

SOUND LEADERSHIP

Leadership Curriculum for Music Students

For band, orchestra, and choir

SCOTT LANG

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Welcome

I'm excited that you're here!

This book is designed to help facilitate a collaborative process between both student leaders and program directors. While each can use these materials individually, I recommend using this workbook in a collaborative group setting to unlock its full potential. Some activities are geared more toward the individual, some focus on the group as a whole, and others are a perfect marriage between the two. Regardless of the structure, each unit and activity is designed to benefit everyone involved in the process.

Drawing upon thirty years of experience in the classroom and as a leadership facilitator, I believe that all great leadership-training experiences have a few things in common:

- They allow you to be **creative**.
- They are **adaptable** and fit your unique situation.
- They are **engaging** and **interactive**.
- And most importantly, they **focus on you**.

Thoughts to keep in mind as you progress

THE HEART OF LEADERSHIP IS NOT IN WHAT WE KNOW, BUT THE CHOICES WE MAKE

Because of this, you will find far more questions in this book than you will answers. My goal for this workbook is based less in teaching concepts than it is asking you the right questions—so you can have your own “Aha!” moments throughout.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING IS A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION

That's why this workbook was designed to be highly interactive. As with anything else in life, the more you are willing to put into the experience, the more you will get out of it. Knowing this, I hope that you will take time to process and reflect, and use this as a vehicle for self-discovery and personal growth.

THIS BOOK IS NOT MEANT TO BE HOMEWORK!

Take your time. Invest in the experience. After all, it means you're investing in yourself! In answering the questions, remember that your thoughts have intrinsic value just as they are. Don't try to impress anyone with “the right answer.” You are a unique person with unique perspectives, and your thoughts and beliefs as a leader should be reflected in these activities.

As a part of this book, you will also find tools to aid in the leadership selection process. Your director may use these tools as is or alter them for your group. Either way, the bottom line is the same: to build a leadership team that reflects the needs of your music ensemble.

Enjoy the workbook, and good luck on your leadership journey!

Good luck

5 LEADERSHIP TEAM ASSESSMENT

Prior to preparing any future plan, it is important to know your starting point so you can measure your growth. As a part of this process, it's also important to note what is working really well and needs to be left alone.

Take some time to consider the questions and answer them thoroughly and honestly. This is not a gripe session, just a chance to know your group's strengths and weaknesses. Try to set aside situations involving individuals and focus on the group as a whole.

To read and complete this section of the course will take some time (approximately 30–45 minutes) so be sure you have the time to complete it before starting.

Key Takeaway

These assessments and the subsequent discussion of them should give you a good idea about your starting point, both as a program and as its leadership team. As you process all of the answers, focus on coming to a consensus on where you are currently and where you would like to be when the process is done. In other words, you are striving for a common point of origination and a destination. When these two things have been discussed fully, you will be well on your way toward being a more effective leadership team.

QUESTIONS

Rate the following statement: Our leadership team is cohesive and active.

1 2 3 4 5
STRONGLY DISAGREE STRONGLY AGREE

Our previous leadership team's strengths were:

Our previous leadership team's weaknesses were:

In the past, the people on the leadership team have been people who displayed the following trait(s) (circle all that apply):

dedication	compassion	care	commitment	initiative
character	vision	risk-taking	ownership	cynicism
sarcasm	anger	patience	laziness	power
hunger/drive	shyness	humor	meanness	honesty
productivity	a strong work ethic			

6 GOAL SETTING

Setting and achieving goals is an important part of any leadership journey. Even in failure, the desire to strive for something difficult to attain is a noble act in and of itself. Setting and attaining goals is where your leadership journey takes on a life of its own. Now is the time when you are no longer training to be a leader but are expected to act like a leader. Everything up to this point will prove to be pointless if you are unable or unwilling to take the next step: TO ACTUALLY LEAD, execute, and help move the group toward its desired goals!

A good, honest place to start is to think about all of the goals you have set in the past that you have failed to achieve, and you'll get a sense for what lies ahead. Remember your last New Year's resolution? Remember the goal you set on the first day of school last year to procrastinate less and work harder? Remember all of the things you said you were going to do during your summer vacation?

I think you get the idea that most people don't even remember, much less achieve, their goals.

Goals without action are called wishes.

There is nothing wrong with wishing for something, hoping that it will magically appear, as long as everyone understands it is a wish. The problem occurs when others are counting on you and your leadership peers to help the group achieve them, only to find that they were more wishes than goals.

THE THREE PITFALLS OF GOAL-SETTING

Believe it or not, most people fail to achieve their goals, not because they are unwilling participants, but because they were doomed to fail from the start. Most goals go unrealized because of three missteps:

1. The leaders were unwilling to do the work required for success.
2. The leaders set faulty, unrealistic goals to begin with.
3. The leaders had no specific plan of action to achieve their goals.

For further clarification and understanding, let's take a quick look at each of the three pitfalls. Review these materials before and after you have set your goals to ensure that you have not set yourself up for failure.

1. *Unwillingness to do the work.* Let's be blunt: There is nothing anyone can do about this but YOU. You and you alone have to commit to doing what is required to get the job done. This is where the vision ends and accountability begins. There will be others who will help and support you, but this does not mean they will do the work for you. At times, it will be important that you don't walk alone as a leader. Your student leader colleagues will walk with you, but don't expect them to carry you.

Key Takeaway

Goals are nothing more than destinations on a map. It's something to point to and dream about how awesome it would be to get there. The key is in the planning of the trip.

7 GETTING ALONG

In this chapter, we will talk about how to deal with the different types of people you might encounter as a part of your leadership role. We can't all be best friends, but we can all get along!

The ability to get along with others on the leadership team is an important prerequisite for leadership and for life. This is not to say that all leaders have to be gregarious and outgoing people who enjoy being in the presence of others—but that they are secure enough in their role and views to be comfortable with different opinions and leadership styles.

Power struggles are not uncommon among leadership teams. Grounded in ego and fear, people seek to place themselves in dominant roles to the benefit of themselves and the detriment of others. This “me” mentality is as destructive of a disease as any that can afflict a group. Your peers are often caught up in the pettiness and choose sides, escalating and widening the conflict. Just remember, **your value comes not from your strength but from your service!**

INTROVERTS AND EXTROVERTS

History is full of many powerful and influential leaders who were introverts, shying away from the attention that came with their positions. They measured their worth by the work they were able to do and the people they were able to help rather than the attention they were able to garner. History looks kindly on those who forsake the spotlight in the name of good deeds.

But some jobs come with the spotlight, which makes them more or less attractive to certain leaders. For some, the spotlight of leadership is easier to deal with. Keep in mind that some jobs require fewer people skills and less interaction than others. That is not to say that you can lead through email or text, but it is important to know if your responsibilities as a leader match your persona.

For example, jobs such as a music librarian or group webmaster require less student interaction than jobs like a drum major or section leader. Concertmaster could very well be an introvert, speaking through their music, while the morale officer is the life of the party. While managing both tasks and relationships is key to being an effective leader, some jobs require less management than others.

There will be disagreements.

The ability to get along is an important part of being an effective leader and leadership team. After all, it is people that you are leading (yes, drummers count as people). This does not mean that each and every member of the leadership team must be your best friend, but that **your relationship does not impede your ability to effectively lead.**

Key Takeaway

Although it is impossible to love every person all of the time, know that the more your peers like and trust you, the more they will want to be led by you. Also, the more your director likes and trusts you, the more they will let you lead. Be likable and trustable in the face of conflict!