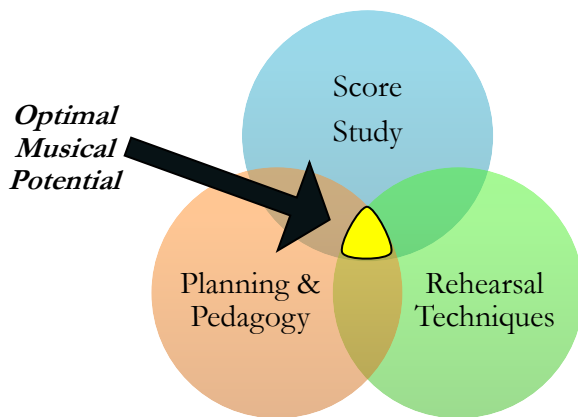


Score Study for the Busy Band Director

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Introduction

Music making is a complex process with many layers and areas of interaction. If we consider the areas of Score Study, Planning & Pedagogy, and Rehearsal Techniques, individually, none of these areas can facilitate an optimal musical environment. However, the intersection of these three areas results in a wonderful opportunity for music making.



Score Study by itself very likely won't make the music making of your ensembles great, but....

Great music making by your ensembles very likely won't happen without Score Study!

Score Study is the way we “practice” for rehearsals.

But wait, I'm a busy band director! My time is limited and I don't have hours of time to devote to score study. This session will offer a variety of practical suggestions and applications regarding several analyzation methods for score study that can greatly increase the efficiency of your study and rehearsals.

There are several methods to analyze a score and the extent to which each method needs to be used changes with each piece and with each ensemble. Remember, repetitious listening to a recording is not score study!

Analyzation Methods

“Score Study Quintet” of Analyzation Methods – You should use all 5 at all times, but not equally.

1. **Pedagogical** – using pedagogy to inform our score study.
 - Perhaps the first question we all ask as educators is, “Can my band play this?”
Application: Do you buy/hand out the piece?
 - Understand the exact meaning for **all** printed words in the score.
Application: Most people perform a task better and faster if they read and understand the directions first! This is also a way to build the musical vocabularies of your students.
 - Selection of rehearsal techniques to facilitate student understanding and execution of specific musical elements.
Application For example, you proactively spot a problematic rhythm while score studying, what pedagogical technique do you use to teach it in rehearsal?

2. **Historical & Biographical** – important background information that shapes our teaching and interpretation of the work.
 - Most often these deal with the classic questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why?
Applications:
 - Understand the context or inspiration for the work.
 - Possible interaction with a live composer; this is easier now than ever!
 - Provides a great opportunity for cross-curricular learning.
3. **Formal** – understanding the architecture of the piece is critical to efficient rehearsals.
 - If you know how something is assembled, you can take it apart in a meaningful way.
 - This also frequently involves a survey of dynamics.
Applications:
 - Rehearsal Planning
 - Phrases leading to Points of Arrival
 - Breathing
4. **Harmonic** – many people consider this to be the only type of score study method.
 - Every piece you conduct you should strive to complete a rudimentary harmonic analysis.
 - When teaching slow music, a full harmonic analysis is strongly encouraged.
 - Don't forget about non-harmonic tones! Not every note in a measure belongs to a triad!
 - When you see a lot of concentrated accidentals – it's a good time for a harmonic analysis.
Applications:
 - Marches often have wonderful harmonies <http://www.conductingmasterclass.com>
 - Tuning, if you can identify who has unisons, octaves, and fifths during your score study, you have taken a large step in solving many of the intonation challenges of your ensemble. Then you can work on thirds and sevenths!
5. **Articulation & Timbre** – using our grey matter for grey areas!
 - How should the notes begin? Specifically what type of articulation should start the note?
 - Releases! – These are ignored frequently. Same question as above, what type of release do you want to end the note?
 - Quality percussion sounds – this one of the biggest weaknesses I hear in band rooms.
 - Special or unusual dynamics. These can often be key factors in making a piece come to life.
 - Mutes – what types? Quick changes? Make sure to determine where they start and stop.
Application:
 - This is the first step in interpretation.
 - You have to make a decision; otherwise you are willing to accept whatever the students give you.

Now that you have done some score study, how to you put it all together?

- Rehearsal Planning – Units, weekly, daily – score study can be an invaluable aid for this.
- Interpretation – Your take on the piece, not just copying someone else.
- Conducting gestures – This process can help you develop musical gestural vocabulary to complement the music. Employing gestures before you score study is just choreography.

Coda

- Score study is your “practice” for rehearsals – don't you expect your students to practice?
- “Practice” in shorter time periods and on a consistent basis both before and during the concert cycle.
- Develop **your** personal process for score study from the 5 analyzation methods presented.