equal” (Brenan & Witte, 2003) in their guidance and teaching duties within the classroom setting. There are two types of team teaching addressed in the research – disciplinary and interdisciplinary. As this research will only focus on team-teaching within the band setting, it will address disciplinary team-teaching.

The term “co-teaching” is closely related term to team teaching. Team teaching is understood as a “species” (Pope-Ruark, Motley & Moner, 2019) of co-teaching's overarching concept. Cook and Friend (1995) define co-teaching as “two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse, or blended, group of students in a single physical

space” (p. 2). It has been recognized that co-teaching provides a specialized purpose, “for the outcome of achieving what none could have done alone” (Wenzlaff, Berak, Wieseman, Monroe-Baillargeon, Bacharach & Bradfield-Kreider, 2002, p. 14). Under the co-teaching umbrella, Pope-Ruark, Motley & Moner (2019) summarized team teaching as the most “intensive” form of co-teaching according to the co-teaching hierarchy originally developed by Cook and Friend (1995) and later updated by Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg (2008).

To summarize the concept of team teaching for this research, it can be described as involving the cooperation between two or more teachers. This includes setting class goals, planning class objectives, preparing and teaching lessons jointly, developing and administering assessment tools, and sharing grading duties (Buckley, 2000; Pope-Ruark, Motley & Moner, 2019). Regarding its execution in the classroom, it has been observed that team teachers participate by “teaching, commenting, questioning, and often underlining joint concepts, hopefully encouraging greater insight for the student” (Knieter, 1963, p. 65).

### **The Elements of Good Team Teaching**

Team teaching among music teachers has been described as “one of the most rewarding experiences an educator may encounter” (Purrinton, 1967, p. 135). Reasons for this conclusion involve the opportunities for musical creativity, student commitment, and educated critique. Among researchers, cooperative teaching has long been considered a valuable tool in teaching diverse groups within the K-12 system (York-Barr, Bacharach, Salik, Frank & Benick, 2004).

Brenan and Witte (2003) noted that a single band teacher model does have its benefits as it does provide the ability for quick decision making and sole responsibility for the direction and execution of goals for the class. Conversely, this method can also result “in stress, isolation, and



stagnation as habit and routine set in” (Brenan & Witte, 2003, p. 32). The “solo” teacher model has been a long-established method but also requires a stable learning environment to be most effective (Buckley, 2000). As the band environment is a dynamic, multi-faceted activity that can focus heavily on team concepts for students (Iliff, 2018), having band directors apply and model team-teaching concepts rather than teach alone would appear to be a logical decision. Music teachers and the research do suggest necessary characteristics that are needed for team teaching to be an appropriate method for teachers. Flexibility, listening skills, ability to share in duties, the ability to take risks, and the willingness to compromise are characteristics and attitudes that are needed to facilitate an effective team-teach method (Brenan & Witte, 2003; Davis, 1995; York-Barr, Bacharach, Salk, Frank & Benick, 2004).

**Collective Teaching Experience.** Ideally, each teacher in a team-teaching situation brings a distinctive experience and collection of skill sets to the classroom. Brenan and Witte (2003) explain that team teaching combines band director abilities and strengths to improve student achievement. This is viewed as the fundamental and critical purpose of team-teaching (Brenan & Witte, 2003). Team teaching provides a combination of talents and strengths of teachers to compensate for each other's weaknesses as well as creating a mutual learning and professional development experience between teachers (Brenan & Witte, 2003; Buckley, 2000; Murphy & Scantlebury, 2010). Opportunities for interaction, observation, discussion, and critique, can have an energizing effect on teachers (Buckley, 2000). When applied to the band setting, this can involve pairing a teacher who specializes in woodwind pedagogy with a teacher whose expertise is brass or percussion. (Brenan & Witte, 2003).

**Shared Duties.** Within the team-teaching design, cooperating teachers can work together to identify goals for the class, plan for instruction, teach students, provide assessment,

share disciplinary duties, and divide up administrative tasks (Brenan & Witte, 2003; Buckley, 2000; Kneiter, 1963; Pope-Ruark, Motley & Moner, 2019). Collaboration can provide for the interjection of innovative ideas and approaches and provide opportunities for teachers to constructively challenge each other's beliefs (Buckley, 2000; Pope-Ruark, Motley & Moner, 2019). There are many duties and complexities involved in running a band program that includes instruction, student management, and administrative responsibilities. The sharing of such duties can lend itself to the improved utilization of time and the more efficient use and focus of teacher energies.

**Improved Planning.** There is more time and opportunity for improvement in the execution of the curriculum when class and administrative duties are shared (Buckley, 2000; Brennan & Witte, 2003). Buckley (2000) observed that it “keeps the syllabus current, clarifies the goals of each lesson, ensures better use of class time, and improves the quality of teaching” (p. 11). Teachers can reanalyze the what, why, and how of what they are teaching. Such shared planning in the band program can lead to a sharing of goals and consistent application of music curriculum vertically throughout the various groups that make up the band program, from the beginner groups through the advanced high school ensembles (Hanegan, Pascasio, Porter & Brandon, 2019; Iliff, 2018).

**Mutual Observation.** In a collaborative setting, teachers can share ideas and learn from each other by watching their co-teacher teach (Buckley, 2000). A literature review of the use of co-teaching models to benefit the student-teacher experience (Kim, 2019) noted that both teachers and student teachers experienced great learning benefits from one another. Through co-teaching, working relationships, knowledge, skill sets, and teaching styles were shared. Team teaching can be applied differently in various band programs, from band teachers teaching

together in the same room to teachers teaching in different rooms. The context of the situation can vary widely as to how the overarching concept of team teaching is applied. The ability to observe one another teach will depend on the arrangement of time and placement of teachers.

**Avoiding Teacher Burnout.** A team-teaching model allows mutual and professional support of one another (Brenan & Witte, 2003). Scheib (2003) explored overload as one of the contributing factors for music teacher dissatisfaction. Heston, Dedrick, Raschke & Whitehead (1996) also found teacher workload as one of the top stressors among band directors and student attitudes and behaviors. It has been suggested that the possibility of burnout is diminished with the support and shared responsibilities that a team-teaching situation offers (Buckley, 2000).

**Application of Proven Team Methods.** Team concepts have long been successfully applied in other fields such as manufacturing, business, media, and the military (Buckley, 2000). Buckley (2000) noted that using the team model in education spurs creativity, builds relationships, and shares responsibility. It creates a unique group dynamic that combines the positive attributes of a small group (Buckly, 2000). Since the band is an educational, social, and team-oriented organization, its staff's team-teach approach and mentality appear as a logical structure for the band program.

### **The Case for Team Teaching – Student Impact**

Research shows that team teaching benefits students (Bacharach, Heck & Dahleberg, 2008; Brenan & Witte, 2003; Buckley, 2000; Kim, 2019; Wilson & Martin, 1998). Wilson and Martin (1998) found that collaboration between teachers in the classroom environment can serve as a model for creativity, discussion, and social interactions that can benefit students. Wilson and Martin (1998) found that college-level, elementary education students in their preservice math

and social study courses perceived team teaching to be effective. Students viewed the experience as more interesting and enjoyed the working relationship of two perspectives in the classroom. Buckley (2000) noted that the differences of teacher opinions and personalities, the change of voices, and their varying rhythms and cadences energize the classroom environment. Students find these variations in teacher styles to be stimulating, which counteracts potential boredom. In the band room setting, such teacher modeling of team concepts might vary based on how teachers are assigned - whether team-teaching in the same classroom or separated by specific instrument types.

In general, the overall classroom environment can be impacted by the team-teach approach. Brennan and Witte (2003) point out that the teacher-to-teacher relationship in the band classroom can open the opportunity for humor and a fun, working relationship that can provide a positive example for students in how teamwork can function. Suggested benefits that directly impact student learning include more attention and time-critical support of individual students (Brennan & Witte, 2003; Kim, 2019), improved teacher-student relationships (Dugan & Letterman, 2008), increased student achievement (Brennan & Witte, 2003; Wilson & Martin, 1998), enhanced critical thinking and analysis skills (Buckley, 2000; Wilson & Martin, 1998), and improved student learning outcomes (Wilson & Martin, 1998).

It is noted that the team-teacher environment can result in improved recruitment and increased retention of students (Buckley, 2000; Wilson & Martin, 1998). The reason for this is further explained by Buckley (2000). The collaboration environment helps to create bonding between students and a heightened sense of self-esteem. Such is a potential benefit of team teaching that is of direct interest to the ever-present concern of band teachers and their programs regarding recruitment and retention of band students.

## **Disadvantages of Team Teaching**

There are many studies, books, and articles that concentrate on the merits of team teaching. There is also consideration given to the various disadvantages that arise from the model for both teachers and students. Regarding students themselves, Wadkins, Miller & Wozniak (2006) came to a more neutral deduction, concluding that there were neither noticeable advantages nor disadvantages to students instructed under a team-teaching model.

One of the primary failures of team teaching is the incompatibility of the partnered teachers (Buckley, 2000; Jenkins & Crawford, 2016). Buckley (2000) continues to explain that this incompatibility can be from those of an uncompromising mindset, fear of a loss of control or the “spotlight” (p.13), or a genuine dislike for the other teacher. Both Wilson & Martin (1998) and Buckley (2000) noted the demand for time and energy as a significant disadvantage for teachers. The time needed to plan and coordinate meetings and the slower process of joint decision-making is explained as a challenge to the team-teaching model (Buckley, 2000; Pope-Ruark, Motley & Moner, 2019).

Wilson and Martin (1998) also mention another problem that arises through the comparisons of the teachers made by students, both vocally and in written evaluations. This includes comparisons of teaching style, the difficulty of their assessment, and which teacher plays the more dominant role. Brennan & Witte (2003) expressed concern regarding band team-teachers as not being viewed as equal partners by students, administrators, and parents.

In addressing team teaching in the instrumental music classroom, Brennan and Witte (2003) note that forcing teachers to team-teach can create an unhealthy learning environment for both teaching and learning. Also, pairing experienced teachers with younger teachers can create

an imbalance in the professional relationship (Brenan & Witte, 2003). Situations like these can create an unequal sharing of administrative duties and create barriers to conflict resolution.

Buckley (2000) cautions that the team-teach environment can be challenging for differing learning styles of some students. Areas of concern include interference with the established habits of students; a hindrance to students who do better in a highly structured and repetitive environment; and confusion for students by differing opinions expressed by their teachers. Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg (2008) point out that confusion can arise for students regarding which teacher to approach with problems or questions.

There are advantages to administrators overseeing team teachers in their schools, e.g., assigning teachers to teams rather than classes, mutual support of teachers, improved learning of students, happier staff, and students, etc. (Buckley, 2000). There are also disadvantages for administrators that should be kept in mind. Buckley (2000) cautions that advocating for a team-teaching model can create more work and planning for administrators, can create issues in the distribution of finances and salaries, and can result in difficulties replacing staff vacancies with other teachers willing to teach in a team-teaching situation. It should also be noted that the sharing of band teachers between buildings and grade levels can pose additional challenges related to class scheduling.

### **What Can Team Teaching Look Like?**

The research addresses the advantages and disadvantages of team teaching and provides insight into what team teaching can look like in application. Cook and Friend (1995) observed that team teaching “requires a high level of trust and commitment” (p. 7) for it to be successfully implemented. It is not always a painless process and can be complex and chaotic in its setup and

practice, which requires setting aside egos in a working and collaborative professional relationship (Pope-Ruark, Motley & Moner, 2019). There are several models or strategies of team teaching in practice. Before I begin to focus on the application of team-teaching in the Band setting, I wish to briefly consider a few general strategy options for team-teaching in the classroom. Several, if not all of these models, can find application in the band team-teaching situation depending on instructional needs and circumstances at any given time.

Cook and Friend (1995) provide five possible team-teaching strategies. (a) “One Teacher, One Assistant”: With this strategy, one leading teacher runs the instruction while the other teacher moves around the room, aiding the lead teacher as needed. (b) “Station Teaching”: The teachers go to a fixed station and provide a specific set of instructional content. When that is completed, the teachers trade students and provide the exact content to a new group. (c) “Parallel Teaching”: The teachers go to separate locations but provide the same instruction to their group of students simultaneously. This is to lower the student-to-teacher ratio. (d) “Alternate Teaching”: One teacher pulls out a smaller group to work with for special attention, while the other teacher continues to work with the larger group. (e) “Team Teaching”: This is shared instruction of the entire group. One teacher can speak while the other teacher demonstrates to the class, or the teachers take turns leading the lesson. (Cook & Friend, 1995, p. 6).

Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg (2008) provided additional strategies such as “One Teach, One Observe” (p. 11). This strategy allows one teacher to lead the class while the other teacher can observe and evaluate student performance. Another strategy suggested is labeled as “Alternative (Differentiated) Teaching” (p. 11), in which two different approaches or strategies

are used to teach the same information. The same outcome is desired, but with variations in instruction.

### **Applying the Concepts to the School Band Program**

Considering the complexity of the band learning environment, there would appear to be a natural application for team-teaching in band programs. Such complexities include the diversity of instruments being taught and the distinctive instructional approaches needed to teach the various instruments (Janzen, 1985; Rush, Scott & Wilkinson, 2014). In addition to instrumental pedagogy, band programs provide a comprehensive system that is not isolated to one class but consists of an entire organization that spans from the middle school beginner to the advanced high school band performer. This includes various forms of musical performance such as concert band, marching band, and jazz band. The pedagogical and administrative management needs of the band program provide a good fit for the benefits of team-teaching as indicated by available research (e.g., Bacharach, Heck & Dahleberg, 2008; Brenan & Witte, 2003; Buckley, 2000; Kim, 2019; Wilson & Martin, 1998).

As part of managing the band organization and addressing its complex needs, numerous band programs implement a vertically-aligned, team-teaching approach (Hanegan, Pascasio, Porter & Brandon, 2019; Iliff, 2018). The term “vertical” has several applications. This may involve sharing staff among grade levels, requiring teachers to be itinerant between high school and middle school buildings (Iliff, 2018). Additionally, the term “vertical” can describe the development of the music curriculum as consistent and progressive from the band beginner to the advanced high school musician (Hanegan, Pascasio, Porter & Brandon, 2019; Iliff,



2018). Iliff (2018) notes the example of band staff having their primary teaching assignments and assisting or overseeing students at other stages of their development.

Along with staffing, Hanegan, Pascasio, Porter & Brandon (2019) address the issue of aligning curriculum throughout the band program in a vertical and horizontal pattern where multiple feeder schools of the high school band are involved. This alignment requires setting identical curriculum, objectives, teaching, and assessment tools throughout the band system. The entire band organization is guided by “unified philosophies, goals, and practices throughout every grade level” (Hanegan, Pascasio, Porter & Brandon, 2019, p. 5).

What kind of recommendations does the literature suggest for implementing team teaching? A great deal of planning is recommended to implement the team-teaching model in the band program (Brenan & Witte, 2003; Purrington, 1967). Brennan and Witte (2003) indicate that it takes considerable preparation and time to convince administrators of its value. Once a team-teaching model is approved for the band program, it is necessary to put together a team that compliments one another’s musical strengths and weaknesses and work ethic, and personal characteristics (Brenan & Witte, 2003). After a team has been selected, it is necessary to go over every aspect of the band program and agree on its various elements (Brenan & Witte, 2003). In laying out their own vertically aligned, team-teaching approach, Hanegan, Pascasio, Porter & Brandon (2019) recommend a high degree of planning and coordination. They demonstrate specific teacher ensemble assignments to primary and assistant duties, detailed administrative responsibilities for each staff member, and leadership and mentoring responsibilities within their school communities.

Considering the broad scope and intricacies of the modern band program, it is surprising that minimal research, and literature in general, has focused on the structure and implementation

of the band team-teaching model where it is practiced. There is a considerable amount of detailed literature that deals with team-teaching practice within general education, which does provide very applicable and reasonable relevancy to the band classroom (e.g., Benjamin, 2000; Buckley, 2000; Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2008; Cook & Friend, 1995; Pope-Ruark, Motley & Moner, 2019). As it may apply to school band, vertical team teaching involves a variety of complex dynamics that deserve specific scrutiny. A more precise understanding of the perceived benefits and challenges to how team teaching is applied in the band setting is needed to provide a more accurate view of best practices. Other band programs looking to adopt such a model could benefit from focusing on the details used to make informed decisions from another band, team-teaching situation.

## **Summary**

Though literature, reading materials, and references are limited regarding the specific application of team teaching in the band setting (e.g., Brenan & Witte, 2003; Hanegan, Pascasio, Porter & Brandon, 2019; Iliff, 2018; Purrington, 1967), there is a considerable amount of general classroom team teaching references to draw upon (e.g., Buckley, 2000; Cook & Friend, 1995; Pope-Ruark, R., Motley & Moner, 2019; York-Barr, Bacharach, Salk, Frank & Benick, 2004). Both music and general education references point to numerous benefits for teachers and students and provide reasons for caution (e.g., Buckley, 2000; Jenkins & Crawford, 2016; Wilson & Martin, 1998). Team teaching can take on many different applications, from teachers in the same room at the same time to splitting up classes for specialized attention (Cook & Friend, 1995). Applied to a band program and classroom, team-teaching can involve a distribution of band staff and an organization of the curriculum in a vertically aligned format

(Hanegan, Pascasio, Porter & Brandon, 2019; Iliff, 2018), requiring a great deal of collaboration and planning (Brenan & Witte, 2003).

The demands of the modern world and its impact on education continue to grow every year. Complexities have long existed within band programs, while musical expectations, methods, techniques, and technology applications advance. At the same time, the emotional needs of students and their connection to music are better understood. This places more significant pressure on band teachers as they struggle to keep pace with their students' pedagogical and emotional learning needs. Perhaps applying team-teaching strategies to band programs does provide a positive solution to such challenges. The vertical distribution and sharing of band staff between the middle and high school levels can be of practical use, fully utilizing and combining the staff's strengths in a team-teaching model throughout the band program.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore a band program that already utilized a team-teaching, vertically aligned model. The study investigated what team-teaching can look like regarding its structure, how its implementation is perceived and applied by the teachers involved, and how teachers work together to achieve objectives. Consideration was given to the range of team-teaching techniques implemented. (Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2008; Cook & Friend, 1995). It was observed how teachers carry out their roles at the various grade levels throughout the day, whether a head director, assistant or co-equal partner role in the multiple ensembles and class settings. The human element of professional and interpersonal relationships and dynamics was an essential part of understanding how team-teaching works. In addition, it was essential to know what positives and negatives directors perceived in how team-teaching

is utilized in their band program and what improvements they would like to see or preferences they might have moving forward.

## METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to examine team-teaching practices in a band program. The research focused on the organization of staffing to facilitate team-teaching and consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of participating band directors. Questions driving the research included (a) What are the driving priorities and objectives in implementing team teaching? (b) What does team teaching look like in the band setting? (c) What are the perceived benefits for both students and teachers? (d) When conflicts and challenges arise, how are they negotiated? (e) Moving forward, what improvements to the team-teaching model are needed?

### Research Design

Though the research strongly supports the value of team-teaching in general practice (e.g., Buckley, 2000; Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2008; Cook & Friend, 1995; Davis, 1995; Pope-Ruark, Motley & Moner, 2019), there is little research available that focuses on its application of structure and practice in the band program setting. The purpose of this study was to explore the process and experience of band team teaching in relation to objectives, perceived benefits, and challenges. Therefore, I chose to utilize a qualitative case study to discover the elements of the team-teaching process in practice (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). My intent was to gain a clearer insight into the organization and experience of team-teaching in the band program setting. I desired to provide a resource for other band directors considering implementing a team-teaching model or considering improvement on existing team-teaching applications. The research was granted approval from the Missouri State University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (2021-320) on March 10, 2021. (See Appendix A.)

Two primary procedures for data collection were utilized – individual and focus group interviews and qualitative observations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I began the research with personal Zoom interviews focused on teacher perceptions of their specific roles in the education team. I explored their feelings and opinions over the perceived benefits and challenges of team teaching. Once individual interviews were completed, I conducted an in-person observation of their high school, intermediate, and beginner classes. They were observed to provide a snapshot of how team-teaching is applied in the various classroom settings. The final phase of the research involved a group Zoom meeting with the directors to allow for follow-up questioning and discussion over the previous interviews and in-person observation.

### **Site of the Study**

The study involved a single band program that currently implements a team-teaching setup. Preference was given to a band program in which teachers are shared between the program's high school and middle school/intermediate levels. The program that fit this criterion was Ozark, MO. The location is a suburban school within a metropolitan area that involves mid-sized to large student populations. Ozark, MO is located south of Springfield, MO, and is the third largest city in the Springfield metro area, with 20,000 residents. The school district comprises one high school, one junior high, one upper elementary, and four elementary schools. The student population stands at 5,933 students PK, K-12, with a free and reduced lunch rate of 33%.

### **Participants**

All directors of the Ozark band program provided their consent to be a part of this study.

I first reached out to the director of bands to gain permission to use the Ozark band program for the study. Once permission was received, this was followed by an email request to the entire band staff to request their participation. The Ozark band program consists of six veteran and accomplished teachers, two males and four females. All directors are over the age of 40. The directors are assigned to various duties under one head or “Director of Bands.” Primary assignments for each of the individual directors include Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Junior High and High School Jazz, Beginner Band, 7<sup>th</sup> grade band, 8<sup>th</sup> grade band, 9<sup>th</sup> grade band, and Percussion instructor. All the directors are involved with helping or assisting with other classes or ensembles besides their primary responsibilities or assignments. I have chosen pseudonyms to represent the participating directors. The names Tim, Erin, Jeremy, Denise, Sarah, and Kathy are used for the participating staff. The name Bill is used to identify an additional director that no longer teaches in Ozark. The students in the Ozark band program were only indirectly involved with this study. No consent from students was necessary.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

As a case study, three primary phases were utilized for data collection. All three stages of research were conducted during the second semester of classes of the 2020-21 school year, spanning the months of March through May. First, I conducted interviews with each director through Zoom meetings, with each session averaging between 45 to 60 minutes. After the individual interviews were completed, I arranged for one day to observe the directors in their classrooms through a full day of classes, with additional but brief discussions with directors between their classes and after school. I watched the High School Wind Ensemble and the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and beginner band classes being taught. Finally, I arranged a Zoom meeting as a

focus-group discussion for the entire staff. Four of the six directors were able to attend, including the head director.

This qualitative and case study approach was appropriate to provide flexibility in following the research findings and further investigation of unexpected information. The individual interviews allowed me to gain specific data regarding each director's schedule and focused insight on their perceptions, opinions, and personal philosophies. A day set aside for in-person observations provided me with a broader perspective and context of information discussed in the individual interviews. The observations also furnished me with a better comprehension of the directors' real-world team-teach setting and how they interacted with one another and the students. The utilization of a focus group to complete the research was chosen to allow for follow-up questions and discussion on those things previously discussed or observed.

### **Data Collection Tools**

In this study, I utilized a semi-structured interview process with hand-written and typed notes, video recordings of all the interviews (including the focus-group), and on-site, qualitative observations that included typed notes. I used an Apple MacBook Air to conduct and record all Zoom calls, with the recordings stored and saved on a Lacie portable hard drive. Notes were taken using a modified observational protocol form (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) that was divided into a "descriptive notes" column and a "reflexive notes" column. (See Appendix B.) My descriptive notes provided factual descriptions of what was explicitly discussed and observed. The reflexive column indicated my impressions, interpretations, and feelings of the same discussions and observations. Additional qualitative information was collected on all email correspondence between the Ozark band directors and me.



## **Data Analysis**

As a qualitative study, I coded for keywords using an emergent process that identified explicitly used words, phrases, and expressed thoughts or concepts that were inferred. I then examined the codes for patterns in the data to identify themes. Recordings and notes of the individual focus-group interviews and the in-person observations were reviewed with prominent comments color-coded into eleven additional categories. (See Appendix C.). I developed these categories by identifying and comparing topics of discussion raised by the participants in the interviews. This process was done manually and not with the aid of computer software. Decisions for categorizing specific words and themes were inductive and deductive, with broad generalizations sometimes made from particular references. In other instances, assumptions were made of comments based upon my previous views and experiences as a band director.

## **CONTENT OF THE STUDY**

### **Introduction**

Over the past several decades, a growing number of band programs have gravitated toward implementing a vertically aligned, team-teaching model (Prendergast, 2020). Band programs continue to evolve and expand to include a wide variety of musical experiences and challenges for students. It has included higher standards of musical performance and innovation. This is especially true of the marching band. Keeping up with such changes and challenges can prove to be overwhelming for individual band instructors. Organizing the band program to share teaching duties and responsibilities amongst teachers can be perceived as a reasonable course of action. Band program needs and challenges can include a desire to provide mutual support, curriculum consistency, and adequate coverage of instructional and administrative responsibilities.

This study aimed to examine a band program that utilizes a vertically aligned, team-teaching model. Due to my long-standing familiarity with the Ozark band program and its directors, I chose the Ozark band as a suitable situation for closer study. I once taught with one of the assistant directors in another district and had also been a clinician for the Ozark band over the years. I have been able to watch the Ozark band program grow and thrive as student participation has increased and additional staff has been added to meet the demands of an expanding program. I was aware of their implementation of a vertically aligned, team-teaching model within recent years. I felt that enough time had transpired to get an interesting and meaningful assessment of how the directors perceived their experiences up to this point.

I conducted a series of individual interviews, classroom observations, and a focus

group to collect information for this project. I intended to examine the desired goals of the directors, the organizational structure of teacher class assignments, teacher responsibilities, and teacher perspectives and impressions of their team-teaching experiences. This provided the primary focus for my study. I wanted to better understand the structure, perceived benefits, and challenges of team teaching in the Ozark band program. I was able to draw upon my research of existing literature to conceptualize and define the various applications of team-teaching strategies that I found in the Ozark band program. At the same time, I perceived that much of the information I collected through discussion and observation was uncharted territory due to the lack of band-specific literature dealing with team teaching. My findings required analysis and interpretation outside the limitations of previous research.

There are unique characteristics to the structure of the band setting regarding objectives, pedagogy, organization, teacher relationships, and administration that provide unique challenges and a variety of applications and solutions. I synthesized the following information and analysis according to my perspective as a band director. My intent has been to offer a view of vertical alignment and team teaching in the Ozark band program that is relatable to other band directors.

## **Background and History**

In searching for a local band program for the study, the Ozark band program stood out as an attractive fit due to their development of a vertically-aligned, team-teaching situation. I selected this program due to their recent initiative to infuse team teaching into their program organization. As of the 2020-2021 school year, the Ozark Band program was in its fourth year of implementing a team-teaching model. There are currently six band directors teaching among

three schools in the Ozark School district: high school, junior high, and middle school. The average teaching experience of Ozark band directors is 19 years, ranging from 16 to 24. There are approximately 700 students in the Ozark band program 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The Ozark Band program consists of a beginner band, two 7<sup>th</sup> grade bands, an 8<sup>th</sup> grade Band, a high school band program (including marching band and two concert ensembles), and a junior high and high school jazz program.

The development of team teaching coincided with a recent expansion of the band teaching staff in the school district. When the head director Tim (pseudonym) arrived eight years ago, there were only five directors throughout the system. Each director was assigned to only one location throughout the school day. Two directors were assigned exclusively to the high school, two at the junior high, and one at the intermediate level. Table 1 outlines teacher responsibilities before a vertically aligned, teach-teaching model was implemented.

Tim expressed frustration with the teacher-assignment model when he first arrived at Ozark, especially at the high school level (Tim, interview 4/6/21; Focus Group, interview 4/30/21). Tim and the assistant director, Erin, were team-teaching together, but there were no opportunities for the two of them to work with the younger band students. Also, they only spent three out of six periods each day teaching band, while the other three were devoted to either music appreciation or music history. Tim noted that this did not provide efficient use of director skills as it related directly to the development of the band program. I perceive that the philosophy behind this is that as a band director, such energies of expertise and time should be spent developing the band program itself, rather than spending instructional time teaching courses not directly beneficial to this objective. Tim also addressed the fact that there was “no overlap” between the three band locations (Tim, interview 4/6/21). This was perceived as one of the band

Table 1. Band Staff Assignments Prior to Implementation of Team-Teaching Model

| Director | School Assignment | Responsibilities   |
|----------|-------------------|--|
| Tim      | High School       | Director for: marching band, concert bands, jazz band, music appreciation, music history             |
| Erin     | High School       | Assistant director for HS marching band, concert bands, jazz band, music appreciation, music history |
| Bill     | Junior High       | Head director for: 7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> grade bands                                   |
| Denise   | Junior High       | Assistant director for: 7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> grade bands                              |
| Sarah    | Intermediate      | Beginner band and general music  |

Note. All director names listed are pseudonyms.

program's most significant weaknesses and reasons for developing a curriculum based upon a vertically aligned, team-teach approach. Also, all the duties of running a high school band program, including the direction and operation of the marching band, rested on Tim and Erin. There was no assistance or support from the other directors. "At first, Erin and I did everything at the high school, but it was overwhelming" (Tim, interview 4/6/21). With the desire to continue to expand the skill and competitive goals of the high school program, Tim felt that the other band directors in the district could be utilized to provide a more supportive role.

Tim also explained that students were arriving at the high school level deficient in certain music fundamentals. He did not feel that this was due to a lack of teacher competence or neglect. He thought that the problem could be solved if all the directors were involved in developing and tracking student skills throughout the different grade levels of the band program (Tim, interview 4/6/21; Focus Group, 5/25/21). He noted that lower grade level teachers could not observe weaknesses or strengths as manifested in the high school ensembles to adjust their instructional strategies when needed. The high school level directors could not see or

address instructional strengths or weaknesses at the lower levels to understand when or where potential problems might be developing.

These perceptions prompted the desired change in the structure towards vertical alignment of staff and team-teaching assignments. The first step involved discussions between Tim and the administration regarding more oversight of the entire band program by the head high school director. The superintendent gave Tim the title of “Director of Bands” to establish a clear leadership position. Previously, Tim was only considered the high school band director with no additional responsibilities or authority of oversight. Next, the directors put together a plan and schedule of assignments to present to the administration. Erin was responsible for creating a workable schedule (Erin, interview 3/31/21; Tim, interview 4/6/21). They desired a practical plan to be in place before presenting a proposal to the Ozark administration.

There was some resistance to the plan, but not from the administration. The head junior high director was concerned about the loss of autonomy at the junior high. These circumstances resulted in the junior high director leaving for another district, but on good terms (Tim, interview 4/6/21). This opened the way to hire two new staff members, one percussion specialist (Jeremy – pseudonym) and a woodwind specialist (Kathy – pseudonym), to join the Ozark band staff. This resulted in a total of six band instructors in the district. The degree to which the transition to vertical alignment was a collaborative effort among all the directors, or driven by Tim’s goals, was not explicitly discussed. A general sense of approval by the Ozark directors for the switch to vertical alignment seemed to be a matter of consensus among the directors.

The process of transitioning to the vertical alignment of band staff between buildings has been a work in progress over the past four years (Erin, interview 3/31/21; Kathy, interview 3/24/21; Tim, interview 4/6/21; Sarah, interview 3/25/21; Focus Group, 5/25/21). This has

involved continued modifications of schedules, teaching assignments, and responsibilities to improve staff utilization and meet program needs. Growing numbers and the move of all ninth-grade students from the high school to the junior high facility within the last four years has created the need for adaptation. Additional schedule and teaching realignments were required to address smaller class sizes necessitated by school district policies surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2020-21 school year. See Table 2 for band staff assignments after implementing the team-teaching model and current to the 2021-21 school year.

Table 2. Band Staff Assignments Using a Vertically Aligned, Team-Teaching Model as of 2020-21.

| Director | School Assignment                           | Responsibilities  |
|----------|---|---|
| Tim      | High School<br>Junior High<br>Middle School | Lead: H.S. marching and wind ensemble. Assists/co-teach 6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> grade brass                             |
| Erin     | High School<br>Junior High<br>Middle School | Lead: 9 <sup>th</sup> grade band, junior high and high school jazz bands. Assists/co-teach marching, 6 <sup>th</sup> grade woodwinds                |
| Jeremy   | High School<br>Junior High<br>Middle School | Percussion instructor, all grade levels   |
| Denise   | High School<br>Junior high<br>Middle School | Lead: H.S. symphonic band. Assists/co-teach marching, wind ensemble, 6 <sup>th</sup> grade clarinets., 7 <sup>th</sup> grade w.w., high school jazz |
| Sarah    | High School<br>Middle School                | Lead: 6 <sup>th</sup> grade. Assist/co-teach 7 <sup>th</sup> grade, assist high school wind ensemble  |
| Kathy    | High School<br>Junior High<br>Middle School | Lead: 8 <sup>th</sup> grade band. Assist/co-teach 9 <sup>th</sup> grade band, marching, 6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> grade flutes              |

Note: includes both fall and spring semester assignments

## **Explanation and Process**

The study was conducted with a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through individual interviews, a day of observing directors teaching their ensembles and instrument techniques classes, and a final focus group that included a majority of the Ozark band directors participating in the study. All my communications before discussions began were conducted through e-mail with each of the directors. I gained permission to proceed with the study by first contacting the head director and explaining the purpose of the study. Once permission was granted, I reached out to the other five Ozark directors to explain the nature of the study, gave them a timeline for the interview process, and set up individual interview times.

**Individual Interviews.** Interviews were conducted via Zoom between March 15<sup>th</sup> and April 16<sup>th</sup> of 2021. During the interviews, I took handwritten notes that were limited to central points while being careful to listen and conduct a conversation with the participant. The audio and video of these meetings were recorded for later review and analysis. The interviews involved an interview protocol that was unstructured to semi-structured in nature. This was based on how the conversations unfolded and the information provided by the participants. Interview content varied based upon the role of each individual in the program. For example, the interview with Tim, as Director of Bands, focused more on his perceptions of how the program functioned as a whole. In contrast, discussions with the other directors focused on more detail-oriented perspectives, such as Jeremy's role as percussion instructor or the day-to-day examples of team-teaching among the directors.

After personal greetings and brief conversations, I began the more formal portion of the interviews with the question, "Tell me about your position." I provided general guidance to the discussions and used probing questions that varied based on the level of detail during the



interviews. I used statements such as “tell me more about that,” “can you explain that in more detail,” and “give your feelings or opinion” as a prompt for more detail (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The outline of the discussions involved the following points:

- Participant’s daily schedule, including any changes that took place between first and second semesters
- Primary responsibilities of the participants within the entire program
- Classes during the day when participants were involved with co-teaching/team-teaching
- Participant perceptions of their duties and roles when involved with co-teaching/team-teaching
- Participant perceptions of professional benefits or challenges
- The degree of cooperation between participants
- Perceived benefits to the band program using a vertically aligned, team-teaching approach
- The impact of COVID on team-teaching

**Observations.** On April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, I spent a whole day observing band classes in Ozark. The Ozark school district is structured on an A/B block schedule in their secondary schools. This means that the band instructors see the same classes every other day throughout the week. I was at Ozark on an “A” day. I used an observational protocol form (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) (See Appendix A.) to take typed notes, using a new form for each class period observed. I took note of which teachers led the classes, the activities of supporting teachers, team-teaching roles, the flow of instruction, and the interactions of teachers with students. I observed directors teaching the high school wind ensemble, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, band, and 6<sup>th</sup>-grade beginners. All six directors were observed in their lead as well as co-teaching roles throughout the day. Time was also spent during planning times, breaks, and after school to discuss what I had observed. I asked questions regarding the schedule, class sizes, teacher cooperation, instruction, and curriculum.

**Focus Group.** The focus group interview was conducted and recorded through Zoom on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Four of the six directors were able to attend, which included Tim, Sarah, Kathy, and Jeremy. Discussion followed the same informal outline as the individual interviews. This provided me with the opportunity to focus on follow-up questions and themes that had started to emerge from the interviews and observations. More attention was placed on teacher perceptions of mutual support, professional growth, and needed improvements to the team-teaching model. Directors were allowed to discuss topics freely, often commenting or extending statements on each other's thoughts and observations. This provided a constructive view of how the directors collectively perceived the band program and their roles in it.

**Interpreting the Data.** Once the process of gathering information was complete, I revisited all recorded interviews and observation notes. I made a spreadsheet for each director, typing direct quotes or paraphrases of director comments directly into their designated spreadsheet. As consistent topics emerged in the quotes and paraphrases, I assigned categories for these topics with specific color codes. Categories were determined based upon explicitly stated words as well as inferred expressions or concepts. Pertinent quotes and expressed thoughts were then highlighted with the corresponding category color. I worked through the collected commentary and coded all relevant recorded and notated information. I transferred direct quotes and paraphrased comments from the individual director spreadsheets to a single spreadsheet under the related category. This final, amalgamated spreadsheet included categorized comments from all the directors. (See Appendix C.) The category headings included the following titles: program continuity, utilization and assignment of staff, the complexity of scheduling, perceived benefits of team-teaching, autonomy versus control structure, egos and

personality challenges, collaboration, involvement of administrators, history, and future challenges.

Once I categorized relevant information, themes emerged to draw results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These themes ranged from the technical, building block aspects of how instruction is organized in the Ozark band program to the more reflective and personal perceptions of how each director viewed their team-teaching experience. One of the primary themes that came to the forefront was the concept of building program continuity. As viewed by Tim, continuity described making the entire band program work better towards a common and unified goal with curriculum and educational objectives. Tim explicitly emphasized this overarching idea as the primary motivator for implementing a vertically-aligned, team-teaching approach for the Ozark band program (Tim, interview 4/6/21; Focus Group, 5/25/21). Next, the effective utilization of all band staff regarding their teaching assignments and schedules emerged as the most discussed topic in the director interviews (Jeremy, interview 3/15/21; Sarah, interview 3/25/21; Kathy, interview 3/24/21; Denise, interview 3/25/21; Erin, interview 3/31/21; Tim, interview 4/6/21; Focus Group, 5/25/21). Finally, the human element of perceived benefits and challenges of the team-teaching model as applied by the Ozark band directors emerged as a significant theme.

Through discussion, I explored frank and impactful insights of the directors' perceived views of team-teaching from a professional and personal point of view. (Jeremy, interview 3/15/21; Sarah, interview 3/25/21; Kathy, interview 3/24/21; Denise, interview 3/25/21; Erin, interview 3/31/21; Tim, interview 4/6/21; Focus Group, 5/25/21). Such insights involved views of what was working, what was not working, or what directors felt needed improvement in the team-teaching model. This helped provide what I perceived as honest, thoughtful, and

balanced discussion on the part of the directors. The directors were forthcoming in discussing both positive and negative aspects of their experiences.

## TEAM TEACHING IN THE OZARK BAND PROGRAM

I have laid out the structural and detailed approach of this study in the previous chapter. I will now provide a more descriptive explanation of what team teaching looks like in the Ozark Band program, how the individual directors perceive the goals of this approach, and their perceptions of their respective roles. Both positive and negative aspects of their individual and collective experiences are given consideration as well as their desires for improvement and concerns for the future.

### **Building Continuity**

The primary motivation for developing a vertically aligned, team-teaching approach in the Ozark Band program was a desire for program continuity (Tim, interview 4/6/21; Group, interview 5/25/21). The isolation of band directors within single schools in the district was viewed as a source of frustration. This was due to teacher strengths being under-utilized throughout the entire program (Tim, interview 4/6/21). The high school directors only taught three band periods (Erin, interview 3/31/21; Tim, interview 4/6/21). Since directors were assigned to a single school, teamwork among band directors across school sites was difficult. The high school directors had no exposure or ability to help the directors and students at the upper and middle schools during the school day. Directors at the lower grade levels were limited from providing support and assistance to the high school directors. Opportunities for collaboration or times when the directors could meet as a team were also limited.

**Seeing the Big Picture.** As the Director of Bands, Tim is focused on the overall quality and improvement of the band program. In addressing the issue of program continuity, much of

what I learned regarding the motives for moving in the direction of vertical alignment and team-teaching is through the lens of Tim's overarching viewpoint. Many of his comments focused on the vertical alignment of curriculum across grade levels and team teaching from a global perspective. Tim explained that before they could implement a continuous 6-12<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum through vertical alignment, one of their most significant weaknesses as a band program was "no overlap" (Tim, interview 4/6/21). Tim had observed that each teacher's focus and concern primarily centered around the level of students they taught rather than the entire program. He felt there was a lack of responsibility or accountability attached to each director, except for the teaching duties and students they experienced at their level of instruction. Tim referred to this as not having "skin in the game". He viewed this as a lack of perspective and responsibility for the entire band program.

Tim explained that before the implementation of vertical alignment, lower grade level directors would never see the manifestation of insufficient teaching strategies once band students entered high school band (Tim, interview 4/6/21). Tim gave an example from his perspective as the high school director, "I would say, 'the kids are having trouble counting' and they (the directors) would say 'no, they count great.'" Tim would respond, "No, we got straight one ratings on the floor (large ensemble contest) and a two in sight-reading – I am telling you they struggle at counting." Lower-grade level directors were not able to see how their teaching strategies were working once their students moved on. Tim's view was that the directors needed to see what was taking place at the high school level to fully understand the results of their teaching in order to make any needed adjustments. On the opposite end, the high school directors could not assist the lower grade levels to improve instructional needs. The perceived needs to facilitate improvements in student skills included smaller class sizes, more instrument-specific

instruction, and available staff for individual student help.

Tim viewed the implementation of vertical alignment as a positive step towards achieving continuity. Tim stated, “Having top-down participation gave us a picture of what is happening. This is one of the big things regarding how it would impact the curriculum at the bottom level. This has given us an accurate picture that did not exist before. Lower-grade level teachers couldn’t see the end and those of us at the high school couldn’t see the beginning before transitioning to this system” (Tim, Focus Group 5/25/21). Tim would note that with directors teaching in multiple schools and grade levels, this resulted in a shared understanding and vision for the entire program. There is, “more attention to the big picture from the entire team. Everyone can see the beginning and the end game of the entire program” (Tim, Focus Group 5/25/21). Jeremy commented that the 6<sup>th</sup> grade band teacher was now involved with teaching higher grade levels. He stated, “I remember the first year doing this and moving the 7th graders over to the middle school and seeing Sarah getting to teach that grade level for the first time (always doing 6th grade before). It was a thrill for her to see the benefits of her work for the first time” (Jeremy, Focus Group 5/25/21).

In my interviews, it was discussed that directors did not have a continued connection with students throughout their band experience before the implementation of vertical alignment (Tim, interview 4/6/21; Jeremy, Focus Group 5/25/21). Before moving to vertical alignment, lower grade level directors would lose influence over the development of their students once students moved on to junior high or high school. Likewise, high school directors had no contact with band students at the lower grade levels and no previous perceptions of their strengths, weaknesses, or personality traits. From the discussion that I had with Tim, I perceive that the program continuity that Tim desired for his program went beyond the issue of instructional unity and

cohesion throughout the program. It also involved the personal connection teachers made with students and the ability to follow through with students from beginner to advanced levels.

**Delegating Responsibilities.** Another aspect of the concept of program continuity is how directors can share workload and band program needs. Before vertical alignment of the band staff was implemented in Ozark, there was no way to share responsibilities among directors. There was no support structure to help with the many needs of the marching band program, nor was there the opportunity for the entire staff to help with the requirements of starting beginners at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level. This included teaching responsibilities and organizing and managing the overall band program, which involved planning, finances, travel, recruitment, uniforms, instrument, and music inventories. Regarding the high school level alone, Tim commented, “There is no way to do it all. At first, Erin and I did everything at the high school, but it was overwhelming to do” (Tim, interview 4/6/21).

The implementation of vertical alignment allowed directors to take on roles that they were most comfortable doing or best suited for. This included both instrumental instructional needs within the program and administrative duties of running the band program. Sarah stated that “I typically feel like if there is a need, and someone expresses it, there is someone to step up to say, I know how to do that, I can do that, let me take care of this” (Sarah, Focus Group 5/25/21). Sarah also explained that there were so many different elements to running the program. She gave an example that one director has more of an inclination for running the financial aspects of the program. In contrast, another director takes care of technology issues, while another director is good at instrument repairs. Sarah would go on to say, “We all see where our strengths are.”

The discussion with Sarah and the focus group (Focus Group, 5/25/21) revealed an



informal approach to delegating some duties based upon expressed interest. Though there are formal assignments regarding scheduled teaching duties, there were no formal assignments for other program needs. What has been described is a natural gravitation towards specific responsibilities, with everyone pulling their weight as they saw needs arise. For example, Erin is responsible for building the director schedule; Jeremy is the go-to person for technology issues, and Denise takes care of instrument repair needs. I observed that this approach works with the Ozark staff because of their familiarity and experience with one another. As a point of caution, I have concluded that this approach may not fit other band situations where more specific staff roles may need to be clearly defined. The sharing of strengths, interests, and expertise to create a single support system was not apparent when teachers were isolated to a single school or level of instruction. Tim provided this summary regarding their present vertical alignment model and the support system that is now in place, “You don’t have to know everything” (Tim, interview 4/6/21).

### **Assigning and Utilizing the Staff Effectively**

I have observed that the efficient and effective scheduling of six band directors across three building locations in the Ozark school district is a complex task (Denise, interview 3/25/21; Erin, interview 3/31/21; Jeremy, interview 3/15/21; Kathy, interview 3/24/21; Sarah, interview 3/25/21; Tim, interview 4/6/21; Focus Group, 5/25/21). I did not arrive at the impression of complexity just from my discussions with the directors but also from my observations of how the teachers navigate their schedules during a school day. How do you utilize six teachers in the daily schedule who specialize in different musical instruments, have varied strengths and abilities, and have different interests while also satisfying each of the

individual schools' class scheduling needs and requirements? Site administrators have their own class schedule needs and limitations and must balance band class schedules with all other courses. Administrators cannot be expected to center class schedule considerations in their buildings solely on the vertical alignment needs of the band program. In addition, the Ozark secondary schools are on an alternating A/B schedule. The high school band has different schedules during the fall and spring semesters that balance between marching and concert seasons at the high school.

Several Ozark band directors commented on the complexities of a transition to vertical alignment (Erin, interview 3/31/21; Deloris, interview 3/25/21; Sarah, interview 3/25/21; Tim, interview 4/6/21). Tim indicated that convincing the superintendent was not at first “an easy sell.” Once approval was given, the superintendent provided the condition that if the directors could find a way to set it up and make it work, they could implement the plan (Tim, interview 4/6/21). Tim indicated that the administration liked the concept of a vertically aligned band program, but because scheduling was the biggest issue, they did not understand how it could work. As Tim stated, “We had to put this together and show them how it would work. That was the way to do it, and it worked really well” (Tim, Focus Group 5/25/21).

The complexity is not limited to the practical concerns of making the scheduling of vertical alignment work. What are the perceived objectives in the assignment process? Is the aim to make teacher roles easier, or to what degree is the best interest of the students kept in view? The task of figuring out the scheduling puzzle was primarily taken on by Erin.

In response to my question about the setting of priorities in putting together such a complex schedule, Erin explained, “It is very complex, with the goal of giving the kids the best opportunity with the best combo of teachers possible. Our comfort did not drive any part of it as

far as travel and as far as all those things went, but it was how we get to as many kids as possible with them broken down into as small of groups as possible - by section or by instrument group or how can we get the best-skilled teacher in front of them to teach their stuff? It is always education-driven” (Erin, interview 3/31/21). This infers that the move by the Ozark band program into a vertical alignment model of instruction was to do what is in the best interest of student learning. Keeping class sizes smaller was a clear priority, especially in the lower grade levels, to provide more focused instruction for beginning-level students. The Ozark band program can start as many as 300 beginner students every year. As one director pointed out, “When you have a giant class, it is really hard to get done the things that need to get done” (Focus Group, 5/25/21). The priority for more advanced ensembles, especially at the high school level, was to have woodwind, brass, and percussion specialists available for those groups (Erin, interview 3/31/21; Tim, Focus Group 5/25/21).

Erin put together a master schedule of directors and assignments by utilizing a spreadsheet format to make sure all necessary classes and ensembles were covered and that the director teams would match the needs of each specific group (Erin, interview 3/31/21). As of the 2020-21 school year, five of the six Ozark band directors taught at all three secondary school locations (See Table 2). Five directors also worked with the high school marching band during the fall semester. Sarah was the only director that taught at two locations – the middle school and high school. Her focus was at the middle school, and she only taught at the high school when assisting with the wind ensemble during the spring semester (Sarah, interview 3/25/21).

Each director had a primary responsibility or assigned group in which they were considered the lead teacher (Focus Group, 5/25/21). Other teachers during that same class or grade level played a more supportive role. For example, while Tim taught the high school wind

ensemble, Sarah and Denise were assigned the same class period while providing a more supportive role (Observation, 4/30/21). This would involve pulling sections or individuals into a practice room for focused instruction while the rest of the group rehearsed. It also would include walking around the room, listening for trouble spots while the music was being rehearsed, and quietly making constructive comments to students. Assisting directors would get Tim's attention by a raised hand to communicate the issue to have it immediately addressed. Supporting teachers would also use the time to take care of administrative duties that need to be completed (Erin, interview 3/31/21; Sarah, interview 3/24/21; Kathy, interview 3/24/21; Tim 4/6/21).

This organization and pattern of leadership and supportive roles carries through to the other ensembles and grade levels. All the directors are involved with teaching students at the middle school level. Though, there is more delegation of directors to teach specific instrument types. I observed that some of the beginner classes, such as 6<sup>th</sup> grade trumpet and 6<sup>th</sup> grade flute, had two directors in the room. The other sections would only have one (observation, 4/20/21). As a band director myself, it is easy for me to understand why such staff concentration would be focused on the formative stages. There is a critical need to focus resources to build solid musical foundations at the earliest stages of development. It was stressed in the Focus Group that for younger grades, the vertical alignment of staff has given them the ability to split students up by instrument type to provide the improved focus of instruction. They have desired to divide the younger students up by instrument type as much as possible (Focus Group, 5/25/21).

Erin admitted that even though they transitioned into vertical alignment four years ago, the schedule constantly changes year to year (Erin, interview 3/31/21). Changing class sizes and attempts at improving the efficient utilization of directors through the day has involved

continuous adjustments (Erin, interview 3/31/21, Tim, interview 4/6/21). I wish to add that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the Ozark schedule because class size reductions were needed for safety measures. This impacted teacher assignments and schedules for the 2020-21 school year (Denise, interview 3/25/21; Erin, interview 3/31/21; Jeremy, interview 3/15/21; Kathy, interview 3/24/21; Sarah, interview 3/25/21; Tim, interview 4/6/21; Focus Group, 5/25/21). Tim commented that “It took a lot of work, a lot of tweaking the model. We are still working on it. We made changes last year and this year on how we do things, so change is a constant” (Tim, focus group 5/25/21).

### **Instructional Practices in the Ozark Band Program**

There is considerable discourse among band directors about the technical aspects of organizing vertical alignment and team teaching. Still, less attention is given to the instructional strategies that can be applied to team teaching. Cook and Friend (1995) identified five possible team-teaching strategies. These strategies included (a) “One Teacher, One Assistant”: one lead teacher runs the instruction while the other teacher may float around the room, aiding the lead teacher as needed. (b) “Station Teaching”: teachers go to a fixed station and provide a specific set of instructional content. When that is completed, the teachers trade students and provide the exact content to a new group. (c) “Parallel Teaching”: teachers go to separate locations but provide the same instruction to their group of students simultaneously. This is to lower the student-to-teacher ratio. (d) “Alternate Teaching”: One teacher pulls out a smaller group to work with for special attention, while the other teacher continues to work with the larger group. (e) “Team Teaching”: This is shared instruction of the entire group. One teacher can speak while the other teacher demonstrates to the class, or the teachers take turns leading the lesson.

Through the interview and observation process, I identified four strategies utilized by the Ozark directors and occasionally a hybrid of strategies within the same class period. I could only take a small sample of observed teacher strategies through one day of on-site observations.

Through the interview process, directors consistently described the type of team-teaching strategies they utilized in their classrooms (Denise, interview 3/25/21; Erin, interview 3/31/21; Jeremy, interview 3/15/21; Kathy, interview 3/24/21; Sarah, interview 3/25/21; Tim, interview 4/6/21; Focus Group, 5/25/21).

“One Teacher, One Assistant” and “Team Teaching” were applied at the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>-grade levels. I was able to observe Kathy and Sarah working with a 7<sup>th</sup> grade mixed instrumentation class. Kathy gave instructions and led the group while Sarah walked around the room and offered help to students on rhythm patterns and notes. Sometimes, Sarah and Kathy would talk to each other across the room on what needed to be adjusted or would both give vocal instructions at the same time to separate groups of students (Observation, 4/30/21). To the outside observer, this might appear chaotic, but the students were very attentive. Both directors expressed their comfort with this kind of teaching environment (Kathy, interview 3/24/21; Sarah, interview 3/25/21).

A form of “Parallel Teaching” was observed with 6<sup>th</sup> grade beginner band students (Observation, 4/30/21). The beginner students were split into like-instrument classes in separate classrooms along the same hallway during the same class period. Two of the larger instrument groups (flute and trumpets) had two teachers in the room, while the other instrument types had only one teacher. The classes with two directors also applied “Team Teaching” strategies by sharing instructional roles by taking turns giving instructions to students. Though a director was leading the students, the other director would walk around the room and freely supply added instruction. All directors in each classroom were preparing for the

same upcoming performance, though the instruction and focus were slightly varied from classroom to classroom.

The high school wind ensemble provided an example that leaned more heavily on the strategy of “One Teacher, One Assistant,” but with there being a total of two assistants in the room along with the lead director (Observation, 4/30/21). Tim was the lead director, with Sarah and Denise floating around the rehearsal room quietly supplying comments to individual students and sections. When a more musical problem needed to be addressed, one of the assistants would raise their hand so that Tim could pause the rehearsal, hear the assistant’s comments aloud, and then further address the issue from the front. Jeremy, the percussion instructor, was also in the rehearsal room. Since the group was preparing for a concert, Jeremy focused his attention primarily on the organization and needs of the percussion section. Typically, Jeremy would have the percussion pulled out for percussion-specific instruction (Jeremy, interview 3/15/21), an example of “Alternate Teaching.” Based upon comments made by Tim (4/6/21), “One Teacher, One Assistant” is the more common strategy used at the high school level in Ozark, with some application of “Alternate Teaching.” In referring to the roles of the assistant teachers, Tim said, “I like if they are active in the room. When they hear something, they raise their hand, address the problem, or address it quietly with individual players, in our high school, that is how it is. Or they pull a section out to work on something” (Tim, interview 4/6/21). All the directors, in discussions, expressed the use of what Cook and Friend (1995) identify as “Alternate Teaching,” which is the practice of pulling out smaller groups or individuals for special instruction while the other teacher continues to instruct the larger group. This strategy was not utilized during my observations at the high school or middle school levels.

A question that I had throughout the interview and observation process was based upon

inferences that came up in earlier research (Brenan & Witte, 2003). How do the directors show who leads the various ensembles and classes when two or more directors are involved with team teaching? How can the students recognize who the lead teacher is, or is that even a concern? Brennan and Witte (2003) indicated that students' lack of clearly understood perceptions of which teacher oversaw the classroom could create problems. This could result in a lack of respect for a specific teacher or confusion on the part of the students. Kathy (3/24/21) addressed this in her interview by explaining that each director is assigned the lead responsibilities for a specific group. Each director has a title that describes their primary responsibility. Students are made aware of who the lead teacher is and receive all email communications from that director. When I watched the Ozark teachers working together, this aspect of lead was not always apparent at the middle school level. A great deal of equal interaction with students was demonstrated. In contrast, the structure of teacher roles in the high school wind ensemble was geared towards one director, with the other directors acting in supportive roles.

### **Director Perceived Challenges and Benefits**

The Ozark band directors have invested considerable time and effort to navigate the challenges of implementing a vertically aligned, team-teach approach to instruction within their band program (Erin, interview 3/31/21; Tim, interview 4/6/21). Working around and adapting to such challenges is an ongoing issue. The goals and needs of the entire Ozark school district continue to evolve with growing enrollments and community expectations. Based upon the investment of time and energy in implementing, supporting, and improving a vertically aligned system of band instruction, one of the primary questions that must be considered is, do the directors perceive noticeable benefits to the model they currently have in place? Has it been



worth the effort? Can their experiences and beliefs supply positive guidance for other band programs?

It is necessary to keep in view that not every band program is alike. The Ozark directors have developed a system around administrative support and permissions, scheduling organization, and available staffing. What has worked for the Ozark band program does not necessarily supply a proven model for other programs. Each band program experiences unique challenges and dynamics, including goals and expectations of administrators, curriculum, scheduling needs, facilities, and staffing, to name a few. This should be kept in mind when considering the stated opinions and reflections of the Ozark band directors. Their approach reflects the needs and goals that the Ozark directors have found as specific to their circumstances, especially under the leadership of the Director of Bands.

While dealing with the overall vision and practical workings of what vertically-aligned team teaching looks like in the Ozark Band program, a great deal of perspective was gleaned from the vantage point of Tim, the Director of Bands. The point of view of any head director or education leader is involved with setting goals for the program and seeing a total picture. It also involves the practical implementation of the mechanics that are required to make it work. A substantial part of my discussion with Tim focused on his vision and implementation of that vision for the program. As a point of contrast, my conversations with the other directors gravitated more towards their views of the day-to-day workings of team-teaching in executing the program's goals, their feelings and attitudes towards what they were experiencing, and the development of their professional relationships.

**Perceived Challenges.** Anytime a change is pursued, there are differences in beliefs, past experiences, methods, and attitudes that need to be navigated in dealing with the human

element. What one individual might see as a positive benefit can be viewed by another person as an undesired negative. When asked about their overall view of the team-teaching approach, as applied over the past four years, one of the directors responded that “There is good, and there is bad.” In further discussing this answer, the director explained that it took time to build a team relationship between directors with six “very opinionated” and experienced directors in their forties (Erin, interview 3/31/21). This was not described as a barrier for implementing team teaching nor a negative assessment of individual directors, but simply as a recognition that there are personal challenges in acclimating solid and experienced teachers to work together as a team.

It was expressed that a significant part of the challenge of team teaching is everyone understanding their roles when teaching with another director. During the individual interviews, one director said that not everyone shares the same teaching styles. They explained that one teacher might not like any disruption during team teaching while others that work together can handle a certain degree of disruption in the classroom or rehearsal. Some teachers prefer a high degree of structure and have difficulty allowing for some of the disorder that results when students are being pulled out of class for individualized help (Kathy, interview 3/24/21).

Understanding roles in the team-teaching situation appeared as a common theme among the various directors. As one director frankly stated when comparing teaching alone with team teaching or assisting another director, “The parts of the job are difficult for me when I feel like I am not being utilized” (Erin, 3/31/21). After years of exclusively teaching at the middle school level, another director discussed working with the high school wind ensemble for the first time. “When I first got involved with the high school ... I did not know how to help, or what my place was. It felt a little awkward. I had never worked with an upper-level group, and I was no

longer in charge. It took me two whole years to know what I could say or when it was appropriate to speak up” (Sarah, interview 3/25/21). As before, such a challenge was not described as a barrier to team-teaching but that which required adjustment. Communication was offered as a critical element in overcoming the challenge. “I remember going to Tim and asking if it would be ok to do this or that. It was always met with a welcome. I was trying to figure out what my place was and what I could offer the group and what I could offer the other directors.”

The Ozark band staff continues to work toward improving staff utilization (Erin, interview 3/31/21; Tim, interview 4/6/21; Focus Group, 5/25/21). This continues to be a challenge when balancing out the program’s needs, filling scheduling demands, and drawing upon the strengths of individual directors. As conditions are continually changing (Erin, interview 3/31/21), concern was expressed that there was still a necessity for more streamlining to utilize the staff better and support how directors use their time in the classroom. The indication was given that more clearly defined parameters would help all directors involved make better use of their time. Sometimes, lead directors provide a clear plan on what tasks are needed by the assisting teachers. At other times there may be no clear instructional goal or an expressed need for help, and therefore supporting staff is left without anything to do. It is not difficult to see that this is a problem for efficiency and a challenge for morale when teachers do not sense that they are needed and are not playing a productive role in the class.

**Perceived Benefits for the Students and Band Program.** Though there is still concern that more could be done to better use the band staff throughout the schedule and in various team-teaching situations, there is still a consensus among the Ozark directors that there are overall benefits to time management. The view that came out of the Focus Group (5/25/21) was that

there could be a great deal of wasted time without team teaching. When one teacher is responsible for the class, the director must stop rehearsal to take care of issues that arise. For example, instrument repair, individual help to a student, issues with discipline, or administrative needs can halt the flow of a class period. This takes away time from teaching the lesson. Having a team situation in the classroom allows one director to stay on task. The other director can take care of classroom variables that usually arise in any given class period. As one director said about team-teaching, it is a “time saver” (Focus Group, 5/25/21). Another director explained, “With two people in the room, you can avoid a lot of interruptions. The other teacher can take care of instrument issues, music, etc.” (Focus Group, 5/25/21).

One of the primary goals in setting up vertical alignment was to reduce the student-to-teacher ratio, especially in the earlier grade levels (Tim, interview 4/6/21). It can split students up by instrument type for younger grade levels and provide a better focus of instruction (Focus Group, 5/25/21). It has also allowed for the possibility of more individualized attention to band students throughout the band program. Kathy observed that “team teaching is a benefit for the kids based upon taking advantage of the opportunity of individual focus on student needs” (Kathy, interview 3/24/21). Conversely, Erin noted (3/31/21) that when looking at the complete list of classes, less than half of all band classes have more than one teacher in the room utilizing team-teaching. At the same time, the number of directors available to instruct the younger students (specifically 6<sup>th</sup> grade beginner band) allows beginners to be split up among the various directors. This decreases class sizes, and as referenced earlier (Cook & Friend, 1995), is another form of team teaching. Tim (Focus Group, 5/25/21) added that teacher instruction had improved with smaller and more focused class sizes. It is being perceived that more focused attention to teaching fundamentals to smaller and more specialized groups resulted in noticeable

improvements in the fundamental skills and ensemble quality at the high school level (Focus Group, 5/25/21).

Jeremy focuses primarily on percussion students from the beginner to the high school level. The team-teaching model allows him to pull them out of the larger ensemble settings and provide them with focused instruction. He explained that the percussion students get much more musical growth by being pulled out of the larger ensemble rather than sitting in the back of the room while wind sections are rehearsed. As a band director myself, I know that it is all too easy to ignore or spend more time addressing the technical demands and needs of the wind section rather than focusing on the percussion section. Jeremy added that this “divide and conquer” approach of separating the percussion section from the wind section is a productive use of time. “Percussion is much more efficient. They can prepare ensemble music much quicker. Their reading skills are much quicker, and it allows for us to get through more music” (Jeremy, interview 3/15/21; Focus Group 5/25/21).

Another perceived benefit has been improved curriculum alignment (Sarah, interview 3/25/21; Erin, interview 3/31/21; Focus Group, 5/25/21). Discussions revealed that various directors viewed that this was still an area for improvement. Such discussion also showed the belief that vertically-aligned team teaching allowed such improvement. Overall, the view was that the current teacher structure facilitated everyone “moving in the same direction” (Focus Group, 5/25/21) to advance instructional goals and assessment.

### **Professional Benefits and Challenges**

I spent a significant amount of time with the directors discussing the structure and practice of team teaching in the Ozark band program. Still, there were also additional and

important threads of conversation. Topics came up in discussions that helped provide a more holistic understanding and picture of the professional, personal, and emotional perspectives of team-teaching through the eyes of the Ozark band directors. Five additional areas of focus arose in the discussions that the directors were willing to discuss. They include autonomy versus control, overcoming ego, interpersonal dynamics and mutual support, professional growth opportunities, and finding time for collaboration.

**Autonomy Versus Control.** When the Ozark Band program was in its planning stages of implementing vertical alignment, one of the directors at the Junior High level left the district out of concern of losing autonomy over their current assignment. Directors were previously assigned to one school and independently made all the decisions that impacted their students and ensembles. However, this was not Tim's vision for the program (Tim, interview 4/6/21). Building continuity to the program and providing opportunities to share staff between buildings meant that instead of each building site consisting of autonomous and semi-independent band programs, the band program would function as a seamless whole. Instead of staff being isolated and only focusing on their assigned school, the directors would work together throughout all grade levels to build continuity throughout the entire band program. This resulted in a certain loss of autonomy, but at the same time, it was perceived that there was a need to provide directors with a sense of control and purpose within the program. Erin explained that it was important for everyone to have their ensemble and "be in charge of something" (Erin, interview 3/31/21). Another director commented that "I like that we each have something that we are in charge of. We all have ownership in the program" (Focus Group, 5/25/21). Though all the directors are working together under the vision and supervision of a Director of Band, everyone

has something that they can take responsibility for, resulting in the opportunity to enjoy a sense of professional growth.

With this degree of ownership, there can also be challenges to the overall desire for continuity in the program. Erin noted that this level of autonomy could pose problems connected to the lining up of curriculum goals between various classes and their directors. “Having some flexibility on how individuals run their class is good, but we can do better in making sure that our fundamental teaching lines up with one another” (Erin, interview 3/31/21).

**Overcoming Ego.** Musicians are competitive by nature. We are groomed from an early age through ensemble chair positions, competition for honor band placements, solo competitions, etc. A degree of self-assurance is necessary to function as an effective musician as well as being a successful music teacher and leader of students. When so many experienced and strong teachers are brought together for a common purpose, how is the potential issue of ego dealt with? One of the directors reflected on this question by stating, “Sometimes there can be a lack of trust in letting someone take students out” when providing extra instruction. “The other teacher may think they are more of an expert and can do it better.” Another director admitted pride as an obstacle and stated, “If we can just put down our pride, we can learn so much from each other.”

The experience of the COVID pandemic has been an extremely stressful time for schools and teachers. Several of the Ozark directors pointed to this struggle as a positive for bringing the staff closer together (Focus Group, 5/25/21; Erin, interview 3/31/21) and helping them overcome interpersonal strains such as ego. As a result of the challenges of COVID, one director stated that after several years of working together, they all realized that they were just trying “to do what was best for kids” (Sarah, interview 3/25/21). She continued, “A lot of issues

have gone by the wayside as we get to know each other's personalities. We are learning the hearts of the other directors. We are all passionate - though we may show our passions in different ways. We just have different ways of showing it and approaching it.”

**Interpersonal Dynamics and Mutual Support.** When any group of individuals is brought together as a team, many different personal dynamics can impede cooperation and breed resentment or provide a sense of cohesion and support for one another. Ego can be an element that can work against the team concept if left unchecked. At the same time, the bonding of teachers in a team-teach situation on a personal and professional level can provide a helpful support system for fellow teachers. Though the Ozark directors have admitted minor struggles with ego, they also indicated the development of a positive support system. Jeremy (Focus Group, 5/25/21) spoke to his perception that the team-teaching model “provides a support network” and that it helps “with not getting overwhelmed.” On a more personal level, struggles in the private lives of directors (as for anyone) can impact their professional lives. Kathy provided connecting thoughts to the idea of a “support network,” but on a more personal level between the staff. She said, “We have had to help each other. We pick up for each other when family issues or crises present themselves” (Interview, 3/24/21).

**Opportunities for Professional Growth.** With six directors in the Ozark band program, I wondered if individuals on the staff felt that there was an opportunity for professional growth or if such a situation would stifle individual skill and creativity. The responses I received were positive. There was a consensus that having a staff made up of varying areas of musical expertise provides available resources that everyone can find benefit (Focus Group, 5/25/21). I have experienced that when a band director is by themselves or in a situation with limited staff, the director must be an expert at all aspects of the program, including individual instrument



pedagogy. Regarding the makeup of the Ozark band staff, Tim commented that “you don’t have to know everything” and that having such a varied staff provided “other areas to draw upon” (Focus Group, 5/25/21).

There was discussion in the Focus Group that when directors are brought together in a team situation, this allows for growth among all the directors. Kathy discussed that all the directors contribute their individual styles and teaching methods, which allows them to learn from each other. She also admitted that what might work for one teacher might not work for another (Focus Group, 5/25/21). Sarah added that this variety of teaching styles and methods is a positive in that “we can see that there are other right ways of doing it” (Focus Group, 5/25/21).

**Collaboration.** Finding time to meet with one another for collaboration was expressed as one of the most significant sources of frustration by the Ozark band staff. In this kind of team-teaching situation, it might be thought that ample time and opportunity for the staff to meet with one another to discuss the program’s direction, address concerns and challenges, or share creative ideas for improvements is readily available. Erin summarized the situation frankly as “not good” (Interview 3/31/21). The Ozark school district does set aside a weekly time for teacher collaboration, but with the Ozark band staff spread out between three different buildings, there is no agreement among administrators as to how that time is to be used. Directors are pulled in different directions by the diverse use of the time in various buildings (Focus Group, 5/25/21). Tim explained by saying, “The problem is that with three different schools, there is little communication between administrators of those schools. We get one period a week on Fridays where we are supposed to meet but are pulled apart for school-specific meetings. A Friday when we are all together is very rare. We communicate a lot through texts, but it is not the same. As the program has gotten bigger, it has been harder to meet” (Tim, interview 4/6/21).

Erin stated that there was an opportunity for brief but limited collaboration for directors when they work directly together (Interview, 3/31/21), but not enough time to address substantive issues regarding the band program. “Big issues are not necessarily addressed when we only see each other for five minutes” (Erin, interview 3/31/21). She explained that limited communication between directors due to lack of collaboration time was a critical issue. Such shared time would help solve many minor problems that arise during the school year.

### **Perceived Areas for Improvement and Potential Challenges**

Through perceiving positive achievements in applying a vertically aligned, team-teach approach, the Ozark directors are still looking at areas for improvement. Tim expressed that the four years of implementation of this model make them still early in the process (Tim, interview 4/6/21). He described it as “still tweaking the process.”

One of the areas of concern that the Ozark directors addressed was regarding improvements to the curriculum. Tim generalized the need to make sure “that curriculum is matching up and covering all the things we need to be covering” (Tim, interview 4/6/21). Sarah noted that there were challenges in aligning curriculum and teaching pace among the various directors. It is “hard to move in the same direction” (Sarah, interview 3/25/21). Erin observed that “having some flexibility on how individuals run their class is good, but we can do better in making sure that our fundamental teaching lines up with one another” (Erin, interview 3/31/21). She explained that there could be better streamlining of assessment points but that it was still necessary to let individual directors take their own speed on covering the materials.

The Ozark directors also continue to monitor potential challenges to team-teaching moving forward. Though most would view growth to the student population as a positive, there

was expressed concern about how to keep up with that growth within the band program. Tim voiced concern with the district expansion (Focus Group, 5/25/21). “The district is still growing. How can we be more effective with six teachers in three buildings? We can’t assume that the administrators are going to figure it out for us.” Tim had expressed the desire to get class sizes even smaller for better class management (Focus Group, 5/25/21), but if band staff numbers remain the same as student numbers continue to rise, such a goal will not be possible.

The most prominent area of concern expressed by the Ozark band staff is the construction of a new career center in the Ozark school district. This will change the distribution of students at the high school and junior high and change schedules. Many students will spend part of their time at the career center and part of their time at the high school. The scheduling details and impacts on student participation are still unknown. Erin stated that there is “a great deal of concern as to what that will do to scheduling across the district” (Erin, interview 3/31/21). Knowing that there will be changes but not being able to predict or yet prepare is creating apprehension. The Ozark band staff has already had to overcome and continue to navigate complexities in implementing a vertical alignment model. The addition of a career center puts a major question mark over the organization of the Ozark band program moving into the future.

## **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into how vertically aligned team-teaching is being applied in the 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade band program setting. This included examining how the participating directors perceived and practiced team-teaching objectives. I selected a familiar public-school band program with an established, vertically aligned team-teaching model. I aimed to investigate its structure and implementation and explore the team-teaching experiences, feelings, and insights of the participating directors in the band program.

I conducted one-on-one interviews with each director in the program. An unstructured to semi-structured protocol was utilized to allow for a free flow of discussion. This format provided the opportunity for follow-up questions so that I could gain a better depth for understanding their perceptions and insights. I also reserved a day to observe all the band directors teaching in person. I used an observation protocol form (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to take field notes and record my impressions of what was observed. A focus-group interview (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) was conducted as an opportunity for follow-up questions and discussion. After reviewing the recorded interviews and notes, I detected emerging topics in my analysis. This provided the foundation for specific categories based on direct statements made by the directors and inferred expressions and concepts. Relevant director comments were put into individual spreadsheets divided by director, color-coded according to a designated category color, and then transferred to a single spreadsheet.

As I listened and reviewed the recordings of the interviews and looked over handwritten notes that I had taken, I attempted to focus on self-contained statements and inferences that provided a good summarization of the various topics being discussed. I took direct quotes and

paraphrased thoughts from director comments to formulate sound bites that could be categorized. Once these sound bites from the interviews and notes were organized by subject, I was able to see the Ozark band program story come together on a single spreadsheet. For example, I could look at the “Benefits for the Program” category and see comments from the various directors that provided a cohesive explanation of that aspect of their experience. This visual aid also helped me to perceive the primary themes that emerged from the data.

The data were gathered to provide a broad picture of the technical and conceptual aspects of designing vertical alignment and team-teaching practices in the Ozark band. These data also provided an insight into the range of personal experiences of the directors, particularly how they experienced benefits and challenges in implementing this model. My analysis uncovered that the directors viewed having continuity of purpose and comprehensive instruction practice from 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade as their driving motivation for implementing a vertically-aligned team-teaching model.

### **Program Continuity**

Continuity in team-teaching has been found by teachers in several subject areas to be aided by consistent staffing over several years (Buckley, 2000). Over the four years of vertically-aligned team teaching implementation, the Ozark band program has maintained the same staff members. The stability of staffing in the Ozark band program has provided a consistent foundation for developing a team-teaching model. This program has also helped provide a stable and comprehensive basis of information to formulate a narrative of their journey from implementation of vertical alignment to a more established and experienced application.

Based on director perceptions, the directors have improved shared goals and buy-in of a global, cohesive band program team. They contrasted this with the previous setup when the Ozark directors were only responsible for a single school location. The intended goal by Tim, the Director of Bands, was to have all directors involved in both lower and upper-grade level teaching situations to see and be involved with the entire band program process from start to finish. This team approach to the whole program provides a consistent progression of fundamental instruction throughout the various grade levels. Though there are indications of improved instructional consistency due to director perceptions in improved fundamental skills among students, the Ozark directors still perceive a need for continued improvement.

### **Complexity**

One of the intended purposes of implementing vertically aligned team-teaching in the Ozark band program was to provide mutual support among directors to tackle the various and complex needs of running an extensive and competitive program. This involved various specialized duties that included instructional, administrative, and technical requirements (Hanegan, Pascasio, Porter & Brandon, 2019; Iliff, 2018). There is a degree of challenge in using vertical alignment as a solution to address such complex demands.

A potential drawback that I perceive is the challenge of implementing vertical alignment in the band setting and maintaining the model from the standpoint of scheduling from year to year. Managing the coordination of placing six band directors among three school sites has proved to be challenging. Circumstances impacting scheduling have changed yearly, including the district demands of smaller class sizes due to COVID safety precautions.

The balance between the band program's perceived needs and individual school

scheduling needs means that scheduling every year is not a static situation. Band programs with fewer staff members or school sites might find vertical alignment scheduling a more straightforward process. Utilizing staff in the most efficient and professionally beneficial way while also trying to meet the scheduling needs of each school provides a continued challenge for the Ozark program. In addition, and what was expressed as the most important, is designing and maintaining directors' schedules based upon what is best for the students.

### **Administrative Approval**

The Ozark band directors' vertical-alignment model was initially facilitated by the necessary approval from the Ozark superintendent and principals. This permission was acquired by the Ozark directors, first providing a proposal and plan to their administration (Brenan & Witte, 2003; Purrington, 1967). Consent to proceed was given on the stipulation that if the Ozark directors could find a way to make it work, they could implement the vertical alignment.

Approaching the administration with a thought-out proposal helped avoid making administrators feel that more work and planning was being placed on them (Buckley, 2000). The preparation of a plan by the directors offered administrators a clear vision and justification for such a move. Administrators have taken a hands-off approach rather than being directly involved in the oversight of the implementation and continued application of vertically aligned team teaching in the band department. They have trusted the professional opinions and goals of the leading Ozark directors and allowed them to create and carry out a plan of action. At the same time, this was a source of unease for the Ozark band staff (Focus Group, 5/25/21). This level of administrator disengagement can also lean towards a degree of disinterest or lack of awareness of the band department's role and value in the overall education process.

## **Making it Work**

Without deeper consideration, it may be easy for us to think that team-teaching is a straightforward process to implement as band directors. Once administrative permission is granted and the logistical hurdles navigated, it might appear that the rest is simply a matter of implementation. Going into the study, I did not fully realize the amount and degree of professional and personal effort required to continually apply and refine vertically-aligned team teaching within the Ozark band program itself. I would conclude that it is safe to assume that similar effort and complexities exist in other comparable programs. Professional and collaborative relationships are necessary to make it work smoothly but are also not without challenges (Cook & Friend, 1995; Pope-Ruark, Motley & Moner, 2019). All the directors are attempting to work toward a common goal, but with different areas of expertise, different opinions, and different personalities. Along with logistical considerations, there is the human factor that needs to be recognized. Not only is “team” a way to approach instruction, but it is a principal component of how the Ozark directors work with one another and how they strive to make the Ozark band program work effectively. This is an ongoing experiment among the Ozark band directors and does not simply involve the carrying out of a list of goals. It is an evolving process, impacted by changing circumstances and the growth and modifications of the directors themselves.

One of the primary challenges in achieving professional and collaborative relationships among the Ozark directors (Cook & Friend, 1995; Pope-Ruark, Motley & Moner, 2019) was that teachers understand their roles, especially when in a subordinate position to another teacher who is leading the class or ensemble. Though equality is an integral part of team teaching in the band setting (Brenan & Witte, 2003), the necessary elements of lead and supportive roles among the



directors still exist, depending on the situation. It was perceived as more of a challenge in the initial stages of implementing team teaching but understanding one's role in supportive situations was viewed by various directors as a continued challenge. Having a degree of ownership was understood as an essential part of having a true sense of professional value and ownership. This is a part of the evolving nature of the Ozark band team-teaching model as they continue to learn how to adapt to working with one another.

It should not be surprising that the ego issue came up in my discussions with the directors (Pope-Ruark, Motley & Moner, 2019). Personal ego can create a potential for conflict in the team-teaching setting (Buckley, 2000). Though not discussed as a significant problem regarding the interactions of the Ozark directors, it was repeatedly mentioned as a character trait and interpersonal dynamic to overcome in order to achieve an optimal level of teamwork and goal sharing. The sharing of ideas and opinions among directors may include a critique of each other's actions, teaching styles, or perceived attitudes. Such analysis can be detrimental if intended or received in a negative context or to justify one's personal views or methods. It can also be an opportunity for growth (Buckley, 2000) if fundamental improvements for the good of the students and the overall band program are kept in view. The Ozark directors indicated an awareness of ego and revealed the challenges that it can create regarding personal conflict and hurt feelings when left unchecked.

### **Varied Team-Teaching Strategies**

Several team-teaching strategies utilized by the Ozark band directors provided a multi-layered view of how team teaching can be applied. Applications of team-teaching strategies discussed and observed included: One Teacher-One Assistant, Station Teaching, Parallel

Teaching, Alternate Teaching, and Team Teaching (Cook & Friend, 1995). It did not emerge from the director interviews that there was an intentional design for the use of these strategies. They appeared as more of a natural if not spontaneous progression based upon individual teacher styles and levels of comfort, professional and personal connections between directors, and the situational needs of the classroom or ensemble.

The application of various team-teaching strategies was context driven. In my experience with team-teaching, this is common. Team-teaching can provide enough flexibility to adapt to different circumstances and needs. As practiced by the Ozark directors, in some instances, such as advanced ensemble situations, the one-teacher and one-assistant method established a clear sense of leadership for the ensemble. It also provided a more orderly environment for ensemble focus and learning at a more advanced level. In other instances, teachers working together in the classroom on an equal basis provided a practical approach, especially at the beginner and intermediate levels. Though resulting in a more animated environment, it offered a level of energy and dual instruction that facilitated the shorter attention spans of the younger students.

### **Application and Benefit to Students**

Though program continuity was the stated objective to move the Ozark band program into a vertically aligned teaching model, the discussions I had with the directors and my observations reveal an even more fundamental objective. The desire to provide the best benefits to students is the primary goal that the Ozark directors wish to achieve. The Ozark directors work to organize and utilize themselves to provide the most effective use of teacher strengths to improve student learning and enjoyment (Brenan & Witte, 2003; Buckley, 2000; Cook & Friend, 1995). Decreasing teacher-to-student ratios and finding a way to provide more

individualized attention to students when needed has been the outcome. Teachers have noticed improvements in the fundamental skills of band students, mainly as those skills are applied at the high school level. There is currently staff available at the high school to provide a devoted class during the school day to prepare band students for All-District and All-State auditions in the fall and prepare for Solo and Ensemble in the spring. As tangible and positive evidence to student improvement, this has resulted in a significant increase in Ozark band students qualifying for the All-State Band. The availability of staff to provide particular focus here results from the realigning of directors from other duties, such as general music.

It was outside of the purpose of my research to collect data directly from students regarding their perceptions and opinions of team teaching. The views shared with me by the directors regarding student benefits are based on the directors' perceived improved musicianship of the students. Exploring student views of team teaching in the band setting provides one of several avenues for future research. The views of school administrators and other teachers outside of the band program were also not researched.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

I need to stress the fact that this was only a study of a single band program. I am not presenting this study as a proven template for vertically aligned team-teaching that can or should be directly adopted by other band programs. This research does provide a sample of how it is being practiced in a single and unique situation. Variables that impact band programs and the type of staff and curriculum structure they implement include the number of staff, qualifications of the team, the number of students in the program, the number of facilities that need to be covered, scheduling needs, administration attitudes, and expectations, and the

intended goals and philosophies of the band directors in the program. I must also include that the priority placed upon other academic and extra-curricular activities in the district can also impact how a band program is set up, based upon how it can be balanced with the over-arching district eco-system. The model implemented by the Ozark band program does not constitute a “one size fits all” example of what team teaching can or should look like.

Since this study was limited to only one program, it was not designed to compare the practices of the Ozark band program with other programs that implement vertically aligned team-teaching practices. As mentioned in the previous section, I also did not gather information on student perceptions. This study was limited to the information and opinions provided by the Ozark directors and my interpretation of that information. Though I acknowledge preconceptions and existing professional beliefs regarding this subject, my goal was to tell the story of the Ozark Band program primarily through the eyes of the Ozark directors themselves for the educational benefit of others. That is the primary reason I relied so heavily on direct quotations from the directors’ explanations of their experiences and views.

Future research could include comparing band programs that utilize team-teaching to ascertain the most effective practices related to program organization, efficiency, and the impact on student learning. Future research could also involve studying the techniques of other effective band programs that do not utilize team teaching. This would provide a comparison of effectiveness and options for directors looking to improve efficacy within their programs. Does team teaching give the best solution for band program effectiveness? This is an essential question for any future research on the topic. The views of other stakeholders are also an important avenue for future consideration. The opinions, attitudes, and understanding of

administrators, students, and parents towards team teaching could provide beneficial insight into how its goals, benefits, and challenges are perceived.

### **Application to Teaching**

Applying a vertically-aligned, team-teaching model in the Ozark band program stemmed from a desire for improvement. The Director of Bands perceived deficiencies in curriculum and teaching consistency, inability to provide mutual support and collaboration, and a lack of shared goals and vision among the band staff. These are critical issues for any band program. With help and support from the staff, the Director of Bands pursued a course of action that was perceived to benefit students and to provide effective use of band staff within the parameters that they had to work with.

My research revealed that such an ideal is not without its challenges. These challenges include the complicated scheduling realities that conflict with efforts to best utilize teacher strengths and roles within a program. Such a challenge fits within the overarching expectations of school administrators. Navigating differences of professional opinions among staff is also an ever-present challenge. It is evident that a great deal of flexibility and collaboration skills are necessary to work through such tasks. It also has its potential rewards, as seen through improvements in students' fundamental skills and staff unity. Notably, unifying the staff behind a more holistic view of the band program from start to finish and developing mutual support and knowledge among directors were viewed as resources for overcoming these challenges. The challenges and desired benefits must be kept in harmony with one overarching goal – keeping the best interest of students in mind.

## **Personal Reflections**

This study has challenged my perceptions of team teaching. Team teaching tends to be much more organic and varied than can be narrowly defined. It has a fluidity that can be applied in many ways under different educational circumstances and needs. I am also a band director, and I came into this study with certain biases regarding the subject. I currently teach in a team-teaching situation with only one other director and exclusively at the middle school level. My position does not reach the complexity and interpersonal challenges involved with the vertically-aligned model of the Ozark band program, or that might exist in many other band programs of the same or larger size. My views of team teaching were simplistic, viewing it as two or more teachers simply working together in a “divide and conquer” approach. I saw team teaching as sharing administrative duties, sharing ideas, splitting up classes, or aiding one another in certain class situations. Though these are definitely aspects of team teaching, this study reveals a much broader and complex picture of the organization, balance, professional autonomy, program goals, philosophy, opinions, and teacher relationships.

My interactions with the Ozark band directors during this study have been extremely enjoyable and enlightening. They have shown a great deal of sincerity and knowledge in their desire to do what is best for students to pursue excellence. They have revealed a depth of self-awareness of both positive and negative aspects of implementing team-teaching practices. Understanding the evolving nature of what they are doing, they continue to strive for improvements and adapt to the ever-changing educational landscape. They readily admit that what they are doing is not a final product but a work in progress.

When I began this study, my perception was that team teaching was the primary path to success in the growing complexities of today’s band environment. I still believe that team

teaching provides many benefits and possibilities, especially with the evolving and growing expectations and demands placed on music educators and educators in general. Differentiated learning, increasingly diverse student populations, social and emotional learning expectations, and many other requirements and challenges facing teachers can be supported by a team effort. I have been in a teaching situation where I was the only director. It can be difficult to provide for all students' educational and emotional needs, not to mention other duties associated with being a band director. It is possible, but it does take a toll on one's energies and time and leads to burnout (Scheib, 2003).

The model implemented by the Ozark band program fits their needs and goals and has resulted in tangible benefits to their overall philosophy and common objectives. It has provided a diverse and mutually supportive pallet of musical expertise (Brenan & Witte, 2003) and delegation of administrative duties. The combined backgrounds of the six Ozark directors provide specialized instruction in woodwind, brass, and percussion. The directors possess qualifications such as instrumental performance experience, marching technique skills, and music arranging capability. Applicable administrative needs include staff scheduling, budget, travel, technology, communications, inventory and repair, and uniform management.

Is team teaching the only answer? This depends on the directors' philosophy and objectives and the student population's needs being served. There are plenty of examples of programs where vertical alignment of staff and team-teaching is not possible or desired. Many directors have other duties that are not band-related, including general music, music appreciation, and study hall. How do such responsibilities fit into the view of how staffing should be organized? Should these other typical responsibilities for directors be viewed as less critical to eliminate them as a responsibility in pursuing vertical alignment? Some directors do

well when they are in complete control and do not share teaching duties or educational decisions with another director. They might perceive team teaching as a hindrance to the execution of their vision for the band program (Brenan & Witte, 2003). On the other hand, other directors may feel limited by the inability to share such responsibilities with others.

Team teaching is a widespread model in the band world, especially for mid to larger-size band programs. Understanding how it is practiced in established and successful programs can greatly benefit those interested in moving to such a model or as a point of comparison and improvement. I hope this research can be a starting point for broader discussion, reflection, future research, and revelations on a subject that deserves more consideration and analysis. As we continue to try to improve what we do for the benefit of our students, this is an important topic that already impacts the learning of so many band students and plays a prominent role in the band profession both now and moving into the future.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Notice of IRB Approval

#### IRB-FY2021-320 - Initial: Initial Approval

do-not-reply@cayuse.com <do-not-reply@cayuse.com>

Wed 3/10/2021 2:53 PM

To: Thomas, Aaron Z <Aaron537@live.missouristate.edu>; Hellman, Daniel S <DanielHellman@MissouriState.edu>



To:  
Daniel Hellman  
Music

**RE:** Notice of IRB Approval

**Submission Type:** Initial

**Study #:** IRB-FY2021-320

**Study Title:** TEAM TEACHING IN THE BAND PROGRAM: AN ANALYSIS OF ITS ORGANIZATION, CONCEPTS, PRACTICES AND PERCEPTIONS

**Decision:** Approved

**Approval Date:** March 10, 2021

This submission has been approved by the Missouri State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). You are required to obtain IRB approval for any changes to any aspect of this study before they can be implemented. Should any adverse event or unanticipated problem involving risks to subjects or others occur it must be reported immediately to the IRB.

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This study was reviewed in accordance with federal regulations governing human subjects research, including those found at 45 CFR 46 (Common Rule), 45 CFR 164 (HIPAA), 21 CFR 50 & 56 (FDA), and 40 CFR 26 (EPA), where applicable.

Researchers Associated with this Project:

**PI:** Daniel Hellman

**Co-PI:**

**Primary Contact:** Aaron Thomas

**Other Investigators:** Aaron Thomas

## Appendix B: Interview and Observational Protocol Form

| <b>INTERVIEW &amp; OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL</b><br><i>"An Exploration of Team Teaching in the School Band setting" - Aaron Thomas</i> |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Date: 4/30/21<br>Time: 8:00 am<br>Location: Ozark H.S./ Wind Ensemble<br>Director(s) observed: — — —                                |                 |
| DESCRIPTIVE NOTES   | REFLEXIVE NOTES |
|   |                 |

## Appendix C: Categorization Spreadsheet Sample

| Notes | Utilizing and assigning staff based upon their specialty or strengths. Challenges in efficient utilization of everyone according to strengths and interests  | Complexity of schedule  | Benefits for the program perceptions/benefits   | Benefits for professional growth  | Student  |  |
|-------|--|---|---|---|--|--|
|       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get a brass/woodwind/ percussion for their large concert ensembles.</li><li>• In answering my question regarding the complexity of their schedule - "It is very complex, with the goal of Giving the kids the best opportunity with the best combo of teachers possible. Our comfort didn't drive any part of it as far as travel and as far as all of those things went . But it was how we get to as many kids as possible with them broken down into as small as groups as possible - by section or by instrument group, or how can we get the best skilled teacher in front of them to teach their stuff. IT IS ALWAYS EDUCATION DRIVEN"</li><li>• <b>It was easy to do since there is no way to do it all. At first, Angela and I did everything at the high school but it was overwhelming to do.</b></li><li>• Used to teach music history and music appreciation 3 out of 6 periods of the day at the high school. There was no working with the younger grade levels. This was the case for both Angela and Tom - they were team teaching music appreciation classes.</li><li>• <b>OZARK IS ON AN A/B SCHEDULE. DIFFERENT SCHEDULE DAILY.</b></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "THERE IS GOOD AND THERE IS BAD" about how this works. 6 band directors in their 40's and are "very opinionated" about everything. Has taken time to build an "o.k." teaming relationship.</li><li>• Still waisting time on the utilization of some teachers in certain situations or what the teachers preferences might be. <b>NOT STREAMLINED</b></li><li>• "I have a vision that is different than other people's vision". That has been the hardest thing. Not having a clear definition of we as individuals should be doing with our time as it is constantly changing.</li><li>• Some teachers work better than others. Some are organized in giving information by the lead teacher to the assistants while others simply roam around, not knowing what to do . In some situations, teachers sit around and do not get utilized.</li><li>• Would like to see more "streamlining of the how" teachers are utilized would "solve allot of that".</li><li>• In discussing working alone vs. attempting to assist a class - <b>"The parts of the job</b></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scheduling: Very complex. Constantly changing. -</li><li>• We had to come up with a plan for them and show them how this works. That was the way to do it, and worked really well. Putting the pieces of the puzzle together was difficult.</li><li>• We were all really excited about it, though there was one person that wasn't excited about it and decided to move on to another position outside of the district. -</li><li>• It took allot of work. Allot of time tweaking the model. We are still working on it to make it right. We made changes just last year and this year on how we do things, so I think that it is constant. -</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For younger grades it is the ability to split students up by instrument type and provide better focus of instruction.</li><li>• There can be allot of wasted time without team-teaching - it is a "TIME SAVER".</li><li>• Pedagogy is much better.</li><li>• <b>This has resulted in a noticeable improvement in stronger ensembles, and better fundamentals at the high school level. -</b></li><li>• Percussion is much more efficient. Can prepare ensemble music much quicker. Their reading skills are much quicker and allows to get more music done. -</li><li>• Percussion gets much more musical growth by being pulled out separately rather than sitting in the back of the room while the wind sections are rehearsed. We are able to divide and conquer our time very well. Paying off better every year that we do it. -</li><li>• <b>More attention to the big picture from the entire team. Everyone is able to see the beginning and the end game of the entire program.</b></li></ul> <p>I am excited about the</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brings people in for personal growth -</li><li>• Learning from other teachers -</li><li>• Other areas of expertise to draw upon -</li><li>• "You don't have to know everything" -</li><li>• We can see that there are "other right ways of doing it" -</li><li>• Some things work for some directors that don't work for others - Katie</li><li>• Provides a support network -</li><li>• Helps with not getting overwhelmed. -</li><li>• Being able to focus on what you are passionate about.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We are professional and keep personal strains between teachers out of the eyes of the students.</li><li>• Each teacher has an assigned group - so there is a lead teacher for each. Students do understand this. They get emails from the lead teacher as well as a title of the teacher of who is the lead.</li><li>• <b>Team teaching is a benefit for the kids based upon taking advantage of the opportunity of individual focus on student needs. -</b></li></ul> <p>Dividing of younger students by instrument type as much as possible.</p> |