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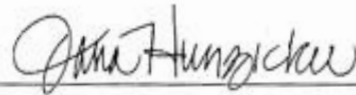
THE IMPACT OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' MARCHING BAND PARTICIPATION ON  
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AT PREDOMINANTLY BLACK UNIVERSITIES

A Scholarly Research Project

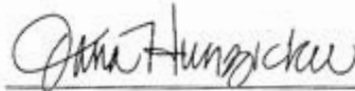
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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May 2024

## ABSTRACT

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) provide access to education for many African Americans across the United States. These institutions offer a unique perspective on higher education in multiple disciplines, none more famous than music performance. The marching band, in particular, stands as a sense of pride for these institutions and allows students the opportunity to develop themselves as musicians while pursuing opportunities in higher education. This mixed methods action research study explores the successful strategies employed by college students at Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) to balance their time between marching band and academics. The study identified several themes related to effective time management and study practices students use to excel in both areas. Students prioritized study time to master all academic classes and adopted different study modes to maximize their time use. They also organized their time effectively to balance their study and practice routines. The themes related to practice highlighted the importance of reflective practice, group study, and independent practice styles, all of which enabled these exceptional college musicians to succeed in both music performance and academic study. Overall, this study sheds light on the positive impact of HBCUs and PBIs in educating diverse communities and promoting academic and musical excellence. By showcasing the successful strategies employed by college students, this study offers valuable insights into balancing multiple priorities and achieving success in different fields.

## DEDICATION

I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to remember and acknowledge the dedication of the people who have played a significant role in my academic and personal growth. I thank my wife, Kelli, for her unwavering love and support throughout my journey at Bradley University. Her encouragement and wisdom have been a constant inspiration in my life. I am also grateful to my parents, who instilled in me the values of hard work and perseverance. Their guidance has helped me become the person I am today. Above all, I am thankful to the Nation's Band Directors who are working tirelessly to develop talented musicians and help them succeed through music. This research is dedicated to all of them, and I will always be grateful for their unwavering commitment to excellence.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pursuing knowledge is an endless journey that demands dedication, perseverance, and a thirst for learning. Despite the challenges and obstacles one may face, pursuing knowledge remains a noble and worthwhile endeavor. Through this journey, we expand our horizons, broaden our understanding of the world, and develop the tools and skills necessary to make a meaningful impact in our fields of study. I started this project before the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic. While I often had my doubts, I am very grateful to everyone who has supported me throughout the completion of this scholarly research project. First, I acknowledge my advisor, Dr. Jana Hunzicker, for her guidance and thoughtful direction throughout this research project. I also want to thank you for giving me that “extra push” to keep going when things get tough. To Dr. Scott Estes, thank you for digging into my research statistics and giving me the feedback I needed to maintain my focus throughout this project. Thank you for reminding me to keep it simple. I also want to acknowledge Ms. Nicole DeWater, my Bradley University student support specialist, who made a difference when it counted and provided me with solutions when I thought there were none. To Marcellus and Carol Brown, thank you both for being great mentors in my life and supporting my pursuit of excellence in music education and this Doctorate degree. To Mr. William A. Johnson, my former Music Supervisor with Chicago Public Schools. Thank you for your love and guidance throughout my career and for letting me know it’s more important to listen to our students. Lastly, I want to acknowledge all my former and current students who have inspired me to be a better educator than I was yesterday.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Overview

Marching bands are as American as apple pie and serve as highly visible organizations representing universities across the United States. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has three divisions organized by school enrollment, with over 1,098 schools participating in collegiate sports (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2020). Historically Black Colleges and Predominantly Black Universities (HBCUs and PBIs) make up about 8.2% of that population. Still, not all of these institutions have the resources to maintain and field a collegiate marching band program. Predominantly Black Institutions (PBI) are schools where 40% of the population is African American or Black (Fox & Thrill, 2017). Traditional HBCUs are institutions founded before 1964 and whose primary mission is to serve African Americans. This study will focus on the impact of marching band participation on academic achievement for students enrolled at Predominantly Black Institutions.

Predominantly Black Institutions with marching bands often lack the proper resources to effectively compete and perform on the national stage. For example, the Honda Battle of the Bands, a national event showcasing and celebrating the heritage and pageantry of HBCU marching band programs, selects the eight top HBCU marching bands from 39 bands with an average membership of 80 to 150 band members each. The event alone has 2,400 collegiate band members participate each year (Honda Battle of the Bands, 2020). Marching bands are a significant part of the campus culture at Predominantly Black Institutions. However, just like sports, marching band is highly competitive. The need for rehearsals to meet the high standards of competitions such as Battle of the Bands places a high demand on student time and

commitment to excellence. Most student musicians devote three to five hours each day in music rehearsals (Cumberland, 2017). Outside of full ensemble rehearsals, some even spend an additional one to two hours each day in personal practice and private lessons. The demand to maintain musical standards of excellence often conflicts with student study time and other academic commitments. This chapter introduces the study's research problem, articulates the study's purpose and research question, and discusses the significance of the study.

### **Challenges of Music Learning at HBCUs and PBIs**

HBCUs and PBIs are instrumental in providing access to higher education to underserved populations and are categorized as Minority Serving Institutions based on their percentage of minoritized undergraduate students. Predominantly Black Institutions typically have geographic circumstances that have resulted in their serving Black students (Hubbard & Stage, 2009, p 1). Historically Black Colleges and Universities, also known as HBCUs, are accredited schools designated by Congress that were founded before 1964 and whose primary mission was the education of African Americans (Fox & Thrill, 2017, p.1). Traditionally, HBCUs have significant enrollments of low-income, academically underprepared students. Despite these challenges, these institutions have successfully achieved their goals regarding student retention and course completion initiatives (Richards & Awokoya, 2012). Being underprepared academically also translates to being underprepared musically, placing an immediate demand on students' time upon entering college. Historically Black College Bands actively recruit newcomers each year to complete their instrumentation needs. Recruits are required to participate in collegiate marching band camps that provide instruction on music and marching fundamentals, and showmanship and style representative of the college's brand. This experience

allows most first-year students to quickly develop the skills needed to be successful throughout the upcoming fall marching band season.

However, in most cases, as classes begin, students struggle with musical comprehension and the added hurdle of balancing their coursework with music and marching practice. It is even more of a struggle for music majors as most come from secondary institutions that do not have music programs that stress the importance of learning music theory. Darby (2018) found precollege academic performance to be a predictor of academic performance in the college setting. Traditionally, music theory is a necessary prerequisite course for upper-level courses in music education and performance programs (National Association of Schools of Music, 2020). The study of music theory requires a significant amount of time in music analysis, sight-singing, and auditory perception. Cumberledge (2017) noted that music majors participating in marching spend significantly more time studying academics than those that do not participate in band. For students that come to college underprepared, the balancing act of time management becomes exceedingly challenging (White, 2018).

### **Researcher's Experience**

I am interested in the impact of marching band participation on college students' academic achievement at HBCUs and PBIs because I was once one of these students. I have been a middle and high school band director for the past 30 years and have directed a university marching band for the past 13 years. At many PBIs, many view the university marching band simply as a service organization performing as supplemental entertainment at basketball and football games. However, the marching band is also called upon to perform at various events on campus and within our local community. Expecting the marching band to be available for a multitude of special occasions puts more pressure on students than many people may realize.

Marching band students have to balance their academic and social activities with as much precision as performing half time shows and playing while marching in parades.

Throughout my career, I have taught at many schools, including predominantly Black Institutions. At these schools, halftime presentations are usually developed based on a theme from pop culture; in some instances, students are encouraged to write music and develop routines as part of the show. These experiences help students immerse themselves in the music of other cultures. Even so, there is a constant struggle to maintain a high level of quality in our musical performances while maintaining high academic standards in the classroom. Upon entering college, marching band instructors typically present students with the fall performance schedule. In my experience, most seem intimidated when they see the amount of time we must spend in rehearsal and the time requirements for travel to home and away games. To alleviate student concerns, music educators help students with their time management by presenting workshops on balancing their studies with practicing and rehearsal commitments. Also, educators that provide culturally relevant content help motivate students to pursue musical and academic excellence. However, even when we provide extra support and encouragement, many of our marching band students fall behind, either academically or in regard to their musical performance. For this reason, I wanted to better understand how my marching band students were prioritizing their academic and musical time to ensure success in both areas.

### **Research Purpose and Question**

The purpose of this study was to describe how college students enrolled in Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) prioritize their time to ensure success in both marching band and academics. The following research question was addressed: How do college students enrolled in

Predominantly Black Institutions prioritize their time to ensure success in both marching band and in academics?

### **Significance of the Study**

White (2018) noted that HBCUs should make the delivery of proper retention initiatives for at-risk students a high priority. Although marching band programs provide a powerful way of transforming students' beliefs about their ability to learn at a college level, little research exists on the academic achievement of students participating in marching band at HBCUs. HBCU marching bands, in particular, need to be studied as the ensembles at these institutions typically enroll students from underserved communities. This study will aid in the strategic review of academic programs in music and music performance at Predominantly Black Institutions. Collegiate band directors assessing program effectiveness and student retention also will benefit from the data collected as a means of improving the retention and persistence of students participating in school music ensembles, especially those majoring in music.

### **Organization of the Research Project**

This chapter introduced the study's research problem, articulated the study's purpose and research question, and discussed the significance of the study. Chapter 2 will present a detailed literature review. Chapter 3 will describe the research methodologies and methods used in the study. Chapter 4 will report and discuss the research findings, and Chapter 5 will conclude the study with implications for practice and recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

College student marching band participation is a phenomenon that can motivate students toward musical excellence. Collegiate band culture at predominantly black universities also plays a substantial role in developing intelligence. The purpose of this study was to describe how college students enrolled at predominantly black universities prioritize their time to ensure success in both marching band and academics. To provide a broad context for the study, this literature review examines research in several relevant domains, linking associations between the history of African Americans and music, musical intelligence, music learning, benefits of music learning, and the challenges of music learning at HBCUs and PBIs. Each section emphasizes the unique experiences of African American students.

#### **African Americans and Music**

African Americans have a history deeply rooted in the performance of music. Cross (2001) believed "that music is a product of both our biologies and our social interactions, and that music is a necessary and integral dimension of human development" (p. 28). The institution of slavery placed various restrictions on the intellectual development of African Americans. Slaves were not allowed to read or write. However, they were allowed to learn and perform music (Burnim & Maultsby, 2015). Africans brought with them a musical culture that provided an opportunity enabling them to pursue knowledge through music. Paulo Freire (2018) believed empowerment is knowledge gained that enhances one's strength. This evidence shows that music plays an essential part in developing the mind.



## **Musical Intelligence and Learning**

Although everyone is born possessing multiple intelligences, some people may have a particular set of advanced intelligences. The restrictions of slavery barring African Americans from learning to read and write have led to many African Americans being highly evolved in musical intelligence.

### **Musical Intelligence**

Musical intelligence is one of the eight multiple intelligences developed by noted psychologist Howard Gardner. Gardner defines intelligence as "the capacity to solve problems or fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural settings" (Gardner & Hatch, 1989, p. 5). Gardner believes that musical intelligence is important because it relates to some individuals' ability to perform and compose music. Skills acquired through the study of music can also be transferred to cultivate better thinking skills while fostering a superior working memory. Skills learned in music are also closely related to needed to study Math, such as when music uses rhythmic patterns as students learn about rhythms. Students also learn number systems when studying patterns and shapes (Civil, 2007).

A marching band instructor often uses math to create forms on graph paper and gives students the coordinates coinciding with the steps and beat of the music to execute these marching patterns on the football field. Most PBI bands use the 8 to 5 system when marching across the field, making forms during halftime shows. The term 8 to 5 refers to the number of steps for every 5 yards of movement. These movements are based on the 32-bar song form in musical competition where every section of music is eight beats long. Marching band students practice their musical phrases to coincide with the number of steps taken in various directions as

they move into different formations. While we think of musical intelligence as the unique ability to perform and compose music, it is also important to understand musical skills that we can access at different stages in a performance – and even beyond music-related tasks. As Sternberg (2020b) suggests, musicians continually use creative, analytical, practical, and wisdom-based skills, such as analyzing a song's structure or improvising music. It is also possible that musicians can be skilled in one musical area, such as singing, but not as skilled in another area, like playing an instrument.

The development of a musician is a continuous process concentrating on all aspects related to musical thinking and performance (Sternberg 2020b, p. 1783). According to Petress (2005), "Music is beneficial to students by creating success in society, school, and developing intelligence, as well as helping students to succeed in life" (p.112). Music helps develop higher cognitive skills. For example, students can learn to synthesize their musical knowledge and skills to make adaptations that allow them to be successful in their environment. Adaptive intelligence is the mind's ability to change in response to the current environmental demand (Sternberg, 2019, p. 1). For example, church musicians may choose to add improvised music during a worship to enhance the message, thus giving creating an environment that helps the listener connect with God on a spiritual level while the pastor gives his sermon.

The ability to compose and perform music is culturally important to African Americans because of the emphasis placed on its use as part of the needs of African and African American communities. Thus, there is a high level of appreciation and focus on music education at PBIs. In my experience as a band director, first-year students usually want to ensure they maintain the musical standards of their older peers. Therefore, they use their musical intelligence to practice and adapt the skills they need at a higher level. Sternberg (2021) believes, "Adaptation occurs

when one changes oneself to fit better into an environment. Shaping occurs when one changes the environment to be a better fit to oneself or what one believes is important" (p. 1781).

Adaptive intelligence can also translate academically as some HBCUs and PBI band programs require students to remain successful academically to maintain their membership in the band.

### **Music Learning**

Musical intelligence supports learning in areas beyond just music. According to Petress (2005), "Music is shown to be beneficial to students in four major categories: success in society, success in school, success in developing intelligence, and success in life" (p. 112). Most people intuitively understand that music connects people, builds community, and allows us the ability to communicate their most inner thoughts and feelings. More importantly is the teaching of values through music; we see it in our schools and churches, locally and globally. These values include self-discipline, teamwork, and worship. The earliest efforts in music learning in the United States centered around the training of singers in the church. Music was not part of the curriculum in schools until the 1800's. Following programs focused on singing, programs in instrumental music in the form of marching bands and orchestras were added to public school curriculum. As more school systems began to add music to core curriculum there became a need to develop strategies for teaching both vocal and written music (Birge, 2011).

### ***"Rote" and "Note" Methods***

The two primary methodologies for teaching music are the "rote" method and the "note" method. According to Cremata (2003), "Rote instruction involves teaching students who do not have music in front of them. Note instruction involves teaching students who do have music in front of them" (p. 1). Both methods have benefits and challenges; however, most music educators utilize the benefits of each methodology to create unique learning experiences for their

students. Through my years of teaching experience in the band, I have found that some students gravitate toward rote learning, especially in peer-to-peer relationships. However, note learning is more effective in ensuring that students practice the correct musical rhythms and phrasing, as the challenge in rote learning lends itself to the possibility of mistakenly practicing incorrect musical passages while committing them to memory, forcing the student to unlearn and relearn the same selection the correct way.

According to Sternberg (2022), “Most of the learning a student of musical performance does will be during practice, not during lessons” (p.1698). In effect, a mental problem-solving process occurs during practice where students reflect on what they have done well and what they have not done well and try to improve their skills accordingly on the way to mastery. In some instances, self-efficacy could be considered a primary outcome of music education. Self-efficacy, defined as one’s belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce a given attainment (Bandura, 1997), is a concept that many music instructors hope their students aspire to in their pursuit of musical excellence.

### **My Musical Learning Experience**

As a musician myself, I was able to gain more confidence in my musical abilities as I continued to practice and learn music; the more time I spent on a particular passage of music, the more it helped me correct mistakes and build the necessary skills to execute a quality music performance. Additionally, feedback from my peers and teachers was instrumental (no pun intended!) in my development as a musician. Together, self-efficacy, and peer feedback motivated my persistence toward mastery and taught me how to manage my time to maintain the same quality in all my classes.

Around the age of 5 I was inspired to learn music and play drums after staying up late with my mom and dad watching an episode of the Tonight Show starring Johnny Carson. Johnny Carson was a late-night talk show host, famous from the 1960s through the 1980s. The show featured great musicians, and Johnny Carson, an amateur drummer, always had the iconic jazz musician and drum virtuoso Buddy Rich on his show as a guest. Buddy Rich was an excellent drummer who accompanied many Big Band Jazz Ensembles before forming his group in the 1960s. I soon joined my school band program and started taking lessons with my elementary school band teacher, Mr. George Quinlan.

### ***Modeling Method***

Rather than the “rote” or the “note” method, Mr. Quinlan used the modeling method to teach music, which is very popular today as it promotes self-efficacy. The modeling method starts with “I Do” as the teacher musically performs what students are to learn. Next, the “We Do” stage allows the teacher to provide scaffolds, such as prompts as students – all at one time – try to emulate what the teacher just modeled, leading to the “You Do” stage, where students perform independently to demonstrate their skill, and eventually, after much practice, mastery.

My musical learning experiences were filled with great music educators leading by example and taking the time to explain the importance of music learning. Through many deliberate hours of practice, as my self-efficacy as a musician grew, not only was I inspired to become a musician, I was also inspired to teach music to show others the joy of music.

### **Benefits of Music Learning**

In addition to musical intelligence, music learning requires effective teaching methods, student self-efficacy, and student effort. When all of these factors come together, there are many benefits of music learning. Music ensemble, a common learning experience for young musicians,

can be defined as a group of people who perform instrumental music together, such as a marching band. Many benefits associated with increased skill in academics and musicianship are afforded to students through music ensemble participation. Crowe (2015) examined the retention of students enrolled in music ensembles. He found that first-year students participating in extracurricular music activities had significantly higher retention rates than those who were. Stevenson (2013) sought to show a correlation between performance-based music ensembles and students' academic achievement. He summarized that the same types of self-efficacy used to play a musical instrument with competency are also used in academic performance. When students perform instrumental music together, they become more confident, leading to increased self-efficacy and effort, which leads to increased achievement in both musical and academic performance.

Tan and Miksza (2018) performed a cross-cultural examination of college students enrolled in musical ensembles from China and the United States. They found that both groups reported that musical achievement, rather than culture, accounted for differences related to students' motivational goal orientations. This study reinforces the idea that group dynamics are integral to group behavior. More importantly, it suggests that students participating in ensembles were more motivated to pursue their musical goals. However, the authors expected Chinese students to do better academically. The data showed that the American students had higher ratings for both academic and musical achievement from the collective band and significant academic perspectives. Other research findings (Gardner & Cross, 2001) show us that individuals can have strengths and weaknesses pertaining to specific areas of intelligence, such as musical intelligence; however, culture and group dynamics can greatly influence both musical and academic achievement.

Goodwine (2019) found that the persistence of African American students enrolled in undergraduate music courses at HBCUs was greatly affected by previous experience. Specifically, these students relied on peer mentors for assistance throughout college, which helped improve their retention in music courses. In other words, students that participate in music ensembles often work cohesively as a group as they consistently perform together, much like African Americans singing spirituals in the fields during the days of slavery. Just as their ancestors experienced, this musical group behavior becomes ingrained in students' musical culture, giving them a sense of belonging to help endure their hardships.

Fix (2017) examined how college marching band involvement affects transition into college as well as college students' overall growth and learning. The study suggests that participation in the marching band provides positive peer relationships while adding a sense of belonging, positively impacting both the college transition and growth processes. Belonging is essential during the college transition and beyond because it encourages greater participation and motivation in activities and learning outcomes. Matthews (2017) believed that, although performing music is essential to the group's goals, motivation was a vital dynamic force that compelled students to participate and master the content and skills central to music. These types of interactions allow students to increase their skills in music and academic performance.

Petress (2005) believes that "music is among the most important subjects taught in our schools; it is important physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially, and spiritually" (p. 112). Importantly, musical ability has been linked to higher test scores on standardized exams. Guhn et al. (2020) found that instrumental music ensemble participation led to higher scores on standardized exams compared to students participating in vocal music ensembles. Malcolm Gladwell, author of the book *Outliers*, states, "The thing that distinguishes one performer from

another is how hard he or she works. That's it. And what's more, the people at the very top don't work just harder or even much harder than everyone else. They work much, much harder" (p. 20).

The longer students stay engaged in instrumental music programs, the more their academic achievement benefits. Music achievement helps build self-efficacy which in turn helps students build and maintain a growth mindset. Building a growth mindset within our students gives them positive reinforcement and aids in learning and acquiring knowledge. Jian (2022), who performed a study measuring student engagement, academic achievement, and self-efficacy, found that "those students who were more goal-oriented have greater academic self-efficacy, which contributed significantly toward sustainable student engagement in music education" (p. 8). However, the study of music alone was not a determining factor in student success. Results like these make the current study's research question timely.

### **How Music Learning Benefitted Me**

In high school and college, my music classes allowed me to practice focusing on achieving my goals as a musician. The more I practiced and was able to solve musical problems and improve my technique, the more confidence I gained as a musical learner. My musical learning agility allowed me to transfer those skills to other academics, which allowed me to stay engaged, thus increasing my academic achievement. The more success I encountered, the more self-efficacy played an essential role in my development as a musician and as a student. The ability to overcome obstacles in learning, coupled with positive motivation from my teachers, led to higher levels of hope, giving me the confidence to set higher goals for myself as a musician and student. According to Snyder et al. (2002), "High-Hope students can conceptualize their goals clearly...therefore they are likely to establish goals based on their previous performance"



(p. 824). Increased levels of hope allowed me to stretch my limits as a music student, thus instilling in me the confidence I needed to pursue both my musical and academic goals. Students with goals tend to focus their time and resources more efficiently. Also, “students use the arts to connect to the external environment, employ imagination to evoke an emotional response and develop personal meaning” (Baker, 2011, p. 47). This personal meaning helps develop goals for their learning to build their own academic and musical skills. Snyder et al. (2002) believed that students who focus on their learning goals are more actively engaged in their own learning, including planning strategies and monitoring their own progress in relation to achieving those goals (p. 202). In other words, involvement in music can lead to hope, which can lead to self-efficacy and goal setting, which can lead to both musical and academic achievement. These are all benefits of musical learning.

### **Challenges of Music Learning at HBCUs and PBIs**

Although there are many benefits to participation in instrumental music ensembles such as marching band, music learning also comes with several challenges for both students and teachers. Darby (2018) showed that students encounter various challenges to music theory success, including problems related to academic preparedness, attitude, and certain personal characteristics. Most of these challenges start with attitude and students' growth mindsets. Darby (2018) found that many students' lack of expectations in college music theory might be seen as a "Culture Shock," like learning a new language. Even more so, students lacked the maturity to maintain focus and discipline regarding time management (p. 76-77). Another factor of stress management was explored by Fleming (2001), who found that students who were most successful were the ones who were able to manage stress and people. (p. 607) Students need to be able to manage stress while at the same time finding a peer group that supports their academic

goals while at the same time avoiding participating in too many recreational activities, which can be significant distractions to many first-year college students.

### **Lack of Culturally Responsive Curriculum and Teaching**

One challenge specifically related to African American students is the lack of culturally responsive curriculum and teaching. A culturally responsive curriculum is a curriculum that respects learners' cultures and prior experiences. It acknowledges and values the legitimacy of different cultures, not just the dominant culture of a society, it also encourages intercultural understanding. It incorporates cultural aspects into the curriculum, rather than adding them on as an extra or separate module or course (Stafford Global, 2022). According to Hammond (2015), "Culturally responsive teaching is the process of using familiar cultural information and processes to scaffold learning. Emphasizes command orientation. Focused on relationships, cognitive scaffolding, and critical social awareness" (p. 156). When culturally responsive curriculum and teaching are absent, it creates a lack of trust between students and teachers, further hindering the student's ability to be receptive to learning new material. For instance, a teacher using music examples from the classical music genre to teach music theory at Predominantly Black Institutions might be more effective using music examples from music that is more culturally relevant (e.g. Earth, Wind, and Fire) to pique the students' interest and gain their trust when presenting new music theory concepts.

### **Musically but not Academically Prepared**

At the college level, another challenge in music learning is students that come prepared musically but not academically. Because these students are unprepared to meet the level of academic rigor in a collegiate environment, they do well in their music classes but not in their other classes. Lack of academic preparation is especially evident for students from disadvantaged

communities that lack the resources to prepare them for college. More often than not, music programs are the first to be cut from the curriculum at both the middle school and high school levels, relegating many schools to service students through after-school music programs (OECD, 2012, p. 16). This is particularly true of HBCUs and PBIs. According to Richards & Awokoya (2012), “Students who enroll at HBCUs tend to have fewer financial resources and less rigorous academic preparation than students who enroll at non-HBCUs, and this under-preparedness accounts in large part for lower retention and graduation rates” (p. 12). The same applies to students enrolled at Predominantly Black Institutions.

### **Academically but not Musically Prepared**

Other students arrive at college academically but are not musically prepared, which affects their overall attitude toward achieving musical success. Darby (2020) found that student attitude was a characteristic that posed a challenge to music success (p. 90). Thus, lacking confidence could ultimately affect a student's ability to succeed in music. More importantly, “Undergraduates’ confidence in their capability to be successful notably affects the impending success and the manner in which the students prepare for that opportunity” (Goodwine, 2019, p. 9).

Students come to college with more experience playing in ensembles; therefore, they may find participating in a band more enjoyable. Royston et al. (2019) found that students come more prepared to participate in ensemble groups than in theory classes, especially those requiring aural and piano skills. Also, many students may come from school districts that lack adequate funding to provide the resources needed for music programs to meet national standards. Often, the students who attend Predominantly Black Institutions come from school districts where funding for the Arts may be limited or nonexistent. Consequently, “budget cuts serve as a detriment to

arts education in public schools” (Botero, 2021, p. 1). Arts Education is essential in developing the whole child; according to a study by the National Endowment for the Arts, “High School students who earned few or no arts credits were five times more likely not to have graduated than students who earned many arts credits” (Catterall et al., 2012, p. 14).

### **Both Musically and Academically Unprepared**

Unfortunately, academically underprepared students often become unprepared musically due to limited access to arts education during middle and high school. Catterall et al. (2012) noted that “both 8<sup>th</sup> grade and high school students who had high levels of arts engagement were more likely to aspire to college than were students with less arts engagement” (p. 14).

When students come to college musically and academically unprepared, they find they don’t have the time to manage the many challenges facing them on the road to success. Participation in the Marching Band and building a good network is one way to help them meet those challenges. The problem is when students struggle at everything, and there is a lack of support based on the student’s individual needs. Darby (2018) states that “students’ preparedness for college may impact their willingness and capacity to persist in their studies” (p. 22).

Persistence in studying and practicing is a fundamental part of being a successful student musician. Unprepared students often lack this personal characteristic and may find it stressful to continue participating as an underperformer. This stress can lead to truancy regarding classes and rehearsals, further exasperating the problem. More than likely, students who are unprepared musically and academically are those who lack motivation and cannot manage their time well. Sternberg and Kibelsbeck (2022) believe that “at all points in learning, the student has to allocate her or his time and effort, deciding which problems are worth dealing with now, which ones will

have to be dealt with later, and if the effort is to be made now, how much time and effort to put into the solution of the problem” (p.1700).

### **Time**

HBCU and PBI college marching band ensembles work persistently to perfect their musical performances. The amount of time involved in this endeavor, typically ten to 15 hours per week, allows students to bond and develop positive peer relationships within the ensemble group. Crowe (2015) found that “the routines and expectations of ensemble participation provide a familiar experience in an unfamiliar environment, as well as opportunities for success and thus more positive outlooks and self-images” (p. 379). While students deal with the issue of how to manage their time, they can look to their peers in the band program to help them develop strategies to be successful in this endeavor. Darby (2012) found that many students were concerned with the time classes were scheduled and had issues getting up for music theory (p. 81-82). Many students were sleeping during class, causing them to miss important segments of learning and instruction. Students that are able to successfully balance their schedules are those that are fully engaged Student engagement is a major determining factor in improved academic achievement, especially with more goal-oriented students (Jian, 2022). Inspired students stay engaged longer, and student engagement translates to academic achievement.

Brigman et al.’s (2007) study showed that students that possess study skills and time management skills were more likely to be more successful academically. However, Cumberledge (2017), who studied the time usage of college marching band participants, found no significant difference between the hours allocated for study/homework and marching band and non-marching band participants. Levitin (2019) suggests that “Learning music means paying attention to time in very particular ways” (para 9). Earlier, Levitin (2006) stated that “ten

thousand hours of practice is required to achieve the level of mastery associated with being a world-class expert in anything” (p. 197). The balancing act is managing the hours to perfect your music and marching band drill routines along with social and academic responsibilities. Even more problematic is having a part-time job while working that schedule. Pekkar et al. (2017) reported that using a weekly diary and allotting time for reflection is highly beneficial to managing your emotions. Understanding “the why” of yourself helps you to empathize with others. Focusing through reflection allows one to organize thoughts better, leading to improved goal setting.

### **My Music Learning Challenges as a Student and as a College Instructor**

Humans are genuinely inspired to do things we like for enjoyment and pleasure. It is rare that we continually do uninspiring activities. My initial journey in music learning was filled with activities that were purely for self-fulfillment. Only when I wanted to be a leader did I feel the need to improve musically. Making these changes presented a challenge, requiring more consistent practice that involved repeating passages until it became an innate motor skill. But musical intelligence involves many talents to give a complete performance. Having to master ear training, music theory, and performance technique as well as enhance my listening skills became a full-time job. The only way to be successful is through time on task.

By the time I got my ten thousand hours as a musician, I was a college instructor teaching other musicians. In this instance, Ten Thousand Hours refers to the concept of success depicted in the book *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell. The challenge here is scheduling the time to reach that goal of ten thousand hours. In that book, he suggests for anyone to be successful in music etc, they have to at least have ten thousand hours of practice. Hence, my focus then became to uplift my level of rigor to raise my musicality through advanced score study and performance

techniques. Here came the balance of work, family, and school and, again, the challenge of focusing and remaining consistent enough to meet and exceed my goals.

### **Synthesis of the Literature Review**

College student marching band participation is a phenomenon that can motivate students toward musical excellence. Collegiate band culture at HBCUs and PBIs also plays a substantial role in developing intelligence. In summation, the research presented in this literature review aimed to provide evidence that indeed musical intelligence is ground in culture and that there is a direct relationship between the pursuit of musical excellence leading to academic excellence. Here it is confirmed that the effects of music participation can positively impact student success strategies. Good time management and improved study skills can be very impactful, with peer mentoring emphasizing good study skills.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter opened with a brief history of African Americans and music, before reviewing the literature on musical intelligence, music learning, benefits of music learning, and challenges of music learning at HBCUs and PBIs. Each section emphasized the unique experiences of African American students, including my own experiences as an African American student, musician, and music instructor. Chapter 3 will describe the study's research methodology and methods.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to describe how college students enrolled in Predominantly Black Institutions prioritize their time to ensure success in both marching band and academics. The following research question was addressed: How do college students enrolled in Predominantly Black Institutions prioritize their time to ensure success in both marching band and in academics? This chapter explains the research methodology utilized in this study, provides information about the study's research context, and describes the methods used to collect and analyze the study's quantitative and qualitative data.

#### **Research Methodology**

The study's research methodology combined mixed methods, action research, and survey research to answer its research question.

#### **Mixed Methods Research**

The core research methodology of my scholarly project was mixed methods. Yin (2006) cites Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), who defined mixed methods research as "the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts, or language into a single study" (p. 41). Yin believes that the value of mixed methods lies in the convergence of evidence – both quantitative and qualitative, which is more compelling than using a single source of evidence study design. Furthermore, McKim (2017) believes mixed methods research is used to gain a deeper, broader understanding of the phenomenon than studies that do not utilize both quantitative and qualitative approaches. However, for mixed methods to be effective, both quantitative and



qualitative data collection and analysis must have a strong integration of the procedures involved, which include the definition of the units of analysis, the structure of the samples used, the instrumentation and data collected, and the analytic strategies (Yin, 2006).

As such, using quantitative and qualitative data helps provide an analytic texture for scholarly research while compensating for the deficiencies of one genre with the strengths of another. Miles et al. (2013) stated that this process using both quantitative and qualitative methods helps strengthen the analytical findings when the results of each methodology corroborate or contradict each other. Mixed-methods research methodologies can be very beneficial to disciplines using evidence-based practice. Music learning – the focus of this study – is one example of evidence-based practice. More importantly, the decision to employ both methods directly relates to this study's needs by measuring the quantitative data collected on students' time usage and correlating that with responses related to how they feel about their participation in marching band and how they use their time to be successful in music and academics.

### ***Convergent, One-Phase Research Design***

I utilized a convergent, one-phase research design for this mixed methods study. "In this single-phase approach, a researcher collects quantitative and qualitative data, analyzes them separately, and then compares the results to see if the findings confirm or disconfirm each other" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 49). For this study, I created an online survey with questions to capture both quantitative and qualitative data from the study participants. The survey measured participants' time in rehearsal, study, and work and their attitudes on strategies to balance their time to succeed in music and academics. Using the convergent, one-phase research design, I

analyzed the quantitative and qualitative results separately and then compared them for similarities or contradictions.

### **Action Research**

In addition to the mixed methods, convergent, one-phase research design, the study employed action research. Herr and Andersen (2015) cite McKenna (1988), who stated that:

The idea of educational practitioners doing research in schools goes back at least as far as the late 19th and early 20th centuries with the movement for the scientific study of education. Teachers were viewed as the frontline of data gatherers for a massive research movement that saw teachers as researchers, working scientifically in their classroom laboratories (p. 20).

According to Mertler (2020), "The main goal of action research is to address local-level problems of practice with the anticipation of finding immediate answers to questions or solutions to those problems" (p. 14). Because my scholarly project was grounded in my past, present, and future experiences as a musician and music educator, the study utilized an action research methodology. According to Stringer (2014), "Action research is a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives" (p. 1). Action research is research conducted to effect change in the researcher's immediate work, school, or other environment. Researchers must identify the research problem and then collect data for further analysis. The researcher reflects on the data and uses it to address the study's research problem, often by drafting a solution to improve teaching and learning.

There are four major stages in conducting action research, which include the planning, acting, developing, and reflecting stages. During the planning stage, the researcher implements

several steps to identify, gather, and create a research plan to address the research question. The second stage (acting) involves implementing the plan and collecting and analyzing the data. After that, the third stage requires the researcher to address changes and revisions to develop an action plan. In the final stage, the researcher summarizes the results and reflects on the findings (Mertler, 2020).

The benefits of action research are many. As Herr and Anderson (2019) propose:

Communities can engage in inquiry through action research in ways that help the group move from working as isolated individuals toward a collaborative community; they can seek to engage their members in learning and change; they can work toward influencing organizational change; and they can offer opportunities for personal, professional, and institutional transformation (Mertler, 2020, p. 46).

For this project, I wanted to study a community of college marching band students enrolled at an HBCU or PBI to encourage others to work together to help students excel as musicians while succeeding in their academics.

Some scholars view action research as needing more quality based on rigor and the researcher's experience level. Walters (2009) suggests that this criticism focuses on how a study's selected research methodology's processes reduce the validity of the research. However, Mertler (2020) believes that researchers can ensure validity and reliability in action research studies through the triangulation of data and constant evaluation of its processes. Kimchi et al. (1991) cite Denin (1970) and define triangulation research as "the combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods, or investigators in the study of a single phenomenon (p. 1)."

I utilized quantitative and qualitative data from the survey to ensure the credibility of my study findings. I triangulated that data with the literature on time management, music practice,

and proven academic strategies for student success. I looked at various aspects of student time usage and reflected on my own experiences as a student and band director to understand the unique cultural influences of students participating in marching band at a Predominantly Black University.

Often, action research takes place in a one-of-a-kind setting, often the researcher's classroom or place of employment, leading some scholars to believe that site-based action research may have little relevance or transferable knowledge to other settings (Gustavsen, 2008). However, according to Ollila and Ystrom (2020), "Action research links research to practice; research informs practice, and practice informs research synergistically" (p. 401). For example, teachers often use reflection to monitor their teaching practices and the knowledge and skill development of their students. In this way, knowledge acquired from reflection as a result of action research can be transferrable and not just remain local. As Stringer (2014) states, action research is a "reflexive process that advocates continued learning and development" (p. 247).

### **Survey Research**

Creswell and Creswell (2018) cite Fowler (2008) and state that "survey research provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (p. 12). This study focused on gathering information through survey research to show the attitudes and opinions of students on how they prioritize their time to ensure success in both marching band and in academics? Stringer (2013) states, "Experimental and survey research (sometimes called quantitative research) is intended to provide generalizable explanations that provide the basis for predicting and controlling events and phenomena through rigorous application of numerically based hypothesis-testing procedures" (p. 5).

Using an online survey for this study was a good option as it allowed the opportunity to collect data in a setting familiar to the student participants. According to Braun et al. (2021), “Those actively engaged in online social media platforms and communities, comfortable with communicating online, will likely be similarly comfortable expressing themselves in an online survey” (p. 649). It was also important to recognize the diversity in the population and allow them to express themselves from their point of view. Jansen (2010) believes the primary knowledge aim of many qualitative studies is to explore the views of participants as expressed in their own words as a means of empowerment. Survey research offered a simple and effective method to gathering information about what students actually think and do.

This study used internet-based survey research as the means of data collection. An important factor of why many researchers use internet-based survey research lies in its convenience especially when working with college students as participants. Miles et al. (2014) state, "Doing qualitative analysis with the occasional aid of numbers is a good way of testing for possible bias and seeing how robust our insights are" (p. 284). To that end, I included several open-ended questions to assess student attitudes about their strategies to be successful student musicians. For example, to understand how students prioritized their time, I asked which tools were most helpful as they strived for academic and musical success. The qualitative data also provided information about the significance of peer mentorship in academic success and what advice they would offer other students for them to be musically and academically successful. This qualitative data was used to support the quantitative data from questions about students' time usage and how they organize their time leading to success. In addition, the qualitative data helped describe the strategies they relied on most to be successful musically and academically. Creswell and Creswell (2017) define qualitative research as “an approach for exploring and

understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 4).

The qualitative data from the administered survey included open-ended questions that gathered information about how students prioritize their time to ensure success in both marching band and in academics. Miles et al. (2013) believe qualitative data can be a good source of human processes where one can see which events led to which consequences, thus allowing the researcher to identify patterns in human behavior.

The benefits of internet-based survey research are many. Current research suggests that internet-based surveys improve response time and increase participation (Menon & Muraleedharan, 2020). Another benefit of survey research is their recruiting convenience, which helps increase sample size and allows them to gather information from populations that are harder to reach within the university (Van Quaquebeke et al., 2022).

Some critics, however, are concerned with the quality of survey research in regard to the honesty and completeness of responses (Fricker & Schonlau, 2002). For example, survey respondents may have opposing views within their own belief system, such as fraternities and sororities on topics regarding hazing and secret rituals. Another disadvantage of internet-based survey research emerges when research participants do not have internet access and therefore cannot participate.

To address these limitations of survey research, relevant research questions were posed, the time to complete the survey was kept under 15 minutes, and all participants were asked the same questions. Specifically, the survey gathered information about college marching band students' use of time for music practice and academic study. The survey, which is located in Appendix A, also asked students to self-evaluate their academic progress and how they study and practice regarding time usage.

## **Research Context**

### **Research Setting**

The research site for this study was a predominantly black public university in the Midwest region of the United States where 75% of the undergraduate student population is African-American. According to the university's annual report, Lake Shore University (LSU), a pseudonym, is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and recognized for teaching and research innovations, community development, and civic engagement. In addition, LSU strives to promote excellence, ethical leadership, entrepreneurship, and social and environmental justice. Located in a highly urban environment, LSU serves both residential and commuter students. LSU has an enrollment of approximately 3,000 students, offers degrees in several academic disciplines, and has over 18 accredited programs. LSU offers graduate and undergraduate degrees, with most students enrolled in undergraduate programs. The marching band is the featured ensemble of the music department at LSU, which also has vocal groups, percussion ensembles, and community music groups. A citation is not included here to protect the identity of the institution.

### **Researcher Positionality**

According to Herr and Anderson (2015), action researchers can be insiders or outsiders. As a researcher who is African-American and has experience as both a student and as an instructor in HBCU and PBI marching bands, I can be identified racially as an insider; however, at the time of the study I was not employed by LSU and did not have a direct relationship with any of the LSU students enrolled in the marching band, which made me an outsider. However, this position gave me a unique perspective as I could identify with the students involved in the program, being African American and a former music major and band member at LSU. As a

former director of an HBCU marching band, I could also understand the challenges of prioritizing their time. As a researcher and outsider, I can also observe the band in rehearsal and objectively study the collected data from the survey. Bukamal (2022) Discusses researcher insider-outsider positionality and believes such strengths are advantageous because the researcher can gain more insight into a particular phenomenon (p.338-340).

### **Research Participants**

The study's participants were 33 undergraduate students enrolled in the marching band as a course in their academic schedule during the 2022-2023 academic year. The demographics of the study's 33 research participants were racially similar to the overall demographics of the university, as African American members made up over 75% of the band's membership. The participants were recruited from the total marching band membership of 45 students, 33 students responding to the survey. In April 2023 the university band director provided research access to all students enrolled in the marching band course during the Spring 2023 semester. This course was selected because of the ease of access and the manageable number of participants, which aided me in carrying out both participant recruitment and survey administration.

All students enrolled in the marching band course received an email invitation to participate in the study, including an informed consent agreement that provided full disclosure about the study. The email invitation, which included a QR code and a link to the survey, was sent by LSU's band director.

Prior to recruitment, Bradley University's Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research (CUHSR) thoroughly reviewed and approved the study's research design and procedures based on federal guidelines for conducting research involving human subjects. Approval was also received by LSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB).



## Research Methods

### Data Collection

Mertler (2019) describes data collection as the acting stage of the action research process, where the researcher uses various techniques to collect qualitative and quantitative data. For this study, the timing of both the quantitative and qualitative data collection was concurrent with the survey distribution, which began during the spring 2023 semester. The participants' timeline for completing the online survey started in April 2023 one week after the initial invitation was sent. With a completion deadline of 30 days after the survey's initial administration, the online survey was closed on June 1, 2023. A reminder was sent out seven days before the survey deadline was to be completed. Final reminders were sent two weeks before the study's close with data collection and analysis began thirty days after that.

During the initial survey administration, no students answered how many hours they spent practicing music. According to the band director, many students needed a more specific perception of this initial survey question. The band director reported that most students don't practice marching band music, and most learn the music in rehearsal. As such, the question related explicitly to "practicing music" was not answered in the first phase of the survey administration. Therefore, I reworded the question to include rehearsal time. The band director administered a follow-up survey, including a restructured question on How students' study for all their classes. The second survey yielded more student participation, and I added this data into this study to correlate the data collected, looking for student academic success patterns. In addition, the survey distribution included links that mobile devices and personal computers could access.

## **Data Analysis**

This study used the survey tool Qualtrics to collect and download the survey responses for data analysis. The data were downloaded into a Microsoft excel spreadsheet for quantitative and qualitative analysis.

### ***Quantitative Data***

Frequency and percentage data corresponding with the quantitative questions from the survey were automatically calculated by Qualtrics and graphically depicted using bar charts that captured students time usage. First, I reviewed student responses from Questions 1 and 2 on the student survey, which measured how much time students spent rehearsing and practicing music and how much time they spent studying. Next, student responses from survey questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were compared. These questions asked how much time students spent working, how much time was spent on leisure activities, and how much time students spend studying with peers.

### ***Qualitative Data***

Stringer (2014) believes "that for researchers to acquire an understanding, they should develop a coding procedure that identifies units of meaning (experience, perception) within the data and organizes them into categories that typify or summarize the experiences and perspectives of participants" (p. 139). For this study, I used In Vivo coding to code the responses from students regarding their experiences participating in the marching band and their time usage. The qualitative data, in the form of students' written open responses, were analyzed and coded based on the study's research question: How do college students attending Predominantly Black Institutions prioritize their time to ensure success in the marching band and academics?

I began my investigation by using in vivo coding to identify words and phrases that captured students' thinking, attitudes, and behaviors in their own words. Miles et al. (2014) state that,

In Vivo, coding used words or short phrases from the participant's own language in the data record as codes. It may include folk or indigenous terms of a particular culture, subculture, or microculture to suggest the existence of the group's cultural categories. (p.74)

After analyzing the student's responses concerning how they use their time to be successful musically and academically, I took the various repeated phrases from students. I placed the coded data into several categories: Personal Study, Personal Practice, Group Study, and Reflection. Next, I compared the qualitative responses with the study's quantitative data for each category.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter explained the research methodology utilized in this study, provided information about the study's research context, and described the research methods utilized for collecting and analyzing the study's quantitative and qualitative data. Chapter 4 will provide an in-depth analysis of the data collected and continue to examine how students prioritize their time to ensure success in music and academics at predominantly black universities.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS, FINDINGS, AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Introduction**

This mixed-methods research study aimed to describe how college students enrolled at Predominantly Black Institutions (PBI) prioritize their time to ensure success in marching band and academics. The study was guided by the following research question: How do college students enrolled in Predominantly Black Institutions prioritize their time to ensure success in marching band and academics? The study's survey results and findings are organized into two major themes: Strategies for Music Achievement and Strategies for Academic Achievement.

The Time Management Strategies for Music Achievement section describes the quantitative and qualitative results regarding band members' perception strategies leading to musical excellence. The Time Management Strategies for Academic Achievement section describes the quantitative and qualitative results regarding band members' perception strategies leading to academic excellence while participating in a collegiate marching band program. The chapter concludes with a summary of the results related to the research question: How do college students enrolled in Predominantly Black Institutions prioritize their time to ensure success in marching band and academics?

#### **Results and Findings**

##### **Time Management Strategies for Music Achievement**

###### ***Quantitative Results***

The survey had five questions related to strategies to ensure success in musical achievement and five questions related to success in pursuing academic achievement. The overall average practice time for all students who responded to the question of how many hours a

week they spend in private practice was 3.07 hours per week. seven students practiced for an average of four or more hours per week, and another sixteen students practiced for two to three hours per week. Students were also asked how many hours a week band students *should* spend in private practice and how they classify their musical ability. The results showed that 85% of the participants, who ranked themselves as “above-average” and “average” musicians, recommended practicing five to 10 hours per week, while the 14% of students who classified themselves as “below average” and/or “not sure” recommended that students practice two to three hours per week. This finding suggests that more successful musicians practice for longer hours than less successful musicians to improve musically. Students who self-classified as “below average” and “not sure” did not view practice time as important as their peers in achieving musical excellence.

### ***Qualitative Results***

The survey responses also revealed the band members' perceptions about band rehearsal hours. Students were asked how long marching band students should practice with the band. The results were 6 hours a week, with some students wanting more hours for ensemble practice than their current 2.5 hours a week to achieve musical success as an organization. Certain direct quotations from students regarding practice time as an organization included comments such as: “I believe the band should come together for brief rehearsals with a priority towards drill/movements.” Two other students wrote, “I feel as though the amount we practice is just enough, but we could also use more time for improvement.” and “I feel that students should practice at least three times out of the week.

**Table 1*****Initial Questionnaire Codes, Themes, and Assertions Related to Music Achievement***

Theme related Code	Theme	Assertions
1. Reflection (RFL)	Strategies for Practicing Music	Time devoted to reflection on previous accomplishments before organizing their practice session
2. Group Study (GSP)		Time devoted to Instrumental and Auxiliary sectional practice
3. Independent Practice(REP)		Individual practice styles and Time devoted to individual study

***Integrated Analysis: How Students Prioritize their Time for Music Achievement***

While student musicians who identified their musical ability as below average or “not sure” reported practicing on their own 3.5 hours weekly, there was a significant difference between hours spent in practice by average and above-average student musicians. The qualitative findings revealed that average and above-average students wanted more hours for music practice, especially when practicing as an ensemble. When these students were asked their opinion on how many hours they should practice independently, the mean was 5 hours per week. In addition, when these students were asked how long marching band students should practice with the band, the average response was 7 hours a week, with some students wanting even more hours for practice than their current 2.5 hours a week to achieve musical success as an organization.

In addition to describing how much time students would like to practice with the marching band, the students also described how they would like to practice as a band. This data revealed that some students were unhappy with the current practice schedule and noted the need for more rehearsal time and focused practice. In general, students preferred to reflect and analyze first when planning what to practice, and they preferred practicing in groups versus practicing

independently. According to student feedback, individual practice was the most used strategy for achieving musical excellence. Certain direct quotations from students who preferred individual practice as a strategy leading to musical excellence included comments such as: “I practice on my own outside of marching band practice in my room, specifically going over routines until they are clean.”

However, students also made references to being dedicated to using reflection practices. Reflective practice involves actively analyzing your experiences and actions to help yourself improve and develop. Reflection can also improve motivation and consistency, enabling students to practice more. Students becoming more skilled in reflection can practice more efficiently and effectively. As one student stated, “I meditate first and then get a layout of what I want to practice.” Other students stated, “I work on the music I struggle with the most and continue from there,” and “By humming horn parts, practicing movements, and tempo practice.”

In this study, students in the marching band employed various time management strategies for musical achievement. These strategies were instrumental in helping them effectively manage their time to reach their goals. Increased time in personal practice and group study were good habits that proved most effective for musicians who classified themselves as “average” or “above average”. For students to make effective use of their practice time, “Students must optimize practice time by setting a plan, eliminating distractions, and establishing goals for each practice session” (Cumberledge, 2015, p.17) The use of reflection during musical practice was another strategy that was popular among students. Reflection is essential in helping students properly manage their practice time. Students must solve the problem of how much time they will put in to make their practice time effective, leading to an improved performance (Sternberg and

Kisselbeck, 2022). Saving time during music practice and using that time effectively can allow students the opportunity to allocate more time for studying academics.

### **Time Management Strategies for Academic Achievement**

#### ***Quantitative Results***

The questionnaire had five questions related to success in pursuing academic achievement. These questions focused on the amount of study time and how students prefer to study. The mean hours used for individual study by students who described themselves as "A" students was 2.33 hours per week. The mean related to hours used for individual study by students who described themselves as "B" students was 2.07 hours per week. The mean related to hours used for individual study by students who described themselves as "C" students was 2.25 hours per week. The majority of "A" and "B" students spent more time participating in study groups on a weekly and bi-weekly basis compared to most "C" students, who only participated in study groups monthly. This data suggests that above-average students were more academically successful because of the time they allotted for study. Also, the "A" and "B" students used their time more effectively by utilizing study groups.

The survey also included questions about mentorship and its influence on ensuring successful academic achievement. Students were asked how much mentorship aids in their educational success. The questionnaire showed that most "A" and "B" students reported that mentorship greatly aided their academic success. In contrast, most "C" students' responses determined that mentorship was only moderately valuable to them as a tool leading to academic success. Participants were also asked to comment on which types of support most benefited them in pursuing educational excellence. Peer mentorship and family support ranked the highest, with



27%, followed by teacher mentorship at 25%. In contrast, tutoring through Student Success Services ranked the lowest at 21%.

### *Qualitative Findings*

The qualitative data revealed the band members' perceptions on strategies related to how they use their study time to succeed academically. Certain direct quotations from students regarding these strategies included comments such as: "Make a planner sheet, and follow it so you can manage your time wisely.", another student stated, "Have a balance with both school and society. Learn how to prioritize." Some students used different styles and modes of study to meet their goals. One student commented, "One strategy I use when I feel as if I'm overwhelmed and failing a class is to form a group chat with other students in the class, and we work together to finish and understand our coursework." While another student stated, "Take notes in class even if the teacher doesn't ask you to and take notes while you do your homework. Writing while learning helps increase retention." The use of time was also mentioned as well as organize your study time and life. Several students commented, "Study and focus on your due dates." When discussing mentorship and practice, students mentioned that reviewing and learning from others while using resources wisely was also crucial in this endeavor, leading to musical success. More importantly, these results revealed a community of positive-thinking students willing to share their experiences with first-year students, thus building upon the success of the band program and emphasizing high levels of musicianship.

**Table 2*****Initial Questionnaire Codes, Themes, and Assertion Related to Academic Achievement***

Theme Related Code	Theme	Assertions
Study Time (ST)	Strategies for Academic Achievement	Time devoted to gaining an understanding and mastery of all academic classes
Study Style (SS)		Modes of study leading towards the effective use of time
Time Management (TM)		Organization of time related to study

**Integrated Analysis: How Students Prioritize their Time for Academic Achievement****Table 3*****Integrated Analysis: How Students Prioritize their Time for Academic Achievement and Music Practice***

	Reflective Practice	Individual Practice	Group Practice 3+ Hours per week	Full Band Practice
Above Average	4/10	10	9	10
Average	7/14	14	11	14
Below Average	1/2	1	2	2
Not Sure	0	2	1	2
Total	12	28	23	28
	Individual Study 4 or more hours	Group Study	Use of Support Services	Time Management Strategies
“A” Student	44%	45.5%	80%	77%
“B” Student	33%	54.5%	50%	60%
“C” Student	25%	0%	50%	25%
“D/F” Student	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	35%	39%	61%	57%

According to the quantitative data, students classified as “A” and “B” perform better academically and attend group study sessions more regularly every week than students classified as “C”. The qualitative data also revealed that “A” and “B” students make use of student support services more frequently than “C” students. Additionally, more “A” and “B” students study independently for more hours every week than “C” students. The data also indicated that “A” and “B” students employ more effective time management strategies than “C” students, enabling them to make more efficient use of their time overall. The combined data revealed that students were focused on improving their academic weaknesses and using that study time with peers in the marching band. More importantly, students felt that time management and planning were essential factors leading to their academic success.

### **Discussion**

The discussion will relate the findings back to the study’s question, How do college students enrolled in Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) prioritize their time to ensure success in both marching band and academics? The students participating in marching band relied heavily on good time management to aid them in their musical and academic success. Upon careful analysis of the results and findings, it has been determined that students frequently turn to reflection to effectively manage their time and foster better collaboration with their peers. Reflective practice is defined as:

Deliberate practice is reflective practice in which individuals try to improve their skills by considering what they have done well, what they have not done well, and how they can improve what they have not done as well as they would wish (Sternberg & Kesselbeck, 2022, p. 1698).

A recent study conducted by Benjamins et al. (2022) discovered that engaging in reflective practices during musical training can significantly enhance the overall learning experience. As a result of this process, participants became more attuned to the expectations placed upon them as band members, both in terms of musical skill and academic performance. The ability to focus through this type of study makes students more efficient and effective with their time in this endeavor. According to a study by Benjamins et al (2022), while sharing reflections in a group setting was found to be a useful practice for some students, others found it stressful and preferred individual practice. In contrast, Bernhard (2005) discovered that high levels of student burnout were associated with negative personality traits and perceived workload, whereas low levels of burnout were attributed to students with outgoing personalities and peer support.

Moreover, the research revealed that group study is a highly favored strategy for achieving success in both academic and music pursuits. Students shared their preferred techniques regarding group study, ultimately leading to their achievements in both music and academics. Additionally, the findings align with Matthews' (2017) study, which suggests that consistent collaboration within a group fosters a sense of community that empowers individual members to strive for excellence.

The study aimed to explore students' opinions regarding time management and seeking support. The study looked at different forms of support, such as peer mentorship, family support, institutional student support services, and teacher mentors. The students showed a preference for peer mentorship, but it was found that students who performed well academically tended to rely more on institutional student support services compared to their peers. Individuals who demonstrate proficiency in the domain of time management often exhibit a heightened ability to

connect with a diverse array of support systems. Additionally, they possess a keen sense of balance when allocating their schedules, allowing them to optimize their productivity and achieve success with minimal expenditure of time (Cumberledge, 2015).

### **Answer to the Study's Research Question**

The study aimed to investigate how college students attending Predominantly Black Institutions balance their time to excel in both marching band and academics. The research analyzed the strategies adopted by students to achieve success in both music and academics, highlighting their prioritization of time to excel in both areas. The findings revealed that group and individual practice were common in both fields, and the use of reflection in practice and academic study was prevalent. According to the study, students employed time management strategies to effectively juggle their musical pursuits and academic obligations. The research revealed that those who earned a "B" grade invested a considerable amount of time in studying and practicing. Conversely, those who demonstrated competence in music but not exceptional skill were adept at prioritizing their time to achieve a healthy balance between both endeavors. Moreover, the study demonstrated that students who availed themselves of school support services and dedicated more time to practice experienced greater success in improving their abilities as both musicians and scholars.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter reported and discussed the study's results and findings before answering the study's research question. Chapter 5 will show my conclusions through a comprehensive summary, implications for practice, suggestions for future research, and a discussion of the study's limitations.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents a comprehensive overview of the study's primary discoveries, followed by a condensed analysis of responses to the research question. The insights offered are based on the researcher's personal and educational experiences as both a former student and band director. Additionally, practical recommendations and suggestions for further research are provided, culminating in a discussion of the study's limitations and the ultimate conclusions of the final report.

#### **Summary of Findings**

The study aimed to explore students' opinions regarding time management and seeking support. The study looked at different forms of support, such as peer mentorship, family support, institutional student support services, and teacher mentors. The students showed a preference for peer mentorship, but it was found that students who performed well academically tended to rely more on institutional student support services compared to their peers. Individuals who demonstrate proficiency in the domain of time management often exhibit a heightened ability to connect with a diverse array of support systems. Additionally, they possess a keen sense of balance when allocating their schedules, allowing them to optimize their productivity and achieve success with minimal expenditure of time (Cumberledge, 2015).

This study examined how college students attending Predominantly Black Institutions manage their time to excel in marching band and academics. The research analyzed the strategies adopted by students to achieve success in both music and academics, highlighting how they prioritize their time to perform well in both areas. The findings revealed that both group and

individual practice were common in both fields, and the use of reflection in music practice and academic study was prevalent.

### **Implications for Practice**

As stated earlier, this study aims to describe how college students enrolled in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBI) prioritize their time to ensure success in marching band and academics. The findings of this study hold significant implications for future practice, as they can serve as a useful guide for faculty and administrators to provide better support systems for students involved in the marching band organization. Moreover, the study participants can benefit from developing novel strategies to enhance student success skills, including academic achievement and improved musicianship. Based on the findings of this research study, peer mentorship proved to be an essential factor in student success. Therefore, it is highly recommended that marching bands establish an official Peer Mentoring Program tailored to the unique needs of the band program students in order to provide them with personalized assistance and support.

According to the research findings, students who received grades "A" and "B" were found to utilize school support services more often than students who received grade "C". Based on this, Academic Tutors could collaborate to provide targeted assistance to students who are enrolled in the band program. The Dean and Music department could also work together to program classes and events that enhance the student experience while improving academic achievement. Additionally, the University could provide adequate access to facilities for study and practice, specifically for students enrolled in the band program.

Further, students could be provided with proven strategies for success in matriculating through their degree programs, such as scheduling, dorm location, and work-study options. Also,

school support services could create specific Time Management Strategies for students involved in Performing Ensembles, which can help them to manage their time efficiently and balance academic and extracurricular activities.

### **Limitations of the Study**

It is imperative to recognize that the study being considered is subject to certain limitations that warrant our attention. This research study did not use actual student GPAs to determine their academic standing. To minimize this limitation, students were asked to provide their academic classification along with the number of hours they used for study. Our research was conducted using a sample from a small midwestern college, which means that the conclusions drawn may not be applicable to institutions of varying sizes. Nevertheless, we made an effort to mitigate this potential limitation by administering an online survey that yielded an impressive 77% response rate from marching band members.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that future research endeavors consider the following suggestions: Firstly, it is advisable to replicate the study in larger institutions to ensure the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, researchers may want to conduct in-person interviews not only with students but also with administration, faculty, and support services staff. Gathering data from these interviews may provide more information about student support services and the accessibility of facilities to support student success. Researchers are encouraged to conduct a study that includes multiple programs from various athletic conferences representing Predominantly Black Colleges and Universities. This would help shed light on the effectiveness of these programs. Additionally, comparing larger universities with small colleges, as well as colleges with varying academic admission standards, could be a worthwhile endeavor.



It is worth noting that the study in question was conducted at only one predominantly black institution. Therefore, expanding the scope of research could provide valuable insights.

### **Conclusion**

The University Marching Band is widely regarded as one of the most diverse and largest organizations on college campuses, boasting a vast array of participants from different backgrounds. To enhance both academic and musical achievements and improve retention rates, it's crucial to instill effective time management strategies in band members. Students are advised to prioritize their studies by utilizing these techniques to excel academically. Educational institutions, administrators, and educators have a pivotal role to play in guiding and supporting students towards successful implementation of such strategies.

As academic excellence is essential to a student's overall growth and development, helping them acquire vital skills and knowledge for their future career and personal success, it's critical for band directors to focus not only on music performance but also on encouraging their students to pursue academic excellence. By fostering a growth mindset and assisting students in realizing their life goals, band programs can play a vital role in creating academic success among students. Therefore, it's imperative for band directors to prioritize academic excellence while focusing on music performance, and to encourage growth mindset among their students to help them realize their full potential.

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## APPENDIX A

### INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE AND INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT

The Impact of College Students' Marching Band Participation on Academic Achievement

at Predominantly Black Institutions

#### Email Invitation to Participate

Dear (Student Name),

As a member of your university marching band, you are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to describe how college students enrolled in Predominantly Black Institutions prioritize their time to ensure success in both marching band and academics.

#### Informed Consent Agreement

The study consists of completing an online survey that will take approximately 15 minutes. This survey will be anonymous. There will be no link between your name and your survey responses. The data collected in this study will help your institution in planning programs to assist students in extracurricular activities with time management. Also, it will further instructors in providing strategies to help students excel in academics and improve musicianship.

There are no anticipated risks involved in participation regarding this study. All information recorded will be kept confidential, and no study participants will be identified in the final report. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. Students that are members of the university band and 18 years of age or older are eligible to participate. You may choose not to take part at all, or you may stop participating in the study at any time. There will be no penalty for choosing not to participate or for changing your mind, even if you do so in the middle of the survey.

The research findings will be compiled and submitted to Bradley University to satisfy the requirements for the Doctor of Education in Higher Education Administration degree. Questions about this study may be directed to the researcher in charge of this study, Professor Ramon W. Key Jr., at (773) 530 -8200 or [rkey@mail.bradley.edu](mailto:rkey@mail.bradley.edu). If you have general questions about being a research participant, you may contact the Committee on the Use of Human Subjects office at (309) 677-3877.

#### Decision to Participate in the Study

NO. If you do not wish to participate in the study, simply do nothing.

YES. If you wish to participate in the study, please begin your participation by clicking on the link below: (survey link)

By clicking on the survey link, you are voluntarily making a decision to participate in this study. Your submission of the survey means that you have read and understand the information presented and have decided to participate. Your participation also means that your questions about the study have been answered to your satisfaction. If you think of any additional questions during or following your completion of the survey, please contact me directly.

Thank you,

Ramon W. Key Jr.,  
Ed.D. Doctoral Candidate, Bradley University

**APPENDIX B**  
**SURVEY QUESTIONS**

**The Impact of College Students' Marching Band Participation on  
Academic Achievement at Predominantly Black Institutions**

1. How many hours a week do you spend practicing your music for marching band?
  - A. 2 hours
  - B. 3 Hours
  - C. 4 Hours
  - D. 5 + Hours

Please describe how you practice.

2. How many hours a week do you spend studying?
  - A. 2 hours
  - B. 3 Hours
  - C. 4 Hours
  - D. 5 + Hours

Please describe how you study.

3. How many hours a week do you spend working?
  - a. 0-5 hours
  - b. 6-19 hours
  - c. 20-35 hours
  - d. 36 or more hours
4. How many hours a week do you spend in leisure activities?
  - A. 2 hours
  - B. 3 Hours
  - C. 4 Hours
  - D. 5 + Hours
5. How would you classify your academic ranking?
  - A. "A" Student
  - B. "B" Student
  - C. "C" Student
  - D. GPA is less than a 2.0

6. How would you describe your musical ability?
  - A. Above average
  - B. Average
  - C. Below average
  - D. Not sure
7. Have you had any music theory classes before attending CSU? Please describe.
8. How often do you attend study groups with your peers in band?
  - A. Weekly
  - B. Biweekly
  - C. Everyday
  - D. Monthly
9. In your opinion, how many hours a week should marching band students spend practicing with the band?
10. In your opinion, how many hours a week should marching band students spend practicing on their own?
11. Describe one strategy you use to be successful musically.
12. Describe one strategy you use to be successful academically.
13. How much does peer mentorship aid in your academic success?
  - A. Significantly
  - B. Moderately
  - C. Somewhat
  - D. None
14. What tools are useful to you as you strive for academic success? Circle all that apply.
  - A. Peer mentorship
  - B. Student Success Services (Tutoring)
  - C. Teacher Mentorship
  - D. Family Support
15. What advice can you offer incoming college students regarding how to be successful in college, both musically and academically?
16. Do you have any final thoughts about musical and academic success in college?