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# An ethnographic case study of a multiple award-winning school brass band in Bergen, Norway



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## Abstract

This study investigates the Norwegian school band culture by using the ongoing success of the award-winning school brass band Tertnes Skoles Musikkorps (TSM) as a case. TSM has competed in the highest section<sup>1</sup> for the last nine years, and is currently Norway's reigning national champion school brass band. TSM's achievements offer evidence of an organization that uses effective strategies to create an environment leading to successful performance outcomes, both on and off the stage. The purpose of this study is to draw knowledge from the kinds of leadership, communication and interactions within the band that may be factors in its success. The primary research question is: *What kinds of learning strategies and relationships can be found within an award-winning Norwegian school brass band?*

The fieldwork emphasizes observations of band rehearsals, and this data is substantiated by interviewing the band manager and conductors, as well as an open-ended questionnaire to the musicians about possible factors affecting the band environment. When observing previous research on award-winning Norwegian bands, not one was found to directly investigate the *culture* of such a school band. Focusing on the strong culture of band competition in the county of Hordaland, this thesis aims to clarify some of the strategies used in a highly successful Norwegian school band. For the theoretical approach, Lev Vygotskij's *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD) is, together with Etienne Wenger's theory of *Communities of Practice* (1998), the foundation for interpretation of the fieldwork data. The socio-cultural learning environment of TSM - its interactions, processes and norms of behavior - are examined to shed light on the typical factors of established cultural patterns leading to performance success. Although some of the findings from the fieldwork are foreseeable established "truths" typically found in most any highly achieving organization, others have revealed unexpected processes and phenomena. The leadership role of the band manager and conductor is naturally of vast importance for success. However, other factors which impact the positive learning environment are also considered here; relationships in the band, ensemble leadership and parental

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<sup>1</sup> In competitions, bands are organized into *sections*, much like divisions in a football league. I will therefore use this term throughout.

involvement is presented to give a more comprehensive picture of the environment of an award-winning school brass band.

**Keywords:** school brass band, conductor, environment, learning strategies, award-winning, Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP), interaction, competition.

## Sammendrag

Denne studien undersøker den norske skolekorpskulturen ved å bruke den pågående suksessen til det prisbelønte skolekorps Tertnes Skoles Musikkorps (TSM) som case. TSM har konkurrert i den høyeste divisjonen de ni siste årene, og er nå regjerende norgesmestre. TSMs prestasjoner belyser en organisasjon som bruker effektive strategier for å skape et miljø som fører til vellykkede resultater, både på og av scenen. Formålet med denne studien er å trekke kunnskap fra hva slags ledelse, kommunikasjon og samspill som kan være faktorer for suksess i korpset. Den vektlagte problemstillingen er: *Hvilke typer læringsstrategier og relasjoner kan du finne i et prisbelønt norsk skolekorps?*

Feltarbeidet legger vekt på observasjon av øvingene, og dataene støttes av intervju med korpssleder og dirigenter samt et delvis åpent spørreskjema for musikerne om mulige faktorer som påvirker miljøet i korpset. Ved å lete etter tidligere forskning på prisbelønte norske skolekorps, ble det ikke funnet en direkte undersøkelse av kulturen til et slikt skolekorps. Med fokus på den sterke kulturen for konkurrerende korps i Hordaland, handler denne oppgaven om å belyse noen av strategiene som brukes i et vellykket skolekorps fra Norge. Lev Vygotskij's teori om *den proksimale utviklingssonen* sammen med Etienne Wengers teori om *Community of Practice* (1998) danner grunnlaget for tolkningene av felldata. TSMs sosiokulturelle læringsmiljø - interaksjoner, prosesser og atferdsmønstre - undersøkes for å kaste lys over de typiske faktorene for etablerte mønstre av en kultur som gir resultatutvikling. Selv om noen av funnene fra feltarbeidet er forutsigbare og etablerte "sannheter" som vanligvis er knyttet til forståelsen av en vellykket organisasjon, har andre funn avslørt uventede prosesser og fenomener. Korpslederen og dirigentens rolle er selvsagt av stor betydning for suksessen. Imidlertid vurderes også andre faktorer som påvirker det positive læringsmiljøet her; relasjoner i korpset, ensembleledelse og foreldreengasjement er presentert for å gi et mer omfattende bilde av miljøet til et prisbelønt skolekorps.

**Nøkkelord:** skolekorps, dirigent, miljø, læringsstrategier, prisbelønt, den proksimale utviklingszone, interaksjon, konkurranse.

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## INTRODUCTION

### i. Rationale

When looking at the results from the Norwegian Championship for school brass bands over the past 27 years, there is no place in Norway containing such an abundance of award-winning school brass bands as the Bergen area of Hordaland. Bergen is the only city in Hordaland, with approximately 500 000 citizens.

Hordaland county is located on the west coast of Norway:



Fig. 1: Map of Hordaland within Norway.

The winning bands of the top section in the Norwegian Championship for school bands 2016 are both from Bergen - Tertnes Skoles Musikkorps (TSM) as winners of school brass bands & Midtun Skoles Musikkorps as winners of wind<sup>2</sup> school bands. The Bergen area is therefore a logical place to study the culture of a first-rate school brass band from Norway. TSM have achieved top results from competing over the last 7 years and are the current title-holders of the Norwegian Championship for school bands.

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<sup>2</sup> The competing wind school bands in Norway participating in the highest sections is close to a full concert band in instrumentation and usually performs repertoire for concert bands when competing.

## The Norwegian Championship for school brass bands 1989 - 2016

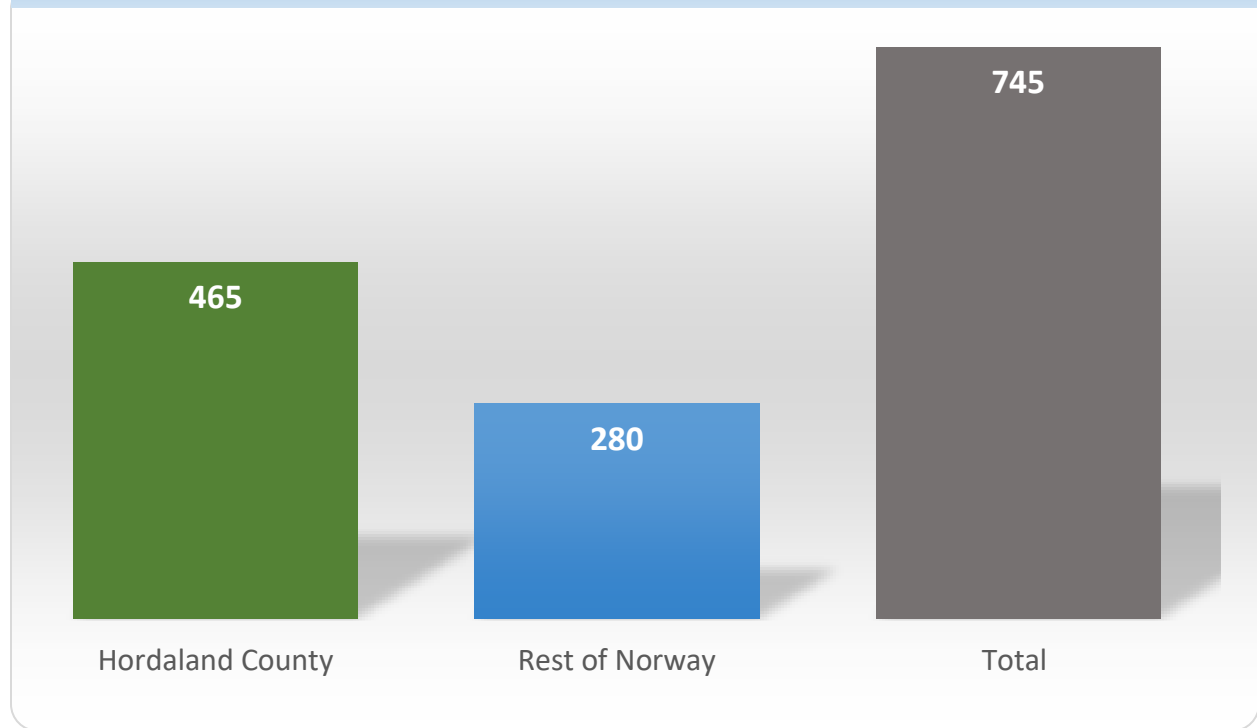


Fig. 2: Statistical chart on the participating bands in the Norwegian Championship for School brass bands.

The chart shows the numbers of participating school brass bands in the Norwegian Championships for school brass bands (NM) during the last 27 years<sup>3</sup>, Numbers include top-(1<sup>st</sup>), 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 3<sup>rd</sup> section and clearly illustrate the position Hordaland has held in NM during this time-period.

Conducting research on the environment of an award-winning school band sheds light on the impacts of the cultural and ethnographic matters in the Norwegian band culture, specifically the Bergen area. Learning to play an instrument and read music together with other children and youngsters involves complex and intricate means of interaction. The interaction holds similarities to any form of group activity requiring co-operation. Choosing TSM as a special case with an ongoing success in performing, this study sets out to provide some answers and reflections on what

<sup>3</sup> information collected from the Norwegian Band Associations archive (NMF).

kind of factors and qualities TSM possesses and what that can teach us about the learning environment and culture in this award-winning school band. The intention is to reveal some of the factors integral to the achievement of the band's high performance results and how the environment in this specific case facilitate and stimulate musical development.

## ii. Research Questions

Looking at the structure of the band there are many different components functioning together: the band manager dealing with the practicalities, being an interpreter for all the different practical needs; communicating with the school where the rehearsals take place, parental involvement, the musicians' self-regulated practice at home, established traditions and culture of the band and the conductor's communication with the musicians on multiple levels. In order to attain a manageable focus, this study is designed around two guiding research questions:

- (1) What kinds of learning strategies and relationships can be found within an award-winning Norwegian school brass band?
- (2) How does the conductor in a successful school brass band lead and instill motivation to achieve a high level of performance?

Examining the high level of performance in TSM raises questions about how these children learn to interact in the band and what enables them to perform at a high level at a young age. Surely we do not need scientific evidence to claim that the children in TSM are seemingly typical school children, like any child from any public school or school band in Norway. Outside the band context they behave like typical children in other schools, yet their musical achievement is remarkable as a group. So, what is the framework this band works within that makes them perennial Norwegian champions?

### iii. Summary of TSM's history and achievements

TSM was founded on the 19th of April 1956 in Tertnes, a small village with about 3400 inhabitants approximately 10 km from Bergen. In the 1960's and 1970's, TSM was described as one of the biggest and most successful school bands in Hordaland but by the end of the 1980's interest waned, as the expense of activities such as football and handball increased, and TSM was temporarily disbanded for over a decade. However, a new generation emerged from eager parents who had previously played in the band. These were still living in the area and continued honing their skills in their own band, Tertnes Brass, founded in 1964 as well as Tertnes Amatørkorps, founded in 1984. When it was suggested at the annual meeting in 1999 that the school band should be shut down as there were only eight members left, two of the more vociferous former musicians refused to allow this to happen. This resulted in 25 Beginners in 2001 and the current conductor of the main band was employed in year 2003. At the beginning of this century the school band started their journey, working their way up to being an elite band in 2008 and becoming the Norwegian Champions for School brass bands in 2009, 2011, 2015 and 2016. In 2016, TSM also won the Development Section in the European Youth Brass Band Championships and in 2017 they came 2<sup>nd</sup> place.

### iv. Participants and research setting

Tertnes Skoles Musikkorps (TSM) is connected to a public elementary school, Tertnes Skole, by name and rehearsal venue. TSM consists of 3 bands, two training bands: A Beginners band<sup>4</sup>, a Junior band and the Main<sup>5</sup> band, which is the focus for this study. In addition, a seasonally-based band consisting of musicians currently attending Tertnes school is also a part of the organization. The main band and their conductor are hereafter called *band* and *conductor* in this study as references are to them, unless otherwise specified (e.g.: training bands).

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<sup>4</sup> 'Beginners' (*Aspirant*) is common terminology in Norway to describe an absolute beginner stage.

<sup>5</sup> The terminology *Main (hoved)* band is used when needing clarification described in contexts with the training bands.

Access to the band was approved by the band manager on behalf of all the musicians, with an agreement of anonymity for the musicians (see attachment for contract).

The structure and purpose of each level of music ensemble within TSM is described below:

**Beginners band** (11 members; year 2016/2017).

The children are accepted into this band from 3rd grade (8/9 years old), with room for some exceptions. The main purpose of the Beginners band is to prepare children for the next levels, first Junior band and then the Main band. Band rehearsals start in early October, on Thursdays, 5pm - 5:50pm, in addition to group tuition which commences at the start of the school year (August). This enables the young musicians to have a small range of tones on their instrument prior to starting in the band.

During their first weekend seminar of the season, the young musicians are invited to participate in their first social interaction with the older members of TSM, which culminates in a sleepover from Saturday to Sunday. This social event is mainly planned by the older musicians, usually occurring on Saturday afternoon, as an extension of a weekend seminar away.

The Beginners band repertoire has a limited tonal range and focuses mainly on basics such as learning to count bar rests, using the tongue to start a note (in the case of brass instruments, not percussion) and getting accustomed to playing polyphonic music. The selected songs have a simple structure with an easily understandable beat (e.g. repeated 8 bar forms). In some cases, the young musicians have privately owned instruments but this however is not a criterion for joining the band. In fact, most of the instruments belong to the band.

**Junior Band** (14 members; year 2016/17)

The young musicians advance to the Junior band after one year in the Beginners band. Exceptions are made when the musicians are considered mature enough to join the Main band and their time as junior is then shortened. This depends on various factors, like the age of the musicians, playing experience prior to joining TSM, and in some cases, the needs to fill certain gaps in the Main band. The main purpose of the Junior band is preparation for the Main band.

Like the Beginners, the Junior band has weekly band practice as well as group tuition. The Junior band rehearsal is Thursdays, 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., with a short break in the middle. Tuesdays, they do group lessons, usually 30 minutes if two musicians and 40 minutes for three musicians together. The Junior band participates in seminars parallel to the main band.

Main events consist of two contests a year: an entertainment contest in the autumn and the county contest, also emphasizing light music, in the spring.

The repertoire of the Junior band varies based on the conductor's assessment of what is deemed suitable for the available instrumentation. Like the Beginners band, music with an easy beat is mainly used. Instruments are borrowed from the school band if not privately owned.

**Main band** (33 active members; year 2016/17).

The most advanced band has two rehearsals per week in addition to weekend seminars. Band practice is on Tuesdays from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. and Thursdays from 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

The Main band participates in approximately 3 contests per year, an entertainment contest in the autumn, the county contest in early spring, and the Norwegian Championship in early summer. In recent years the band has also been invited to participate in the Development Section in the European Youth Brass Band Championships.

When participating in the Norwegian Championship, TSM's repertoire consists for the most part of contemporary brass band music (mainly from the 1980's and up), typical to that of a high leveled 2<sup>nd</sup> section, or sometimes even 1st section adult band. For concerts and entertainment contests, arrangements of well-known/popular songs are used.

As for TSM's younger bands, most instruments are owned by the school band but some musicians choose to buy their own when becoming more certain about continuing to play in the band. It is common to buy a private instrument after receiving money from confirmation.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Confirmation is a Christian ritual used for confirming baptism as an adult, personally responsible to God and society for their own behavior. It occurs the year of turning 15 years old. Today the religious connotations are not central like they used to be in Norway and it is possible to have a non-religious confirmation. It is a big event in the youngster's life, receiving gifts (usually money) and having a party (almost like a wedding) with family.

Members of the main band are tasked with planning social events for all the bands, usually occurring on a Saturday afternoon, as an extension of a weekend seminar.

**Elementary school band** (seasonal based band).

This band plays during school hours for Christmas caroling,<sup>7</sup> training for the parade at constitution day with the elementary school students and for recruitment concerts in June.

The repertoire consists of two easy marches for constitution day, carols for the Christmas parties and easy entertainment music for the recruitment concert in June.

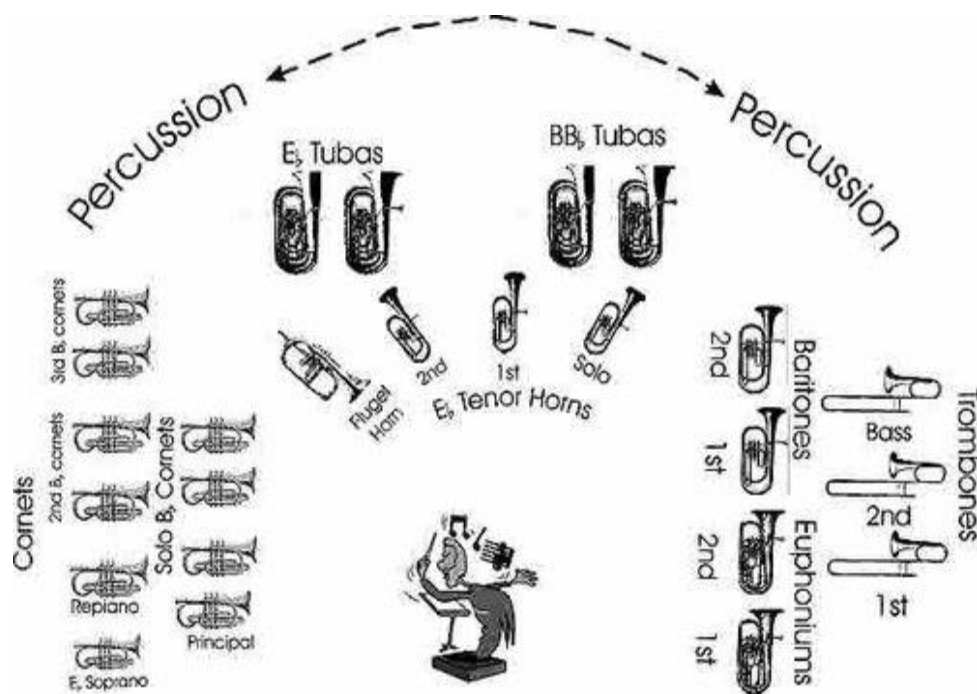


Fig. 3 ("[chart of standard brass band setup]," 2016)

<sup>7</sup> Caroling (*Juletrengang*) is the closest word for describing walking around the Christmas Tree holding hands and singing.



The above model of instrumentation comes from the British brass band culture. “The instrumentation of British brass bands has remained remarkably consistent since it crystallized in the late nineteenth century” (Myers, 2000, p. 182). There have been discussions about the instrumentation of the brass bands incorporating other instruments such as saxophones but today’s instrumentation has developed over years and is now a standard for brass bands. “A change of instrumentation today would involve rearrangement (or abandonment) of the very substantial repertoire on which bands draw” (Myers, 2000, p. 183). The standard repertoire used is written for the established instrumentation of a brass band and upholds a strong tradition. The school bands competing in the highest sections mainly play music written or arranged for this specific instrumentation. The training bands in TSM does not have a full instrumentation but aims for recruiting at a wide range not risking the main band lacking any musicians on specific instruments in the future.

#### v. Training Model

TSM uses a well-established training model for the top school bands in Norway. The training model in Norwegian school bands varies depending on the level of the band and also the specific band traditions. The young musicians in TSM are usually accepted into the Beginners Band from the age of 8 years, parallel with either individual lessons or tuition in small groups with an instrumental teacher. In the case of TSM, the parents’ involvement is central to the training of the musicians, as many of the parents actively play instruments themselves and do a lot of voluntary work for the band, such as teaching at group rehearsals when necessary or helping in the training bands. In addition to the rehearsals in the Beginners band, the young musicians play in small groups of two or three. The percussionists play together as do the Eb or Bb instruments, usually the same instruments but with some variety depending on various factors such as availability of the actual instruments (cornets, baritones etc.), age, level of the musicians and other practical issues.

## vi. My background and agenda

“Listen! Always keep an open mind to music, no matter what kind. What is good about this music? Is it the energy in death metal or the nerve in the sopranos voice? You do not have to like it, but what does like mean? Listen to it and keep an open mind!”

Stendahl, my own school band conductor, 1991.

Growing up as a participant in the strong school brass band culture on the west coast of Norway, I have always cherished a conducive learning environment and wondered about the reasons behind a successful wind or brass band’s culture. The different aspects of learning go a long way beyond the actual performance situation and have taught me much more than just the actual playing. It is also about interaction with the rest of the band, on so many levels, made feasible not only by a competent and dedicated conductor but also by eager parents and volunteers working hard to make the practical as well as the social aspects as fulfilling as possible. Today I have almost 20 years of experience, both as a trombonist and jazz vocalist with a rich variety of genres and settings and as a freelance brass teacher, in addition to a small position at Bergen Culture School. I also have experience as an adjudicator in music contests, at both regional and national level. Teaching both single students and small groups and as a conductor with a strong interest in the Beginners and Junior bands, I aim to clarify some of the reasons behind a well-functioning school band organization to hopefully get some reflections or considerations useful for understanding the musical achievements in a specific school band environment. With my experience of both playing in an award-winning school band and later observing the same band struggling to even exist, I find great interest in trying to uncover some of the reasons behind a successful school band and its success as a community of practice. The way the participants in a school band with a high performing level interact, is of great interest to me and I aim to build on my existing knowledge about the school band culture and at the same time be open for new perspectives and possible biases in my existing perception.

## vii. Concerns

An important concern approaching this research is based on the impression that across time a distinctive brass band subculture has developed in western Norway, and TSM is an example of a successful *school* brass band, receiving multiple awards times over the last 9 years. It is necessary to link some of the existing culture in TSM to an established culture but at the same time, it is important not to mix the present and the past. To do this would be anachronistic and undermine the credibility of the findings. The research is on the current situation in TSM and looking especially at the impacts on the learning environment.

For the last 12 years, I have been an active contributor to Midtun Skoles Musikkorps, the current Norwegian Champions of school *wind* bands, working as a brass teacher (particularly low brass instruments) with trombone being my main instrument. I also work as a conductor for the training bands (taking a sabbatical whilst working on this thesis) and earlier as a substitute conductor of the main band. My starting point for researching the school band tradition in Norway is advantageous considering my own experience in the field, working for over a decade inside an organization which has similarities to the case used in this thesis. At the same time, it is of great importance to be aware of my position of experience in the field I am researching, as I can be in danger of making assumptions, ignoring important factors or taking for granted matters of importance for the complete outcome of the research. [...] “how we think about research is always shaped by our assumptions about: the nature of social phenomena (and) the proper ways to investigate such phenomena” (Silverman, 2013, p. 103).

My relationship with the conductor of the main band in TSM goes back over 20 years but during the last decade we have had little contact other than occasionally meeting in sporadic work situations. We come from the same region and met in one of the local brass bands and later at the music program in high school. We both attended the performing program at the Grieg Academy in Bergen for a couple of years. Due to our prior contact, I have done my best to be as professional as possible in relation to the conductor of the main band. I have not given him detailed information about my work on this thesis and we have not met outside the setting of TSM during the period of fieldwork.

The coding of the data gathered from the fieldwork was influenced by my own experience as a conductor and brass teacher. “We only come to look at things in certain ways because we have adopted, either tacitly or explicitly, certain ways of seeing” (Silverman, 2013, p. 247). There were certain situations and methods taking place that were so familiar to me that I was in danger of taking them for granted and I had to be cautious not to miss out on points of interest and findings by establishing my own “truth” and thus ignoring possible factors affecting the school band’s success.

#### viii. Scope and delimitation

The research of TSM delimits examining factors that impact the motivation to perform at a high level. The scope is to try to find accentuated factors in the learning environment on the interaction in a successful school band. When it comes to the conductor’s competence, it is implied that knowledge about the music, the technicalities of conducting well, how to tune a brass instrument etc. are basic skills needed to lead an award-winning band. This research looks beyond the conductor’s basic skills and investigates the issues of communication and the basic skills considered necessary for leading a school band to perform at a high level.

Calling an award-winning school band *successful* is in this context limited to explaining a performing success shown by results from contesting. Acquiring performing success relates to productive performing strategies. To be a successful organization, the issues surrounding the leader’s role are central, and how the strategies for facilitating success are chosen. Aiming to reveal these successful strategies, we must look at both the conscious and subconscious choices made by the leaders and how they are related to matters such as personality, culture and musical background of the conductor.

The band being chosen as the case for this work was not randomly picked. TSM is a special case used to elucidate environmental frames and attempt to draw some knowledge from this award-winning school band. However, TSM might have some resemblances with other school bands in Hordaland, as the school band culture has similarities in structure, training models and to an extent what kind of repertoire and conductor-skills are considered valuable. The purpose of this

thesis is not to make any comparisons with other school bands but to use TSM as a case, describing an environment that generates a school band performing at a perpetually high level.

Another award-winning school brass band worth mentioning is Manger Skulemusikklag. Historically, Manger Skulemusikklag are the most successful school brass band in Norway, having achieved 14 first places during the last 27 years in the top section of the National Championship for school bands and was twice the winner of the Development Section in the European Youth Brass Band Championships. It is only in recent years that TSM have been able to compete with them. Manger Skulemusikklag would have been equally as interesting a case for studying the environment in an award-winning school band. The band is connected to Manger Musikklag, one of the best brass bands in Scandinavia, capable of competing with the finest brass bands in the world. TSM is today the best school brass band in Norway and for that reason alone chosen over Manger Skulemusikklag as a case for investigating a successful school brass band.

It would have been of great interest to interview parents, former board members and former band members to map the process of the established culture for promoting a high performing result and how this came about. But to achieve optimal credibility, it would have been necessary to spend a great deal of time trying to find the most dependable sources, as the findings could easily be influenced by eager enthusiasts trying to paint a picture about the success of TSM, blurring the findings in the process, and compromising the credibility of the thesis.

Nor did the fieldwork show any confrontations or conflicts directly. I was only informed about them by the band manager and conductor. It would take a lot more observation to be able to take direct part in difficult situations, even if it were possible to get to the stage where this could be observable for an 'outsider'.

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter starts with a description of both former publications on bands from Norway, and further, different publications of relevance for examining a school band with a high performing result. Publications related to leadership behavior, motivation, competitiveness and the successful wind bands in Japan, will give a basis for understanding some of the perspectives used in former publications and of relevance to this study.

### 1.1 Former research on bands from Norwegian institutions

During an online search of former publications using the words *band*, *school band* and *brass band/wind band*, no former PhD publications from Norwegian institutions with these search words was found. Little has been done from Hordaland, which is quite surprising as this county stands out as a distinctive area when it comes to generating band musicians playing in some of the finest bands in Norway, both brass bands and concert/wind bands. There are some interesting master theses written about bands in Norway, essentially in the last 10 years. Previous master theses on Norwegian bands, particularly school bands, are published from a variety of courses from Norwegian institutions. The following is a chronological summary of former publications:

Berit Handegard (2007) wrote a master thesis at the University of Bergen institute for cultural studies and history of arts. Handegard compares young and older musicians' motivation for playing in a band. The keywords are community and ritual. She interviews active young and older musicians to look at what she describes as an esthetic community being constructed. The findings show differing motivations between the young and older musicians, with the young ones seeming to appreciate contests more while the older ones seem to value the importance of the rituals involving the band on Constitution day. She aims to clarify why some musicians do not leave the band when reaching adulthood and in her summaries, she points out the importance of belonging in a community. Handegard states fellowship and belonging to a community to be the key concept of banding.

From Høgskolen i Volda, Sissel Gylderud (2011) examines the school band as an arena for social learning and uses Vygotsky's theory about the proximal zone of development to look at how new musicians learn from older and more experienced musicians. Her conclusion is that the members develop from being "peripheral legitimate participants" (Lave, J. & Wenger E., 1991) to more knowledgeable practitioners. The concluding remarks claim that the feeling of community within the band members is shown in many ways and is of importance for the social integration of the beginners. She calls the musicians with longer experience in the band *the knowledgeable* and points out their role as role models for the beginners. She stresses being a legitimate peripheral participant as a beginner and how it changes into more knowledgeable in the practice.

Nina Grønli Turtum (2012) interviews 4 musicians who have 'dropped out' of the school band, connecting motivation to the dropout problems. She looks at how the school band is perceived in a postmodern society, what kind of ownership is connected to the activity, how one perceives the community in the band, as well as individual identity and youth culture. She claims that there is a big black hole when it comes to public knowledge about the voluntary culture sector in Norway and requests more communication about banding in general.

Kari Aasmoe's (2013) thesis is about the ability of bands to provide an arena be an arena for promoting health and quality of life from a music therapeutic perspective. Aasmoe considers band participation as a phenomenon and uses theory from the phenomenological field. Motivation, health and quality of life are keywords in this thesis and her research question is to look at the motivation behind playing in a band and how this can be connected to health and quality of life. The sense of community and playing are described as part of using music as therapy. She analyses the findings into individual factors: social factors, systemized factors and cultural factors. The findings conclude with the sense of affiliation and playing an instrument being helpful in many ways for the individual's health and quality of life. She also highlights the informant's use of concepts coinciding with theoretical concepts about health promoting factors.

Silje Margrethe Jørgensen (2013) employs a qualitative analysis on the band movement's reputation and debates the kind of status the band movement has amongst youngsters, both active players and non-players. She points out that the idea differs from the active participants to the outsider's association with bands. The non-playing youngsters seem to look at participating in a band as something nerdy or weird and Jørgensen points out that the vulnerable identity

development in the teenage years makes some youngsters leave the school band due to this unfavorable reputation. Jørgensens' keywords are reputation, youngsters, media and identity and she elucidates different ways of looking at the band as a cultural phenomenon and/or an activity depending on the youngster's own experience with a school band.

Cedomir Popadic (2014) looks at the factors that influence the satisfaction of playing in a school band and he connects satisfaction to quality when describing this. Like the thesis mentioned above, this work uses motivational factors as a central part of approaching the research. He accentuates the importance of the conductor's response, the musicians' trust in the conductor and the band's musical repertoire having the most influence on the musicians' satisfaction playing in a band.

Edward Aleksander Snyder (2014) studies the position of the parents in the band as well as the band director's [conductor's] perception of parental involvement in school bands. Part of his conclusion is that band parents' relationship to the conductor is of importance when communicating about the necessity of home-practice for the musicians. Snyder concludes with parents' and band directors' perceptions of parental involvement coinciding on the parents' understanding of home-practice routines, but band directors perceive that parents do not influence their children's musical education.

Elisabeth Steen Fors (2014) investigates a former national project between NMF (The Norwegian Band Association) and Norsk Kulturskoleråd (The Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts). The project's purpose is to reveal how youths' codetermination, sense of achievement and motivation, can be important in keeping youngsters from leaving the band. Fors interviews chairmen, conductors, mentors and culture school teachers and submits a questionnaire based on findings from the former project about Youth Assistants called *Youths and codetermination, achieving and motivation*. The project is about increased codetermination for the Youth Assistants between 14 and 19 years old and the conclusion is that increased codetermination has a positive effect for both the Youth Assistants and the younger band members looking forward to their turn. Fors claims that it turned out to that the youngest band members' experiences indicating how successful the project had become. Fors highlights the younger musicians' experience with the Youth Assistants as a subsidiary for the researches findings.



Juberg (2015) interviews two band conductors, attempting to reveal the aspects characterizing their approach to being the leader of an interaction. He highlights the aspects of leadership, music and relations in his findings and underlines the conductor's view on interaction as an important characteristic of the different aspects. Juberg uses documents from the Norwegian Band Association (NMF) to look at the compliance between the conductors' practice and the existing documents and curriculum promoted by NMF. He claims the conductors' perception of musical interaction is multifarious and that there is a gap between the documents from NMF and the actual practice of the conductor.

Ellen Marie Sundby Bredesen's (2016) thesis on school bands investigates the various participants' understanding of what she calls the good band. The analysis is based on activity theory, categorizing conceptual framework by Engestrom and Young (2001) on activity theory principles. Bredesen's research on the motivational factors in 4 different school bands seeks to reveal some of the activities that make a school band successful. The selection of the bands taking part in the study was randomly chosen by Bredesen after fulfilling the criteria of regular rehearsals, what she calls an 'engaged' conductor and the main band consisting of a minimum 5 members. She investigates one band from each part of Norway, and calls them *band South*, *band West*, *band North* and *band East*. She defines *participating in contests* as a tool, based on activity theory. Participating in contests is, together with *the instruments*, *recruiting*, *musical collaboration*, *band trips* and *specific local tools for the band*, defined as tools used by the bands. Her findings suggest that participating in contests should not be focused solely on winning but on participating, aiming to grow as a band and working towards a common goal to improve. Bredesen concludes by clarifying of the understanding of different perspectives and roles being of importance to make the band motivated to work for the common goal. Bredesen does not emphasize the meaning of being a contest winning band as a direct connection to being successful. Her approach to success has more to do with motivation and satisfaction or wellbeing. An interesting point made is what she calls the parents' underestimated role in the school band. She writes about the parents needing to understand their roles as voluntary workers, determined authorities for uninspired musicians wanting to leave, motivators for making the musicians practice at home and generally being a part of the environment of the school band. In her reflections, she claims to have found some perspectives that stand out and can be used as tools to promote success in the band. She stresses several things to be important for success in a school band; active parents, well-functioning co-

operation and clarified roles between board and conductor, motivation, wellbeing of the musicians, and a good balance between social and musical activity with focus on the musical work

### 1.1.2 Comments and reflection on former theses' purpose and agenda:

Together with perspectives on interaction, factors for being successful, co-determination, parental involvement, identity, role modelling and health promotion, motivational factors stand out as being the highest focus in the former thesis published on bands in Norway.

The former theses are useful for establishing a base for understanding the different aspects of the Norwegian school bands' culture and social structural position in the community. They have in common researching environmental factors that makes banding either meaningful, or conversely, lacking in meaning. or the opposite, lacking in meaning. When it comes to grasping some of the general principles of the ongoing challenges that school bands are facing in Norway, it narrows down to how to motivate children to start playing, and potentially of greater importance, how to keep them in the band when they become youngsters seeking for identity and sense of belonging. Former theses show different perspectives on the community the school band creates, and how the musicians operate within it. Most of them have in common an underlying agenda of concern, due to the Norwegian Band Association's (NMF) considerable drop in membership numbers. Since the 1990's the membership of NMF has been halved on a national basis. Several school bands in Norway have been struggling during the last few decades and there has been a dramatic decrease in membership, with bands being shut down or merging with other school bands in the area. Programs on how to recruit members, how to run a band (for board-members) and how to keep the youngsters from leaving the band have been used by the Norwegian Band Association and offer preventive help for bands struggling with these issues. These programs vary in the different regions or in support from the councils in the different areas of the country. Hordaland county is not affected by this drop like other parts of Norway, and still has a strong band movement in both school bands, brass/wind and concert bands. However, it must be pointed out that Hordaland is not untouched by this destructive trend. The recruitment of new members to play in the school bands is a constant concern and is a point of focus in the Norwegian Band

Associations work. The council of Kristiansand<sup>8</sup> decided (2016) to initiate actions to turn the negative trend and to make necessary actions to increase recruitment, improve quality and status. The assumption is that banding has become “out of fashion” and that the choices children have for leisure activities holds a broader selection than previously.

By looking at TSM, we might find answers that define a school band as *successful* and/or *good* that provide information about why this particular band is strong despite facing the same challenges as the rest of Norway. In addition to this, there is the ever-increasing range of leisure activity choices which make it more challenging to keep the musicians in the band. It would be historically negligent to fail to mention the challenges TSM experienced back in the 1990s, when the band was almost closed down due to the handball and football (soccer) activity becoming very popular in Tertnes<sup>9</sup>. The fact that the band almost ceased existing 18 years ago shows us that TSM is a current case of success, without having a long history as reigning school brass band champions in contests.

TSM being defined as the current best Norwegian school brass band gives a slightly alternative approach to defining *good* or/and *successful* than the former theses written about environmental factors in Norwegian school bands. In common with Bredesen’s thesis, motivational factors are important when approaching the social and learning environment of TSM, but the definition of success differs. Success is elucidated through TSM’s performing and the factors impacting the high performing success is related to all the themes in former theses. Much like Bredesen (2016), the environment of TSM is researched from a broad angle instead of separating the meanings of interaction, codetermination, parental involvement, identity etc.. These perspectives are all a part of the success in TSM and the former theses help to clarify the different points of interest from equivalent sources.

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<sup>8</sup> Kristiansand is a city on the south coast of Norway.

<sup>9</sup> Band Managers remark.

## 1.2 Relevant former research

The topics of this section contain former publications connected to different aspects of the environment in a successful school band: how the conductor behaves, the framework the musicians interact within, what instills motivation and how competitiveness is a disputed topic, but is nevertheless of significance for the high results in an award-winning school band. The publications described below are connected to music education and banding.

### 1.2.1 Leadership behavior

Based on his paper, Richard E. Goodstein (1987) published an article about band leadership behavior and the characteristics of high school band directors in the U.S. The purpose of the study was to determine whether there were any differences between a successful group and a randomly selected group of band directors in their leadership behaviors and/or descriptive/environmental characteristics. Goodstein claims that “the literature indicated that non-musical factors were of possibly greater importance than musical factors in the identification of successful band directors”. He places much importance on the conductor’s personality having an impact on the success of a band and claims that the most successful conductors teach, or belong in, more urbanized areas (of the U.S). These findings can be compared to the band milieu in Bergen, the “capital” of brass bands in Norway, when it comes to successful conductors belonging to an urbanized area. The Bergen area currently has 5 brass bands and 3 wind bands in the top section, and these bands, together with the culture school (Bergen Kulturskole), generate most of the teachers and conductors for the school bands in the area.

As a part of his method, Goodstein adopts an approach called LEAD-self, developed by Hersey and Blanchard from 1976. “Leadership behavior is measured by having subjects respond to a series of 12 hypothetical group situations” (Goodstein, 1987, p. 14) and covers 4 leadership styles. “The result indicated that the investigated band director had strikingly similar leadership behaviors. Their primary leadership behavior was defined as being high in human relationships and high in the need to accomplish tasks” (Goodstein, 1987, p. 13).

Davison (2007) examines the effect of a band director's leadership style and the strength of student leadership abilities within the band. Davison claims that; "The manner by which decisions are made and changes are implanted within a musical organization may reflect leadership style" (Davison, 2007, p. 1). He calls for research on the relationship between students' leadership within the band in context with the director's leadership in relation to performance outcome. Studying the students' participation in decision making is of interest when trying to discover if there are any connections between the director's leadership style and the students' leadership abilities. Furthermore, Davison points out the importance of the director's leadership skills being a model for the students' own development. The festival ratings (performance result in concert band festivals) was significantly higher in the bands with a director with facilitating skills. Davison does not explain in depth what he means by the word facilitating, other than the student's participation, both social and musical. "Students' leaders may have the ability to influence peer attitudes, model musical concepts, and affect the social climate of an organization" (Davison, 2007, p. 6).

Royston (2013) investigates the relationship between collegiate band members' preferences of teacher interpersonal behavior, and perceived self-efficacy. She [...] "measure the relationship between preferences of interpersonal teacher behavior and self-efficacy scores" (Royston, 2013, p. 1). Royston maps teacher interpersonal behavior using a system developed in 1985 called Model for Interpersonal Teacher Behavior (MITB) and the purpose of this model is to measure the teacher's and student's interaction. The teacher's interpersonal behavior is described as important to create and maintain a positive and warm classroom atmosphere.

"Teacher personality traits have shown to positively influence student motivation as well as achievement and musicianship" (Royston, 2013, p. 3). She accentuates the importance of cooperative traits as being the most desirable. The conductor's ability to also see the differences between the members is a part of the beneficial personal traits held by the conductor/teacher.

What the research described above has in common is human skills as a highly influencing factor on leadership behavior. The approach to the research varies but the outcome of the research is the leader's capability of building human relations which are beneficial for motivating the musicians. Aiming to define human skills is of a philosophical character and too abstract to

measure or theorize. We can only aim to find links in observable actions with questions being asked.

### 1.2.2 Motivation and Competitiveness:

**Motivation** can be related all the way back to basic instincts like finding food or shelter as being fundamental for motivation in human beings. These early theories are considered inadequate when explaining modern societies` complexity of motivation amongst the human beings from first world countries. “All modern theories of motivation take account of cognition, an acceptance that much of our behavior is mediated by our thoughts about and perceptions of event” (Hallam, 2002, p. 226).

Hallam argues in her article from Music Education Research that more recent theories about motivation “[...] have stressed the tendency of the individual towards growth and self-development” (Hallam, 2002, p. 226). The complexity of defining motivation in a developed and modern society is carefully and thoroughly described by Hallam in her article about Musical Motivation. Hallam claims there are many ways to explain the reasons behind musicians` motivation to play an instrument: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and sometimes a mix of both. There is no clear answer to this and it is important not to exclude any reasons being of importance for the child to keep playing in the band, or even leaving the band. Hallam substantiates commitment as an important part of motivation and it is sensible to consider commitment as a central factor for building a successful organization.

**Competitiveness** is a highly disputed topic. Promoting competitiveness amongst young people can sometimes be ill advised, but can also be very beneficial. The responsibility of being the grown-up leader in a competitive environment, making healthy and inclusive decisions involves a very delicately balanced liability. Some would claim that being part of a competitive environment is mainly negative and creates stress, pressure and can sometimes lead to low self-esteem. In a team activity, such as participating in a school band, the structure of the band has similarities to team sports, with the results depending on how the team works together and it is important to know when to promote single accomplishments for the greater good. There are

many advantages in taking part in a competitive environment but it does not automatically follow that competition in general is positive. Individuals have different personalities, experiences and principles, so making statements about the value of competitiveness depends a great deal on the writer's own experiences of competing. As humans, we find competitive situations everywhere and it is a part of our lives from a very early age. Competitive instincts can be linked to motivation and how human beings experience or relate to different situations where competitiveness can be validated, depending on the individual's experience. Reflections are of greater importance than trying to make statements and are necessary for understanding the concept of promoting competitiveness, and why it can be valuable for the musicians to experience a competition based environment.

“Festivals are exceptionally motivating to students, as they appreciate the competitive aspects of music festivals in terms of competition as being a motivational factor when practicing and performing” (Gouzouasis & Henderson, 2012, p. 479).

The above quotation is from an article in *Music Education Research* and describes secondary student perspectives on musical and educational outcomes from participation in band festivals. In the research by Gouzouasis & Hendersons, several of the replies from the students' open-ended questionnaire used the word motivation when being asked about the value of taking part in a band festival (contest) and the researchers claim a connection between motivation and competing. It is important to consider the outcome of this research as being affected by the opinion of students who excel when competing. “It could be that student opinions may vary depending on their success at the festival” (Gouzouasis & Henderson, 2012, p. 488). The researchers chose to interview the students in bands participating at the Band Revue, an annual district concert festival for bands holding students in grade 9-12. “It would be interesting to know the opinions, regarding competition, of those students who are in bands who received lower ratings than those students of the present sample” (Gouzouasis & Henderson, 2012, p. 488). The research concludes with band festivals being exceptionally motivating to students and claims that “[...]students value band for more than festival participation and recognize the rich, diverse learning experiences that festivals offer once they are involved in festival performances” (Gouzouasis & Henderson, 2012, p. 493).

The act of competing follows a hierarchy of different relations, such as the musicians holding the position as solo players or group leaders in relation to each other or with the rest of the instrumental group, or the responsibilities given them by the conductor. The hierarchy is about finding your place in the band and being encouraged to constantly aim for a higher individual or/and united result. The leadership skills learned in a successful school band can be of importance for a future work situation, both by watching a skillful conductor but also by the interaction with peers.

### 1.2.3 Wind Bands in Japan

*Wind Band and Cultural Identity in Japanese Schools* (2012) is the only book published so far by a Western scholar, detailing and systematically describing the culture in a successful school band. David Hebert's research on what he rightfully calls the "The World's Finest School Bands and Largest Music Competition" provides thorough information about a focused and determined culture. The book provides insight into the Japanese band culture describing the community of an award-winning wind band from Tokyo.

It is not a straightforward task to compare Japanese culture to Norwegian, but the shared basis is an investigation into an environment that requires young musicians to perform at a high level in a band. There is a massive cultural difference between Norway and Japan. One of the differences is the population of Japan being approximately 126 million in 2017, as opposed to Norway who in 2012 passed the 5 million mark. This alone has an influence on the structure of society and how the community acts together. Furthermore, it impacts a great deal on the criteria around a school band, the number of people to recruit from and what kind of system is used; the school band being a part of an education program like in Japan or based on mostly on voluntary work, as in TSM and the Norwegian school bands in general. The Japanese bands share a high performing result with TSM but the culture differs in ways such as practicalities around the band, the affiliation, recruiting methods, the number of musicians, the training model, the community and prospects for the individuals. When considering the cultural differences, the main point of interest lies in investigating components that create a successful school band.



Developing a school band in Japan differs from developing one in Norway. The students in the most successful school bands in Japan “spend over 20 h/week...in school band rehearsals (Hebert, 2012, p. v). The Norwegian bands do not practice for long periods every day as in the top school bands of Japan. TSM rehearses twice a week, for 2 hours (including a break) on Tuesdays and 1,5 hours (including a break) on Thursdays, giving a total of 3,5 hours per week. TSM also performs in front of an audience approximately once a month and has weekend seminars 4 times a year. The musicians in TSM also learn routines of practicing on their own at home. In Japan, the children mainly practice at school with peer musicians, in group rehearsals or together with the band, whereas in Norway the young musicians are expected to practice alone at home and to find effective routines in doing so. The differences in practice culture leads to the question of the conductor`s role in the rehearsal and how the conductor in TSM manages to communicate to the young musicians a shared understanding of what is expected of the musicians.

The Japanese school bands are connected to the educational school program. In Norway, the school band movement is a leisure activity and connection with an educational program is random or rare. In some cases, where the conductor is financed through the local culture school, there might be some educational guidelines, depending on the culture school`s policies. The main set of directions followed in Norwegian school bands is developed by the Norwegian Band Association and does not have any connection to the schools` educational program. TSM`s conductor is paid directly by the school band board with no connection to the local culture school. The involvement of the parents in Japan seems to be of less influence than in the Norwegian school bands. The rehearsals in Japan take place as an extension of the school day or as a direct part of the educational program whilst in Norway, most school bands practice early evenings and is not an extension of the musicians` regular school day.

#### 1.2.4 Comments and reflections on relevant former research

The school band system in Norway is not considered as an education, meaning that it is not connected to a school program. It can be misleading to call the Norwegian school band tradition a *music education* as the meaning of the term may vary in different cultures. First and foremost, school banding in Norway is a leisure activity and has little to do with the compulsory school system as in other parts of the world, e.g. Japan or USA. Participating in a band is not a subject at school and only rarely involves the permanent music teachers at school as the conductor or leader. The motivation of the musicians for playing has in general nothing to do with gaining advantages in the school system by attending the band and can therefore be exclusively seen as a leisure activity. The conductors in the school brass bands in Hordaland county are, in many cases, renowned musicians from elite brass bands, continuing their own experiences from playing in a successful band. This culture of obtaining a certain status by playing in a ‘top’ band affects the choices made by most school bands when it comes to hiring conductors. The skills, values and methods used resemble those used in competing school bands and affect the way the school band is organized, both on a musical and practical level. The conductors themselves have experience from competing and they contribute to maintaining a competitive culture in the school bands. The ideal of leadership behavior is influenced by the conductor’s own experiences with conductors from the brass band culture and is to an extent authoritative and focused on results.

### 1.3. Environment and community

During Lev Vygotskij’s short life (1896-1934), the Russian psychologist created the foundation for the sociocultural theories and shed a pioneering light on the value of interaction with others as a significant part of enabling advantageous learning processes.

Lev Vygotskij was the main originator of contemporary scholarly understandings of “engagement in social activity as the foundation for high-level cognitive functions (Wenger, 1998, p. 282) and his idea about the zone of proximal development is the umbrella for researching the environment in TSM in order to look at factors impacting their performing

success. Vygotskij's original idea was a reaction to the tests given to schoolchildren and how he considered the result as being insufficient by looking solely at the schoolchildrens' isolated skills acquired without any help from teachers or peers. Vygotskij's idea about the zone of proximal development (ZPD) has been modified and expanded to fit in different perspectives on how less knowledgeable people can learn from interacting with more knowledgeable people.

Learning becomes part of human nature and is not constructed into being a solitary process carried out alone. With the theory of the ZPD, Vygotskij focused on the delicate line between one's self-reliant competence and one's abetted possibilities in interaction with more knowledgeable people. "Wenger's view is compatible with Vygotsky's notion of the "Zone of Proximal Development", as the teacher [conductor] and older peers take on the role of scaffolding learning in order to facilitate activities that guide learners toward attainment of valued competencies, enabling them to become full participants in the community" ( Hebert, 2012, p. 218).

The precursor to Wenger's theory about Communities of Practice is the book *Situated learning* written in 1991 with his co-writer; Jean Lave. In this book Lave and Wenger theorize what they call *legitimate peripheral participation* (PPL) explicating the complex ratio between the interconnections with persons, activities, knowledge and the world (Lave, Wenger, 1991, p. 121). In the forewords of Lave & Wenger's book, The American linguist and anthropologist William F. Hanks states: "Learning is a process that takes place in a participation framework, not in an individual mind" (Lave, Wenger 1991, p. 15).

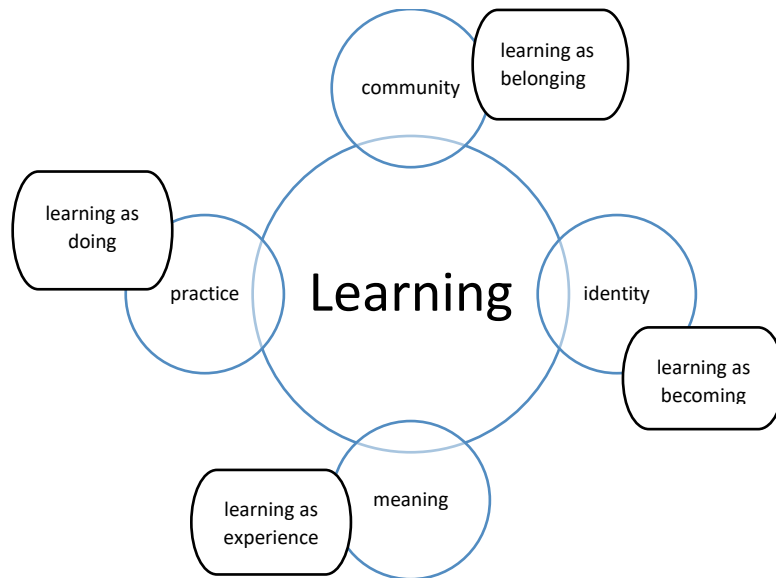


Fig. 4: Components of a social learning theory.

(Wenger, 1998, p. 5).

Wenger's theory focuses on learning as social participation. Wenger does not explicitly mean constructed activities, such as a school band, when he is defining communities.

The term *participation* is used to describe the general experience of living. However, Wenger's theory provides a clear perspective; it adapts to a narrower position suitable for investigating specific communities with limitations and boundaries. The narrower perspective is not Wenger's but is utilized as a theoretical base by many researchers because of its precise description of learning as part of social participation.

Wenger defines a practice to be groups of people interacting regularly and sharing a concern or passion. He stresses a collective history of learning as central and how to do the practice better.

Wenger's theory, together with the ZPD, is the base for this research on the learning and social environment of the current highest awarded school band in Norway. The important role social interactions play in learning is carefully researched both in psychology and pedagogical studies over the last few decades and has come to have a high status for understanding learning and development.

Etienne Wenger accentuates the importance of the content of the learning environment to achieve a high (performing) result and how participating in *meaningful* activities and interactions

is connected to engagement. This perspective can be seen in context with the musicians' feeling of success in the sense of belonging to a successful school band. According to Wenger, engagement is, together with imagination and alignment, connected to the modes of belonging and is important for understanding the [...]“processes of identity formation and learning”[...] (Wenger, 1998, p. 173). “Whoever we are, understanding in practice is the art of choosing what to know and what to ignore in order to proceed with our lives” (Wenger, 1998, p. 41). The identity of playing in an award-winning school band is connected to how the musicians find meaning in the activity and participation.

The environment in a school band contains many different components interacting together. TSM requires a constructive communication across and between the different components such as conductor-band manager, band manager-parents, young musicians-older musicians, conductor-music teachers, band manger-school band board etc. Wenger's theory about learning as a process of social participation is of interest when it comes to trying to understand the band environment and its culture.

“Practice is[...] a process by which we can experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful” (Wenger, 1998, p. 51) and Wenger's acknowledged book about Community of Practice contains a lot of comparisons that fit the (school) band milieu, comparing it with a work place. It is important to notice that Wenger's theory is about communities' perspectives, with learning being closely associated to our lived experience of participating in the *world*. He does not write about the meaning of learning in a constructed environment exclusively. Because of the popularity of Wenger's theory, it is worth mentioning that it also has been misused and stretched to fit to more extreme declarations of a philosophical character and the theory generates relevant discussions on its limitations and possibilities.

## 2. METHOD

This chapter describes the method chosen for undertaking this research, which is designed to enable production of relevant and trustworthy results. To get the most reliable answers to the research questions, the most beneficial approach is studying the environment of TSM by doing an ethnographic case study, emphasizing the observational findings from the fieldwork. Robert Yin argues [...] “that a case study strategy is preferred when the inquirer seeks answers to how or why questions, when the inquirer has little control over events being studied, when the object of study is a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context [...] (Schwandt, 2007, p. 28). The fieldwork strived to accomplish firsthand knowledge about the environment in accordance with the research questions;

- (1) What kinds of learning strategies and relationships can be found within an award-winning Norwegian school brass band?
- (2) How does the conductor in a successful school brass band lead and instill motivation to achieve a high level of performance?

### 2.1 Research Design

This observation uses a qualitative method due to the nature of the research question. Describing observational actions is considered suitable for reflecting on motivational impacts occurring during the band rehearsals. Using quantitative methods, trying to measure and put data related to the impacts on the learning environment into charts or forms, would change the possible findings of the thesis and would also limit the possibilities for reflecting on whether any important observation was omitted. The focus is within a timeframe of 4 months of fieldwork, aiming to reveal some of the existing impacts on the learning environment of TSM.

A description of the interaction based on observation as the main fieldwork, substantiated by the interviews and questionnaires, first and foremost provides a basis for reflecting on factors impacting on the learning environment. Due to the research questions, it is not interesting or

suitable to use hard facts to obtain information related to the environment in this case. It is of more interest to try to accentuate observed situations or answers given in interviews and questionnaires and to make a base for further reflections on the impacts on the learning environment.

Vygotskij's zone of proximal development works as a basis for examining the interaction that provides an environment for musical growth leading to a high performing result. Wenger (1998) writes about *learning as a part of social participation* and viewing this quotation from a broad angle, the success of TSM can be investigated by searching for factors impacting the learning environment in the band, emphasizing the conductor's role. Social learning theory is the foundation for analyzing the data from the fieldwork and by using the ZPD as a theoretical base, the perspective on impacts on the learning environment provides an optimistic starting point. That alone limits the perspective to being of a positive character and aims to uncover the impacts making the learning environment one of constant development and expansion in a meaningful way for the musicians.

## 2.2 Data collection

The data gathered from the fieldwork is observation, interviewing conductors and band manager and a questionnaire for the musicians in the main band. Most of the fieldwork is undertaken observing the band rehearse at their usual location at Tertnes School and this provides realistic insight into the band's sociocultural learning environment and the practical frames they work within on a regular basis. The data is partly coded in the moment of observation and is affected by the theoretical base of factors impacting the environment. Comparing situations that occurred during the fieldwork led to some reflections on patterns or ways of behaving in the environment of TSM. Looking at patterns or ways of behaving is connected to an ethnographic approach.

[Ethnographic Methods] "This is the collection of methods for generating and analyzing qualitative data that are grounded in a commitment to firsthand experience and examination of some particular social or cultural phenomena" (Schwandt, 2007, p. 93)

TSM is an *information-rich case* (Patton, 1990) with all its components working together to create an award-winning school band. Limiting the scope to the observable interactions with the Zone of Proximal Development as a base, confines the multiple ways that researching an environment of an award-winning school band could be done.

Being a part of the environment in the field enabled observation of the different components of interaction between all the participants of TSM and gives the most adequate understanding of the different components of interaction between the active participants in the band, both musicians and leaders. Schwandt states participant observation as being the primary method of ethnographic studies and most of the fieldwork carried out is of observational situations, both during the rehearsals, during breaks and in the periods just before and after the rehearsal.

The fieldwork in this case was a constant process of acquiring theory, mixed with questions and thoughts as a researcher, and the understanding of the theoretical base developed as knowledge from the observing situations take place and new matters of interest occur. In the book; *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*; Schwandt points out the function of theory, and how theory is used both in context with shaping the research questions and problems but also to establish a *local theory* about the culture being researched. The *local theory* is what the researcher sees and hears in relation to people, interactions and events after the fieldwork has started. “Theoretical candor means making both kinds of theoretical decisions [theoretical base and local theory] explicit in writing an interpretive account” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 291).



## 2.2.1 Observation

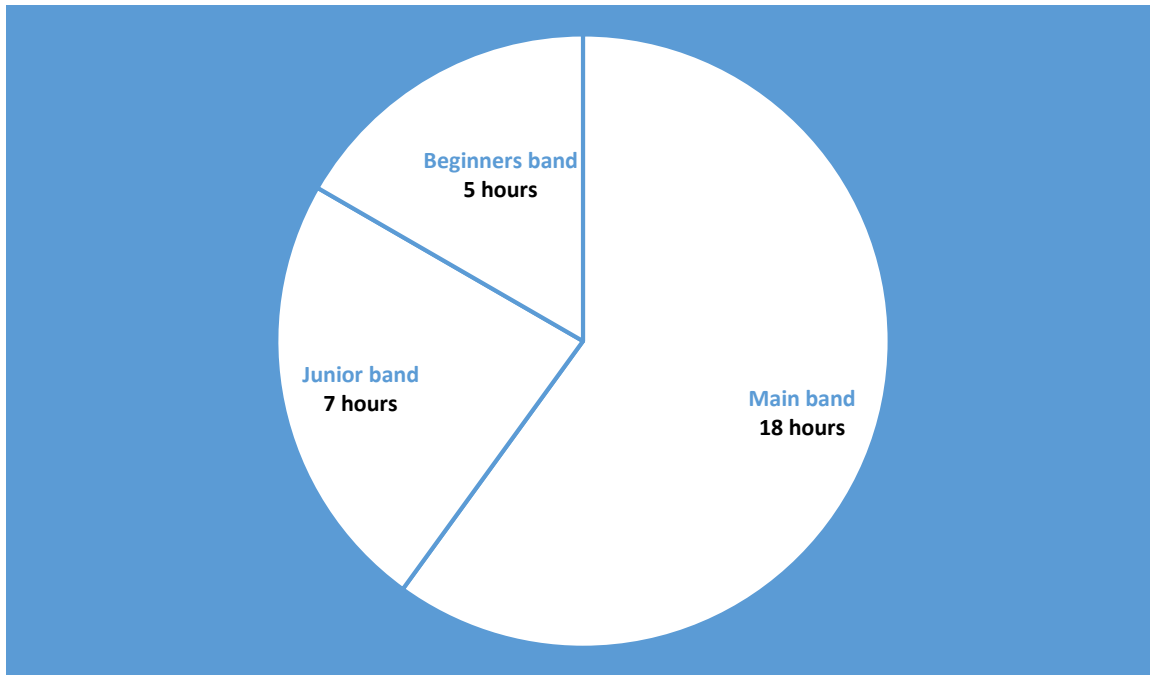


Fig. 5: Distribution of observation hours.

Approximately 30 hours of observation has taken place between October to the end of January when the fieldwork was finished. The observation took place during the band's rehearsals and lasted for about 2 hours each time, switching between the training bands and the main band.

<b>TUESDAYS</b>	<i><u>Main Band</u></i>	<i><u>Junior Band</u></i>	<i><u>Aspirant Band</u></i>
6 p.m.	Tutti rehearsal	Group lessons	Group lessons
7 p.m.	Tutti rehearsal	Group lessons	Group lessons
<b>THURSDAYS</b>	<i><u>Main Band</u></i>	<i><u>Junior Band</u></i>	<i><u>Aspirant Band</u></i>
5 p.m.			Tutti rehearsal
6 p.m. (finished 7.30 p.m)	Tutti rehearsal	Tutti rehearsal	

Fig. 6: Practice hours.

The band rehearsals take place on Tuesday and Thursday afternoon and early evening at Tertnes School. The observations were handwritten using a notebook to log the interaction going on between conductor, musicians, band manager and others of interest to the research. The notebook also had a column for thoughts about what needed to be investigated further, and a column for assumptions or thoughts of a philosophical character. The scope focused particularly on the methods and behavior of the conductor(s). A separate column for my own thoughts and questions occurring during the observation was helpful for developing further writing and possible investigations into theory and previous publications. Thoughts on methods used by the conductor(s), how practical issues are solved and future questions for my formal interviews with the conductors and band manager were influenced by the observation log.

“All scientific inquiry may be traced to some form of careful observation, and in the social sciences, observation plays a critical role for the task of identifying established patterns of human behavior” (D. Hebert, G., 2005, pp. 110-111).

*Who* is observing? *How* are you observing? *What* are you observing? The purpose of these questions is linked to the research questions but also stands in a strong correlation to the researcher’s pre-understanding. The researcher’s own experience, in this case both from playing and conducting, has an impact on how the theoretical base is approached, what is noticed when doing the observation, and how certain observations are highlighted as important for the outcome of the findings. The researcher’s experience from the field is a part of the pre-understanding and is an important factor for *how* the observation is done. It is important to keep in mind that it is best to avoid influencing the interpretation of the fieldwork in an inaccurate or biased way because of the pre-understanding. *What* is observed is often linked to *who* is observing and is accounted for the existing interest in the field as the motivation behind this research.

I chose to blend in and observe the rehearsals to look at the conductor’s communication. Because of the limited space of the music room, I became part of the percussion group by sitting in the back of the band, which provided the best place from which to observe the conductor. The data was partly coded during observation, with the focus on the factors impacting the learning environment made by the conductor. In hindsight, comparison with other situations that occurred during the fieldwork led to some reflections on patterns or ways of behaving by the conductor and musicians. To make the musicians behave as naturally as possible in the presence of a

researcher, I tried to be a part of the normal environment, talking to the musicians, being friendly, helping them if necessary with musical or practical difficulties, trying to avoid creating a distance between them and myself as a researcher. The musicians of TSM are used to being observed, evaluated and watched by people from outside. Now and then parents blend in and give a helping hand to the musicians, both practically and musically. In 2015 a Swedish school band attended one of the rehearsals, sitting close to the musicians and observing them play. This is just one of many examples of the musicians' experience with attention. It was clear from the beginning of the fieldwork that it would not be a distraction for the musicians to have a researcher present and during the rehearsals they did not seem to take any notice of me - or at least not show any signs of being distracted.

The following is a transcription of the observation log, being as faithful to the original handwritten log as possible in order to give an example of how it was done:

<p style="text-align: right;">21<sup>st</sup> of October 2016</p> <p>(Main band)</p> <p>Observation log:</p>	<p>Look into:</p>	<p>Thoughts:</p>
<p><b>The time is 6:04 p.m. First observation. The rehearsal is just starting and I am in the hallway waiting for the band manager to come to an agreement on how to make an entrance and introduce myself to the musicians. I can see the conductor from the hallway. He chuckles.</b></p> <p><b>The main band rehearses in the school’s music room, in which it can barely fit. The percussion rig is so huge that there`s not much room left after the brass players have found their seats too. (<i>My first thought is, this will be too loud and damage their hearing!</i>) One of the percussionists is wearing ear plugs to protect his hearing but as far as I can tell, no one else is. The musicians are getting ready, making a lot of noise; warming up, chatting to each other, preparing the percussion or finding their music.</b></p> <p><b>The cornets have made a head start when the conductor enters the room. “What was good about this playing?” the conductor asks. Silence. The conductor is waiting for an answer from the cornets. “Precision”. The answer is from one of the older musicians. “Right!” the conductor says, and continues to ask critical questions of the musicians, now including the rest of the band in the discussion. The conductor’s behavior is demanding but friendly and he has a humorous style, talking directly to specific musicians, making them stay alert in case he addresses them directly. The band is getting ready to play while listening to the conductor asking more critical questions; “so what is this key signature called on your instrument, “Gabriel”?”</b></p> <p><b>The flow of information from the conductor requires the musicians to stay very focused in case he addresses them. The conductor smiles and chuckles a lot.</b></p>	<p><i>The atmosphere is intense and focused, why?</i></p> <p>✓ <i>They are noisy, will this change when they start rehearsing together??</i></p> <p>✓ <i>Will he tell them off for playing poorly? Or maybe for not being able to answer his question?</i></p>	<p>• <i>How can he [the conductor] be so demanding and at the same time so likeable?</i></p> <p>• <i>The musicians seem to trust him.</i></p>

Fig. 7: Extract from observation log, step 1 in transcription.

Situations of interest connected to environmental factors that occurred during the observation were highlighted in the observation log for further examination. These situations happening in the moment provided a process of reflection whether certain situations were coincidences or showed patterns of an established culture. Some of these situations helped substantiate the questions needed to be answered by interviewing. "Successful interviews enable the sharing of understandings that cannot be obtained through other research strategies" (Hebert, 2005, p. 115). The shared understanding is a mutual one on matters connected to the band, both on a methodical level but also cultural issues established in the school band environment in general.

The starting point was to look at the learning environment and practical structures that enable a competing school band to achieve performing success. It is of importance to be watchful and attentive during observation, noticing situations of interest to the research but also being aware of the selection done by the researcher, being at risk of creating constraints to the work. The knowledge drawn from some of the data could be answered in normal circumstances, when the questions were connected to specific events happening in the moment. So, as a part of the fieldwork, questions occurring spontaneously were, when possible, asked there and then. For example: who is responsible for the percussion rig before and after the rehearsal? Is someone else going to use the music room after the rehearsal today? How long has the soprano cornet been playing that instrument? Usually the band manager or conductor was around to answer the spontaneous questions. The answers also confirmed or disconfirmed less concrete questions in different observation situations, such as patterns of behavior and interaction. For example: do the euphonium players always switch between the parts or is one of them the leader and makes decisions without the conductor? The answer to this question gives a concrete answer to the way it is shared but it also says something about the choices made by the conductor - this may lead to further investigation to gain understanding of his leadership behavior and convictions.

I chose to sit behind the band with a good view of the conductor and simultaneously remain outside of the musicians' line of sight. With the training bands, this worked well, but with the main band the practice room was so small that I became "a part" of the percussion section. The percussionists did not seem to mind my presence; they were focused and did not seem distracted by me. Our communication mainly consisted of nodding to greet when I arrived or smiling at each other in amusing situations, which happened frequently because of the conductor's use of

wit and irony. I also observed the main band from the front, like an audience, but I chose not to switch between the positions during the rehearsal in order to avoid any kind of possible disturbance. When I was in front of the band, I felt that the musicians were a bit distracted by me taking notes and it was also hard to hear everything that the conductor said. At the same time, observing the band from another angle made it easier to see the musicians' response to the conductor's comments and instructions. I also observed a concert and listened to different soloists from the band at the county contest Hordablæsten, the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2017 in Bergen. The county contest is the biggest of its kind in Norway, with thousands of musicians involved. The contest consists of soloists, small ensembles and bands. The soloists and ensembles are divided into classes based on age groups and almost 30 arenas are active at the same time. The most eager musicians participate as soloists, as well as in small ensembles and also with their school band during the same weekend. TSM came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the contest and some of the players did well competing in the contest for soloists.

The notes and writings from observing the band is put into context with the answers from the interviews with the conductor and band manager, and questionnaires answered by the musicians in the band. The observation led to some processes of thinking and rethinking and helped define the final questions for the interviews and questionnaire.

### 2.2.2 Interviews

As previously mentioned, the purpose of the interviews and questionnaires was mainly to validate or challenge data from the observations.

To avoid making constraints to the answers, the purpose of the interviews was not revealed in detail to the ones being interviewed. Appearing as secretive can also create problems as the respondents might become nervous or feel tested, so it is a fine balance requiring empathy from the researcher. The questions had a quite strict form with similarities to a survey, and did not emphasize the body language and the respondent's open reflections to the extent that qualitative interviewing often does in recent research from Scandinavia. The further transcription and analysis focused on cross-examining the answers with observational matters.

The intentions for the interviews were to compare the respondent's answers with observational findings and to map the conductor's and band manager's statements on relevant issues for coinciding answers.

The scheduled interviews took place at Tertnes School's facilities on 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2017. The two conductors and the band manager were interviewed individually for about an hour each. The questions were finished close to the interviewing taking place, influenced by data from the observation and thoughts and questions occurring during the observation. Situations and focus were amended during the observation and I endeavored to be as thorough as possible, making meaningful connections between the observational work and the chosen questions for the interview. The questions were roughly designed when commencing the work on the thesis and were refined during the process, being influenced by both observation and relevant theory. The interviews and questions asked would lack important information if the questions were decided and not changeable from the beginning of the fieldwork. However, the nature of the questions ended up the same as at the starting point of the research, but was refined during the process. Because of the time limitation in doing a master thesis, the most beneficial method for the fieldwork was to interview the conductors and band manager at the end of the observation in order to confirm or challenge the data from the observation. Carrying out the scheduled interviews with the conductors and band manager at the end of the observation period was a conscious choice from the start of the thesis work. As mentioned before, the constant process of integrating theory with impressions from the fieldwork refined the final questions for the interviews and questionnaire. It is important to clarify this process for the credibility of the work when doing qualitative research.

Being a part of the environment in TSM during the fieldwork led to some informal talks with the band manager, conductors, musicians and parents. The 'small talk' is a way of being accepted in the community as a friendly person and not as a distant researcher trying to uncover errors and omissions, as some people are misled into believing. The fieldwork was also about clarifying the practicalities and frames around the organization and to look at the interaction between the conductors and the musicians in a credible way. The informal talk strives to demystify the researcher's role to enable an understanding of the issues affecting the culture in the band.

The scheduled interviews started with some friendly small talk to make the conductors and band manager feel as relaxed as possible and reassure my intentions for the interviews not being a search for errors or omissions in their work.

The interviews with the band manager and conductors were cross-examined, looking at the similar or equal questions from the interview guide (see attachment for questions). The purpose of the interviews was mainly to substantiate and make connections with the findings in the observation and answers in the questionnaire from the musicians, but also to be able to clarify relevant issues that were not always possible to discover through observation alone.

### 2.2.3 Questionnaire

Like the interviews, the intention of using a questionnaire was to compare with observational findings and map the musicians' statements on relevant issues for coinciding answers.

A partly open-ended questionnaire was handed out to the 33 musicians in the main band on Thursday the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2017 at the rehearsal. The musicians were asked to answer the questions at home and not discuss them with fellow musicians. The questions should be answered by 10 years old as well as 18 years old, so they were encouraged to ask their parents for help if the language being used was difficult to understand. Reasons for leaving some of the questions unanswered should not be because of challenges understanding the language used. The musicians were also told the parents should not answer the questions, but just to explain the words or content in the questions. The questionnaire was put into an envelope and the musicians were told to seal the envelope and hand it back to the band manager. The process of formulating the questionnaire was finished after observing the rehearsal situation over time. The questionnaire was refined in context with the data from observing, as were the questions for interviews. The conductor's role and the musicians' experience of the environment in TSM was the focus of the questions (see attachment for questions). The only information the musicians had been given at the start of the fieldwork was that they were a part of a study on their performing success. Not revealing too much information was done deliberately, to avoid influencing the way the musicians approached the questionnaire. With 33 active musicians in the (main) band, 28



answered the questionnaire given to them to fill out at home. The findings therefor represent 85 % of the musicians from the band. The questionnaire was partly open-ended, with encouragement to give extensive answers when suitable.

## 2.3 Data Analysis

The approach to the analysis was coding and triangulating the fieldwork.

Separating coding happening ‘in the moment’ from coding-collected data in hindsight is necessary to understand the findings. The coding in the moment is influenced by the researcher’s pre-understanding, the research questions being chosen and again the researcher’s background and experience in the field. These factors seem to be along the same lines, but it is important to be aware of the complexity of the researcher’s influences to her work in order to do the coding of the data in a reliable way. The coding is based on looking for impacts on the ZPD and how it is observable in the band.

### 2.3.1 Coding of Qualitative Data

The coding of the data gathered from the fieldwork is based on factors impacting the learning environment of a successful school band and a constant selective coding in the moment occurs to draw knowledge of the most central and interesting aspects for further theoretical perception and discussion of the findings.

“Coding requires constantly comparing and contrasting various successive segments of the data and subsequently categorizing them (Schwandt, 2007, p. 32). Subsequent to the observation the coding of the data involved going back looking at the notes and documentations made.

To look for coinciding patterns in statements and comments, behavior and communication, or repeated methods used by the conductors, the data from the observation log was coded by different themes. A color code was used to help clarify the different components of the learning environment:

- Leadership behavior, method and convictions.
- Use of wit (and irony) in the rehearsal situation.
- Critical questioning, thinking and reflection.
- Musicians' interaction and behavior.
- Parental involvement and impact.

Fig. 8: Example of color coding.

Some of the data contained multiple codes and the colors helped clarify the different findings.

Example of transcription of interviews and log:

Interview with training bands conductor:

12<sup>th</sup> of January 2017.

- **Why do you think the main band in TSM has such a high level of performance?**

Training bands conductor: The culture. It is in the walls. The conductor of the main band is very skillful. High expectations in every way. [...] The culture. The culture is about being good. One *should* be good.

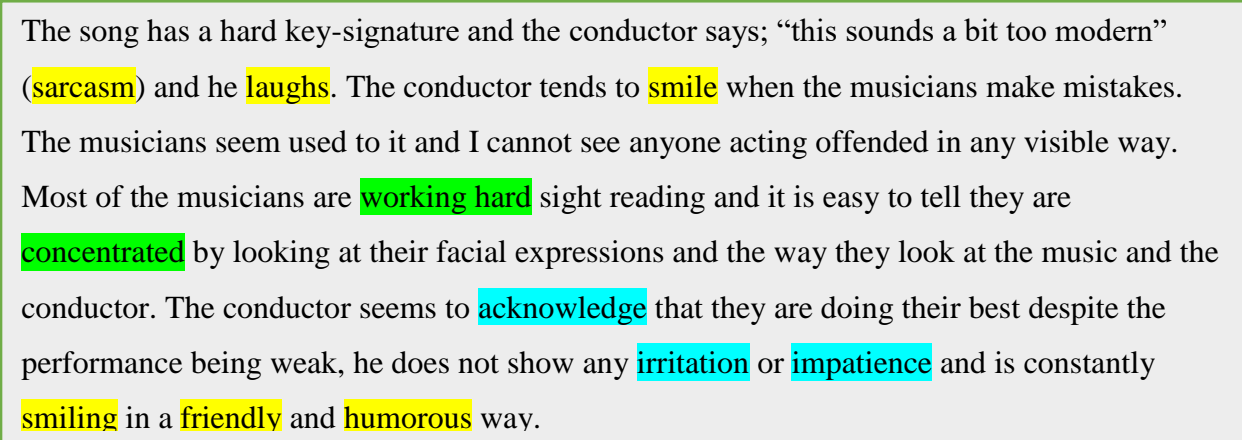
The interview with the training bands' conductor was then compared with the observation log to look for coinciding data supporting her statement:

Observation log:

15<sup>th</sup> of December 2016.

The song has a hard key-signature and the conductor says; “this sounds a bit too modern” (sarcasm) and he laughs. The conductor tends to smile when the musicians make mistakes. The musicians seem used to it and I cannot see anyone being offended in any visible way. Most of the musicians are working hard at sight reading and it is easy to tell they are concentrated by looking at their facial expressions and the way they look at the music and the conductor. The conductor seems to acknowledge that they are doing their best despite the performance being weak. He does not show any irritation or impatience and is constantly smiling in a friendly and humorous way.

The color coding was then added to the transcriptions for further comparison:



The song has a hard key-signature and the conductor says; “this sounds a bit too modern” (sarcasm) and he laughs. The conductor tends to smile when the musicians make mistakes. The musicians seem used to it and I cannot see anyone acting offended in any visible way. Most of the musicians are working hard sight reading and it is easy to tell they are concentrated by looking at their facial expressions and the way they look at the music and the conductor. The conductor seems to acknowledge that they are doing their best despite the performance being weak, he does not show any irritation or impatience and is constantly smiling in a friendly and humorous way.

Fig. 9: Example of color coding applied to observation data.

The example below is on how the color coding was used in the transcription process:

Observation log:	21 <sup>st</sup> of October 2016
<p>[...] The cornets have made a <b>head start</b> when the conductor enters the room. <b>“What was good about this playing?”</b> the conductor asks. Silence. <b>The conductor is waiting for an answer</b> from the cornets. <b>“Precision”</b>. The <b>answer</b> is from one of the older musicians. <b>“Right!”</b> the conductor says, and continues to <b>ask critical questions</b> to the musicians, now <b>including the rest of the band in the discussion</b>. <b>The conductor’s behavior is demanding but friendly</b> and he has a <b>humorous style</b>, <b>talking directly</b> to specific musicians, making them <b>stay alert in case he addresses them directly</b>. The band is getting ready to play while listening to <b>the conductor asking more critical questions</b>; <b>“so what is this key signature called on your instrument, “Gabriel”?”</b> The <b>flow of information</b> from the conductor requires the musicians to <b>stay very focused in case he addresses them</b>. The conductor <b>smiles</b> and <b>chuckles</b> a lot. [...]</p>	

Fig. 10: Example of categories used in color coding.

The color coding categorizes the different interactions in the band and behavior or method used by the conductor.

### 2.3.2 Triangulation and Synthesis

Triangulation is a concept often used in qualitative research as a way of describing how data is analyzed, and may be defined as “the comparison of different kinds of data (e.g. quantitative and qualitative) and different methods (e.g. observation and interviews) to see whether they corroborate one another” (Silverman, 2013, p.449).

Observable actions logged from the fieldwork impacted the questions used in interviews and the questionnaire. The observable actions of interest needed to be investigated further with findings from the fieldwork to substantiate or challenge the observable actions.

### 2.3.3 Schedule

During September 2016, a mandatory seminar about data collection strategies took place at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL) and it kick-started the work on this thesis. Writing summaries from former research parallel with reading theory suitable for ethnographic methods, was the focus before going out in the field from the middle of October 2016. The fieldwork consisted exclusively of observations until the middle of January when the interviews of conductors and band manager took place, and the questionnaire was handed out to the musicians. At the beginning of February 2016, a mandatory seminar about data analyzing took place at HVL and provided some insightful meetings with the rest of the students, professors and teachers. From February 2016, the focus has been on the data analysis and findings and the first draft was finished at the middle of April 2017.

I was at TSM teaching at a weekend seminar late March 2017, working with the trombones on the music for the Development Section in the European Youth Brass Band Championships coming up on the last weekend of April 2017. This was paid work and not as a favor in return for them welcoming me to do my research in the band. At the same time, it generated some new thoughts and reflections useful for the ongoing analysis of the data collected from the fieldwork.

## 4. FINDINGS WITH DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the actual findings from the fieldwork. Data from the observations found to coincide with statements from interviews and the questionnaire is the focus for reflecting on different factors that impact the learning environment within TSM. A comparison of the findings from the fieldwork is later considered in relation to theory, including an adapted version of Vygotskij's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) substantiated by Wenger's theory of learning as social participation.

Recall the guiding research questions:

- What kinds of learning strategies and relationships can be found within an award-winning Norwegian school brass band?
- How does the conductor in a successful school brass band lead and instill motivation to achieve a high level of performance?

In addition to developing robust answers to the above questions through triangulation of various kinds of data, this study also incidentally led to some additional findings which will also be presented here. Specifically, this includes findings related to parental involvement, and attitudes toward participation.

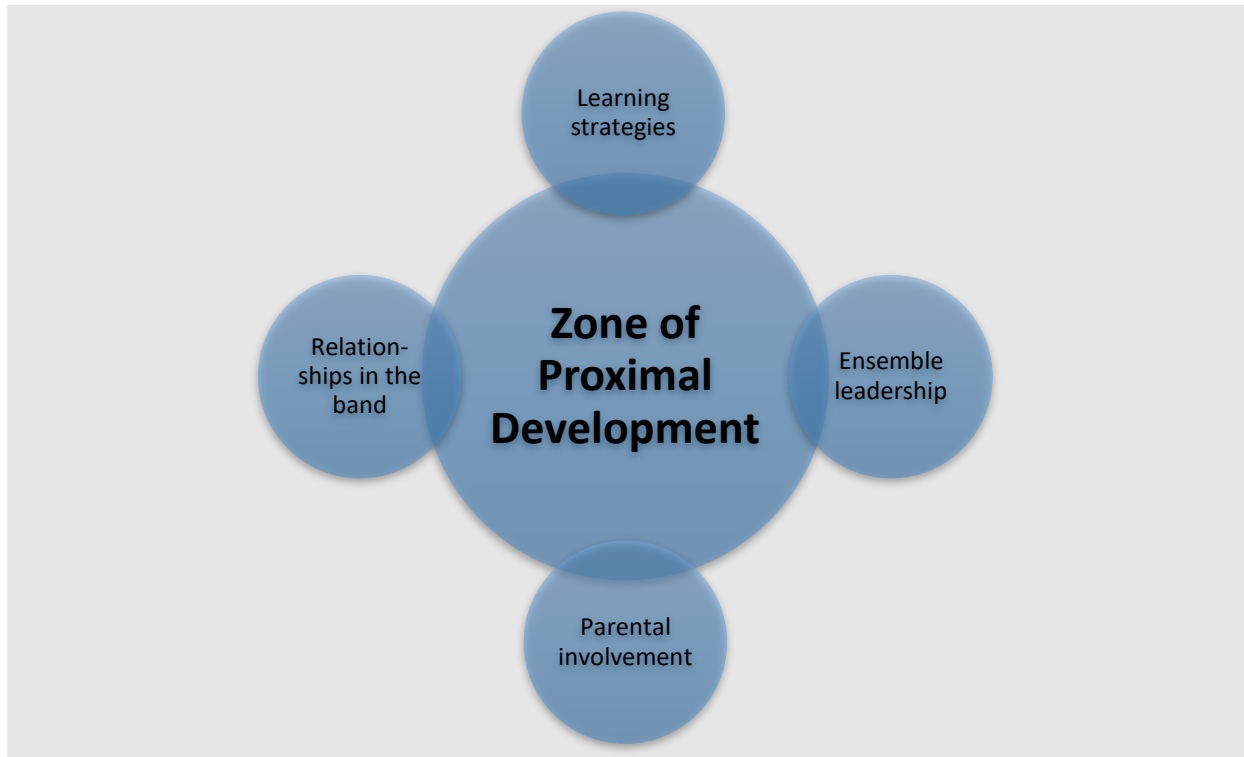


Fig. 11: Factors impacting the ZPD.

#### 4.1 Interpretation of Data

Transforming the coding to actual findings is not a straightforward process and all the ideas, assumptions and reflections made by the researcher must be separated from the actual data gathered from the fieldwork. In this case, the interviews and questionnaire were primarily used as an extension of the observable actions in the band while looking for complying statements with observation. Through observing TSM rehearse I looked at the conductor's communication with the musicians and how he led this community of practice to a high level of performance.

As described before, the qualitative data was first coded with colors and later the writings from the observation log was cross-examined with the outcome of the interviews and questionnaire to look for coinciding patterns. With 33 active musicians in the main band, 28 answered the partly open-ended questionnaire given to them to fill out at home. The findings from the questionnaire therefor represent 85 % of the musicians from the main band.

#### 4.1.1 Learning strategies

The musicians were asked if the conductor usually noticed if they made a mistake during band practice. The multiple choice answers available were limited to; **Yes**, **no** or **sometimes**. 12 (43 %) of the musicians answered **yes** to this question, 16 (57 %) answered **sometimes** and none said **no** (0%). How the musician answering this question perceives the limited possibility of answering this question cannot tell us specifically what they put into their answer choosing **yes** or **sometimes** because they overlap in meaning. What is clear is that no one says **no**. This leaves us with the impression that the musicians feel noticed by the conductor. In the rehearsal situation, the conductor communicates verbally and often addresses the individual players: This creates an intensive and demanding learning environment requiring the musicians to be attentive and stay alert in case he addresses them. The relationship between the musicians and conductor could be described as a hierarchy with the conductor being on top of the system as an authority. The conductor's role as the leader of the group is clear. The power that comes with this position however does not reflect negatively in his attitude toward the musicians. The conductor uses his position for promoting the musicians' ability to constantly reflect and continuously seek answers to questions related to music. When addressing the musicians during rehearsal the conductor is not always friendly, but he is clear about what he wants. His behavior may be described as direct and demanding and this attitude is an integral element of the hierarchal culture in the band, providing a learning environment that continuously encourages thought and reflection.

*Extract from the observation log:*

*25th of October 2016.*

It is 6:12 p.m. and the band is warming up together, playing a hymn to tune in and focus. (*The way the conductor is communicating using facial expressions and eye contact gives me the impression he is demanding focus*). "Okay, F major for you "Richard", what is that for you "John"? the conductor addresses a young musician on the "back row" (cornets). The conductor does not wait for an answer but heads to the blackboard and draws a circle of fifths. He does not spend time explaining it thoroughly but points to the different musical key signatures to show them how to figure out the different keys for Eb instruments or Bb instruments [...]

Fig. 12: Extract from observation log on engaging critical thinking.



TSM's conductor describes the band as in constant pursuit of high performance levels and that the continuous development of the band culture is always the main focus of his work and mindset. Observing the band rehearse, it is clear the band has grown accustomed to a very high flow of information from the conductor as well as the ever-present possibility of being posed a question or receiving instructions on musical matters.

The training bands' conductor was asked in what ways TSM are an including community, or the opposite, excluding in anyway, and was very clear about the answer; "Including! Anyone is welcome, anyone can start playing with us, the board is good at reaching out to those who show an interest in playing. Excluding in the sense that the level of playing increases quickly, resulting in some of the musicians becoming demotivated because they cannot keep up with the rapid progression. Some of the musicians gets-their music customized".

Although the training bands' conductor finds the band including there are several issues to take into consideration; the economic costs of participating in the band, the music played at Christmas time being of a religious nature and the necessity of a high concentration level during rehearsals being a possible challenge for students with learning- or concentration difficulties.

Both conductors were asked about their view on what they emphasize as being important for the musicians to learn from their experience in a band. The conductor of the main band emphasizes that being a part of a community and learning how to cooperate proves to be beneficial in the long term and becomes an attribute they can draw from for the rest of their lives. He also emphasizes the importance of awareness of others, not just themselves, achieving their best, pushing their own limits and learning to be prepared.

The musicians were asked about how much they practice at home. Included in the question was the issue of whether or not this differs ahead of the Norwegian Championship versus playing carols at Christmas functions. Some honest answers were given: "It varies". "Almost never". "I almost never practice but before contests and such I do". "I practice almost every day but the amount I practice depends a lot on whether we are about to play a contest not. I do not practice as much when it is just a concert". Others seem to practice much more: "I practice for about 2-4 hours almost every day. I am more motivated before EM [European Youth Brass Band

Championship: EYBBC] and NM [the Norwegian Championship] than for playing carols at Christmas, but I try to practice approximately the same”. “I am into keeping a high level so I practice approximately 2-3 hours every day”. Some musicians explain why they mean practicing before contesting to be important: “Yes, because EM [EYBBC] is much more serious than playing carols at Christmas parties. That is not difficult, we have played them [the carols] before. On the other hand, EM [EYBBC] has more difficult bits and bobs it is worth practicing”. “I actually do not practice much but I learn the music really quickly at the rehearsals and I practice more and more when approaching contests and concerts so I know the music 100 % before going on stage”. 15 (53,5 %) musicians answered **yes** when asked if they had ever considered leaving the band. 12 (43 %) answered **no** to this question. One answered blank. Out of the 15 who have considered leaving the band, 11 (over 73 % of them) practice unevenly or rarely. This indicates a link between practicing at home and motivation for playing in the band. Drawing any conclusion from these responses is tricky but it does lead one to a certain attention to possible connections between motivation for self-regulated practice at home and motivation for playing in the band.

The training bands’ conductor stresses the importance of cohesion, social aspects and that they have a good time together. She highlights the social aspects as possibly the most important for the training bands’ musicians. “If we are talking about the musical side; learning to read music, playing a lot of music in different genres and tempos. Positive experiences from playing concerts and contesting. Learning to appreciate the good feeling of performing, sitting on stage. The experience has a lot to do with achieving, learning to achieve”.

It is interesting to see how both conductors state that the most important things one learns being part of the band are factors related to social coexistence. The question was asked in general terms and the conductors chose to emphasize the social learning rather than musical factors as one perhaps would expect. At the same time, musical factors might be of such obviousness to them, they looked past it when answering.

The band manager was also asked a similar question, adapted to her role in the band being different from the conductor’s: What kind of skills learned in a school band do you see as the most important? “Creating goals, working together towards a common goal and not giving up. Getting the musicians to understand that it is hard work. Musical interaction, listening to each

other, learning to listen to the other musicians' parts, understanding what is important in your part”.

The observation in the junior band showed a high focus on progression. The information-flow is extensive, as it is in the main band, and the musicians are addressed directly. The training bands do not have a quiet environment for learning like in the main band, but the conductor rather encourages the musicians to interact with her and ask questions back and show interest. She uses thumbs up for evaluating the musicians' performance and gets the musicians to evaluate themselves; thumbs up for good, thumb in horizontal for okay and thumbs down for not satisfied. The training bands' conductor was asked about her focus on preparing the children for a future in a contest winning school brass band: “Quite big. A big focus. We practice a lot of different songs during a very short period. I give them songs with hard key-signatures on purpose to prepare them for the main band. During the Beginners band the goal is to reach the Junior band and the same with the Junior band musicians preparing for being good enough for the main band”.

This focus on qualifying for the main band requires of the juniors a fine balance between finding meaning in the moment and at the same time acceptance of the focus on preparing for the future. The purpose of the training bands being preparation for the main band gives a culture focusing on achievement and training with a specific goal for the future. The future might seem distant and abstract to the young musicians so the training bands must also provide some meaning for the young musicians beside the focus on their potential future in the main band. The Junior band participates in contests twice yearly, playing music appropriate, and sometimes even customized, to the existing instrumentation in the band. The repertoire consists mainly of arrangements of famous movie soundtracks and well-known pop songs, both Norwegian and international. The training bands have a very thorough plan for desired progression during the season, describing monthly goals to achieve, starting in August, ending in June. The plan of musical progression is very detailed and with realistic goals for the musicians.

The following is an extract of the plan of musical progression, showing January:

	<b>Goal:</b>	<b>How to reach the goals Beginners:</b>	<b>How to reach the goals Juniors:</b>	<b>Focus for group rehearsals (40 minutes)</b>
January	-Juniors practice for the county contest.  -Beginners: Two band songs for the 12 <sup>th</sup> of Feb.	<b>Basics:</b>  -buzz on mouthpiece  -breathing exercises  -exercises for flexibility  -tongue  -C major scale  -D major scale  -Bb major scale	<b>Basics:</b>  Practice sheet  Scales  County contest music Book of hymns	Practice sheet included scales 20 minutes County contest repertoire 20 minutes

Fig. 13: Extract from the training bands' plan of musical progression, January.

The conductor of the main band uses a lot of wit and chuckles a lot in all kinds of situations, even when the musicians make individual mistakes or when the bands ensemble playing is poor. The way the conductor uses wit and irony does not always seem comprehensible for the younger musicians and there is an age limit for understanding everything he says and does. This might exclude some of the younger musicians, creating a culture where the older musicians'

understanding comes first. It seems however to be a deliberate method for the developing of the band, based on the conductor's conviction of purposeful learning strategies.

One of the tuba players looks like he is falling asleep, his head is bent down to his chest. The conductor looks at me and smiles. I am a bit confused. I raise my eyebrows to show him I do not understand what is happening; the conductor pretends to use his thumbs playing a game on a cell phone to show me. "Tutti from the top!" the conductor shouts. When the band starts playing he walks over to the tuba player. The tuba player does not notice him. The conductor just makes circular movements with his arm to show the band to continue playing. The conductor is smiling and standing right in front of the tuba player, but he still does not notice the conductor. The song ends and the band stops playing. "You are a role model" the conductor says. The tuba player looks up; "but I do not play in this part [of the piece]" he replies. "Not good enough. You are affecting the person sitting next to you". The conductor is referring to the younger tuba player next to him. The musician discusses with the conductor. He listens and answers back. Always with a smile. The conductor appears to be very patient faced with a trying teenager.

Fig. 14: Extract from observation log on leadership behavior.

In Hebert's dissertation he claims that: "Research studies have demonstrated that effective instrumental teaching may entail an extreme ratio of mostly negative feedback" (Hebert, 2005, p. 386). Negative feedback can be given in many different ways. The individual understanding and experience with receiving negative feedback also influences the way it is given. The conductor's humorous style, being humble and yet clear gives an impression of the conductor wanting to treat the musicians with respect to be treated with respect in return. The environment in TSM shows a culture for pushing the limits of the musician's capabilities for learning and how this is affected by motivation from the conductor, peers, band manager and involved parents. The learning environment is high in critical questioning and feedback but seems to motivate the musicians instead of demotivating them. Reflecting on whether his conducting style in TSM differs from other bands, the conductor describes his leadership style as becoming milder during the years; "there used to be bigger differences [method]. I used to be stricter. More direct, maybe I was

more demanding. There were more issues to deal with before, in the build-up process. My style became more and more similar everywhere [conducting different bands], I think. It would be interesting to hear what the musicians having experience with me conducting different bands think! I remember one some years ago, pointing out that I behaved differently in different bands”. (*He chuckles*).

[...] The band is sight reading potential new repertoire for the county contest (Hordablæsten) coming up in the middle of February 2017. One of the songs has a lot of time-signature changes and the conductor stops the band and asks “Why are we playing such difficult music?” He smiles. They change pieces and all the percussionists are playing tuned percussion. The song has a hard key-signature and the conductor says; “this sounds a bit too modern” (sarcasm) and he laughs. The conductor tends to smile when the musicians make mistakes. The musicians seem used to it and I cannot see anyone acting offended in any visible way. Most of the musicians are working hard, sight reading and it is easy to tell they are concentrated by looking at their facial expressions and the way they look at the music and the conductor. The conductor seems to acknowledge that they are doing their best despite the performance being weak, he does not show any irritation or impatience and is constantly smiling in a friendly and humorous way.

Fig. 15: Extract from the observation log.

Regarding how the conductor thinks about taking individual considerations for the band members, he replied promptly: “I take individual considerations all the damn time!” He finds it very frustrating at times and hard to treat everyone equally. When it comes to absence, the conductor must sometimes make compromises. He states it is not always fair on the younger musicians if some of the older ones are allowed time off the band due to their busy schedules, but to keep the older ones in the band sometimes requires a compromise.

The "...learning is closely associated with the notion of praxis, of collectively established ways of acting..." (Hebert, 2012, p. 218). Written in context with studying a Japanese school band, this statement could just as well stand alone as a general declaration on the impacts of the learning environment developed in a successful organization. The musicians in TSM act together towards a common goal and the intrinsic motivations for successful performing at a high level is significantly influenced by the conductor in this band.

#### 4.1.2 Relationships in the band

When the musicians were asked to give an extended answer about their motivation for playing in the band; 17 (65 %) of the answers to this question combine musical factors with the social factors with peers. This indicates that learning to play music in a band has an important social factor. The band members accentuate the importance of meaningful relationships and interaction with like-minded as part of their motivation for being in the band. The relationship with peers is important for the identity and sense of belonging for the young people and the musicians in TSM are not different from other youngsters when it comes to searching for meaningful coexistence in a group. Professor of Education, David J. Hargreaves together with cowriters Nigel A. Marshall and Adrian C. North (2003) distinguish four levels of social influence, stressing the relationship between developmental psychology and music education: *the individual level, the interpersonal level, the institutional level and the cultural level*. The *individual level* and the *cultural level* being the micro and macro excesses of this theory, the focus in this research has mainly been looking at the *interpersonal-* and *institutional level* of social influence.

Through the interviews, conductors and band manager all emphasize the social factors in the band being important for the wellbeing of the musicians. When the conductors and band manager were asked about the 5 main points they hope for the musicians to learn through their experience in a band, they all emphasize the social aspects of being part of the band:

«*The social, the cohesion is the most important they learn by participating the band*»  
(training band conductor).

«*To become a part of a community; cooperation, knowledge for the rest of their lives, be aware of others, not just themselves*» (main band conductor).

«*Set a goal, work together as a community towards a common goal, not give up*” (band manager).

“All musical behavior is ‘social’ in the sense that musical meanings are socially and culturally constructed from the physical sounds that constitute them[...] (Hargreaves, Nigel, North, 2003, p. 151)”.

An example of encouraging feedback between peers happened at rehearsal when one of the solo cornet players turned to the young soprano cornetist and complimented her playing; “Crazy good!!” The soprano cornet player’s facial expression revealed that she appreciated the compliment and she looked pleased for a long time after. The compliment came after the band played a complicated piece, difficult to the fresh soprano cornetist. The atmosphere in the band seems to be influenced by an involved interaction between the young and older musicians, the older ones encouraging and cheering the younger ones, resulting in the younger musicians seeking information from the older musicians. “In cases where the family is not engaged in motivating the child to do music, a wider environmental involvement may compensate for the lack of family support” (Hallam, 2002, p. 235). During the interview with the band manager she talks about “catching” the ones who are discontent before they choose to leave and how the band always aim to create a satisfying environment for everyone. Wenger claims that [...]”a community of practice is a living context that can give newcomers access to competence” [...] (Wenger, 1998, p. 214). The environment in TSM holds a flexible relation between knowledgeable and less knowledgeable people and how they interact. The conductor is considered the head of knowledge but the musicians also play a serious role in being knowledgeable and taking on important roles for the development of the learning environment.

When asked about his role as an important facilitator for building relations, the conductor explained how he used to drive his car to Tertnes, pick up musicians, and take them to concerts with different bands. He wanted them to experience and listen to good brass bands. This happened 13/14 years ago and was a part of what he calls the *build-up process* of the band. During the interview, the conductor used the phrase ‘build-up process’ on several occasions and was asked to explain the meaning of this statement. The conductor described this to be the



process leading to today's level and how he sees the current situation as a maintenance of an established culture after working with the band since year 2003. Thomas E. Kloss article about *High School Band Students' Perspectives of Teacher Turnover* describes the vulnerabilities of a teacher (conductor) leaving and a new one taking the place of a person who has an established relationship with the musicians. "The teacher [conductor] guides their students through issues of responsibility (showing up on time), integrity (with their parts learned), and musicality (the audience wants us to play for them)" (Kloss, 2013, p. 12). Kloss stresses a relationship to be formed between the musicians and the conductor over time, and that students make connections with their teacher.

The conductor has been with the band for over a decade and he knows a lot of the parents, siblings and other family of the musicians. Some of the players in the band made a relation to the conductor when they were toddlers and have grown up listening to the bands concerts.

Hebert states [...] "motivation to devote such time and energy to the band derived from the encouragement of their peers, rather than actively-involved parents" (Hebert, 2012, p. 267).

Although the backing from peers differs from Japan to Norway due to cultural and educational differences in the band, the relationship with peers will be important to young people, independent the place of birth. "*Practice is, first and foremost, a process by which we can experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful*" (Wenger, 1998, s. 6).

15 (53,5 %) of the musicians describes the relationship with the other musicians using the word *friendship* in a positive context. The answers did not have any negative feedback on the relationship with the other musicians. Somewhat surprisingly, none of the musicians mention anything related to musical factors when asked to describe the relationship with other band members. Words like *including, good environment, best friends, good relationship, good* are frequently used in all the answers. The value of this feedback must be seen in light of the formulation of this question being very open (see attachment) and the musicians could easily associate relationship with friendship. Nevertheless, it tells us the musicians *want* to give an impression of the social environment being positive by emphasizing it to this extent and that the focus of this matter is important to them.

The band has a hierarchal system with the conductor on top. Claiming a hierarchically based system as being positive is risky in many ways and it is mainly viewed as negative in modern

pedagogics. No matter how we twist and turn the scope on hierarchy, it is a part of a competing school band and it cannot be avoided. How the musicians find their place in the hierarchy and how it is possible for the musicians to climb in the system and for the conductor to facilitate an understanding for the hierarchically based system, is in this case of greater interest than to criticize the negative aspects of a hierarchal system. A Norwegian school band can be a unique community for young people's development together in a group - how the 9-year-old interacts with the 17-year-old, how behavior is shaped by the musicians' way of communicating, guided by a sensible conductor and influenced by the band's established culture for social behavior. The school band is much more than learning to read music and play an instrument. It is learning how to interact with others, how to multitask by playing an instrument, read the music and watch the conductor all at the same time or give an impression you are paying attention when you want to listen to your friend whisper a joke at the same time as the conductor is talking! You also learn to consciously or sub-consciously find your place in the school band hierarchy, hopefully built on fair and natural terms. The hierarchal system holds a lot of similarities to professional work life and can provide an experience for understanding this structure from an early age.

Asking the musicians how parents, family or friends would react if they left the band, 17 (61%) uses the words; negatively, sad or disappointed. 5 (18 %) uses the word surprised and 2 (7%) does not know.

#### 4.1.3 Ensemble leadership

Both current conductors in TSM have a connection to the highly awarded brass band, Eikanger Bjørsvik Musikklag (EBML). EBML are the reigning champions of the European Championship for Brass Bands 2017, considered to be the best brass band in Norway, with 17 wins in the top section of the Norwegian Championship for Brass Bands between 1981 and 2017. The main band conductor substituted on euphonium with EBML for a period from year 2000, and the training bands' conductor presently plays the cornet in EBML. They have both experienced working with the most acknowledged conductors in the brass band world, like Professor David King, Howard Snell and Professor Nicholas J. Childs FLCM. The conductor of the training bands is an educated teacher, specialized in children with difficulties. The conductor of the main band has an unfinished degree from the Grieg Academy – University of Bergen.

17 musicians (61 %) mention the conductor directly as an important factor for the success in the band when being asked about the reasons behind the band's high level and success in contests. This might not be surprising, but the question had no link to the conductor (see attachments) and was deliberately put between other questions not mentioning the conductor to try avoiding constraints to the answers given by the musicians.

The observation log showed that the conductor encouraged the musicians to constantly reflect and seek answers to questions related to music and encouraged the musicians to achieve by giving them acknowledgement when they do.

The conductor repeatedly demanding the musicians' attention is delicate when it comes to the fine balance between being insistent in a negative way or motivating for learning. The conductor's approach to the musicians gives an impression of respect and recognition towards the musicians because of the way he addresses them and solve problems. Claiming the musicians' attention seems to be established as a part of the conductor's method and the musicians are left with little choice than to pay attention. "The rehearsals consisted primarily of repetitive drilling and solves problems, with technical and expressive performance of the repertoire as the only explicit objective" (Hebert, 2005, pp. 385-386). The structure of the rehearsal holds similarities to the description Hebert gave of Ishikawa Middle School Band in his

dissertation. The goal of the rehearsal is the same, having the musicians perform their best, but the way the conductor approaches the purpose entails complex dissimilarities due to cultural differences. The conductor of TSM leads a leisure activity whilst in Japan the school bands are a part of the music education directly connected to school. This leads to differences in how the activity is approached by both conductor and the musicians.

The focus on the conductor elucidates his importance as a facilitator for development, as an important designer of the learning environment and the most significant contributor to pushing the boundaries of skills in what seems to be a motivating and encouraging way. “Their [directors] primary leadership behavior was defined as being high in human relationships and high in the need to accomplish tasks” (Goodstein, 1987, p. 218). The way of commenting, rapidity in information-flow, choice of words, use of wit and irony and body language is all part of the conductor’s personality in TSM. This behavior and personality was observed during the fieldwork. The observation log held multiple examples of the conductor encouraging the musicians to constantly reflect and seek answers to questions related to music. The conductor combines humor with being demanding and this characteristic coincides with Goodstein’s statement. Knowing how to make the musicians interested and alerted derives from the conductor’s own experience as a musician, making his behavior, consciously or unconsciously, built on this previous experience. The way the conductor asks questions is arguably most significant; how the conductor can make this constant questioning inspiring instead of being irritating or even nagging in a negative way. We cannot claim that all the musicians are paying 100% attention to his constant questioning all the time, but it is the culture this knowledge-seeking creates, how this method (or behavior) of questioning used by the conductor impacts the learning environment leading to the performing success of the band. The conductor addressed the younger musicians more gently than the older musicians but at the same time he does not leave any doubt of what he expects. At a rehearsal, he stopped the whole band because one of the young 3d cornet players did not start playing with the band. “What did you dream about now?” the conductor asked with a smile. As Goodstein (1987) claims that non-musical factors were of possibly greater importance than musical factors in the identification of successful band directors (conductors), it is as mentioned an underlying fact that the conductor must be skilled in music to provide a high performing result. The non-musical factors, such as a high level of human relations, supplements the musical skills of the conductor. The conductor challenges the

musicians with several questions related to musical issues. Assuming the conductor knows his behavior or statements are of such an advanced character that the young musicians cannot always understand, he was asked why he sometimes chose to talk in such an advanced way, being aware that a lot of the musicians cannot fully understand him. His answer was; “for the more experienced musicians not to get bored to death! And for the younger ones to catch something on the way. The older ones would die of boredom if everything had to be carefully described in details. It is great fun when the younger musicians actually get some of it!”

The conductor chooses to address the musicians in an advanced way deliberately and gives the impression he thinks of this to be a common understanding and the right thing to do for achieving the most beneficial progression. The conductor is a role model to the musicians and sets the standard to the culture for what is required of the musicians in the band. A leader of any kind needs to gain trust in order to have his staff do as he requires. Why a successful conductor might not have success in another band at all depends on how the musicians find him trustworthy or not and trust is connected to experience. If the musicians have a bad experience with other conductors it is likely it will take some time for them to trust the new one. It depends a lot on the trust and reliance between the conductor and the musicians and how the roles are filled. *“It seems that a relationship forms between band students and their teacher over time”* (Kloss, 2013, p. 12). In TSM’s case, the conductor has been with them for over a decade and is a big part of the existing culture in the band. It is a very delicate situation if the conductor quit and a new conductor take over.

Over the course of the year, TSM perform some original compositions but mainly arrangements and transcriptions of popular songs. For the Norwegian Championship for school brass bands (NM), the conductor chooses an original composition lasting approximately 15 minutes. Although the musicians have some influence in this matter the final decision is made by the conductor. Top section bands hold a high standard in choosing original compositions and looking at the repertoire chosen over the last decade, there is a clear move toward more advanced, contemporary pieces. The top school bands are using the same repertoire as the adult bands when contesting. The top section school bands play repertoire used by the adult brass bands of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> (sometimes 4<sup>th</sup>-and even 1<sup>st</sup> section) when competing in NM. The standard of repertoire chosen for NM over the last decade has increased both in adult brass bands and in

school brass bands, and the art of choosing advanced music seems to have become a “contest within the contest” amongst the top school brass bands.

The conductor of the band describes the Norwegian Championship to be the most rewarding and musically gratifying activity. This contest stands out as an opportunity to appreciate performances of “serious” pieces of band music in the top sections, and the conductor spends a great deal of time searching for the piece best suitable for the band’s current strengths. The contest pieces usually have some short solo features, mainly for the solo cornet or euphonium, or sometimes other instruments.

The Development Section in the European Youth Brass Band Championships (EYBBC) has a specific test piece for all the bands. The school brass bands put this piece into a 20-minute program with other pieces chosen by the conductor. The test piece for the EYBBC is described as easy by the musicians of TSM and some of even describe it as a bit too easy to play and would prefer more challenges. The repertoire TSM uses for NM is as mentioned of a much higher standard. The Norwegian Championship holding a higher standard of repertoire than the EYBBC is a bit surprising, but keep in mind however the differences between the two contests, the NM only having a freely-chosen piece, while the EYBBC has a different structure with the mandatory test piece. For the EYBBC over the last two years, TSM has opted for light music arranged for brass band as their freely-chosen pieces. Arrangements of music by artists like Sting, Robbie Williams and Michael Jackson were played in 2016 when TSM became the champions of the Development section of the EYBBC.

#### 4.1.5 Parental involvement

When the conductor was asked about how the parents contribute to the band, he answered; “Some of them quite a lot, we use them as instructors and there are pros and cons with that (*the conductor chuckles*). They have experience and the necessary performing skills, and the band saves money on this voluntary work. They also help a lot with the practicing at home. Some of them had a central role in the build-up process of the band”.

The band manager was asked the same question about the parents’ contribution to the musical work: “A lot! We have 80/90 parents in total. Many of them play in the bands located at Tertnes (Tertnes Amatør & Tertnes Brass). Some parents used to play being young, but also many of them have never been in a band. Having a lot of playing parents, we use them as instructors for seminars and group rehearsals. We save a lot of money doing it like this. They do it for free, volunteer work. The parents also do a lot of other volunteer work, e.g. cooking for the musicians at a weekend seminar. All this volunteer work lies in the established culture”.

TSM is built on voluntary work and the existence of the band depends on it. Practical work consists of cooking at weekend seminars, copying sheet music, taking care of the economy, booking flights and hotels for contesting outside Hordaland etc. It is a big job and the parents contribute with a lot of voluntary work. This is not exclusive to TSM, the whole band movement in Norway is built on voluntary work, both school bands and bands. Because of the great dependence on voluntary work it makes the band vulnerable because of the lack of mandatory procedures like you would find in an education program connected to a school program. The organizing of the practicalities in bands differ and the understanding of what a band requires to be stable varies throughout Norway. In Tertnes there are some very active parents involved and the band manager does a great deal of organizing and communicate between musicians, parents and conductor.

Parental involvement in music education can be practiced in multiple ways; practical work, active musical participation and musical engagement without playing actively. All of the ways of parental involvement mentioned, are observed in TSM and active participation in the musical work is a major part of the voluntary work in the band. The most famous method worldwide engaging parents actively in the musical work, is the Suzuki method from Japan, developed

essentially for strings by Shinichi Suzuki. The Suzuki parents also learn to play the instrument and participate together with their child. This is a very active way for the parents to involve in the musicians' development. Some parents in TSM play at a high level in bands and contribute as tutors at group rehearsals and seminars. This way the band saves a lot of money by not paying educated music teachers to teach the musicians. The active role of parents in TSM was best illustrated in the training band rehearsals. Some parents helped with pointing at the music, keeping the beat with percussion or just being present and available. When doing the observation, the training bands' conductor always had parents available for assistance, either in the room or in the room next door. The training bands' conductor is free to focus on the music, while practical issues can be delegated to parents. Valves needing oil, music stands being defect, percussionists needing instruments from the music room downstairs, etc. can all be very time-consuming in training bands.

There are many ways for the parents to be involved; from being a supporter from the inside as in the Suzuki method, to the outside observer with no active participation musically, but attending concerts, encouraging to practice at home, helping with practicing, etc. Parental involvement will differ within various schools, methods, teachers, traditions and the parents' personality and previous experiences. Parents were actively involved at the training bands' rehearsals in TSM. The band manager pointed out that playing parents are especially helpful with the beginners, both for practicing at home and for helping in the rehearsals. Parents helping actively with musical issues in the main band were not obvious during my period of fieldwork except for some parents teaching at weekend seminars. Parental musical involvement in the main band was shown by some regulars hanging around at band practice and by parents sporadically dropping by now and then.

During interviews with the band manager, the parents' involvement was mentioned several times, as well as practical issues. The band manager uses the words: *established culture* as an explanation on how the parents engage in the band. She also points out that the parents without any experience in music need to be aware of what it takes to play an instrument and how much practicing at home is involved to be able to follow the band's progression.

On Thursdays, Tertnes Amatørkorps takes over the practice venue when TSM is finished, so the musicians always have an interested "audience" listening from the hallway during the last



minutes of their rehearsal. This creates a helpful environment, a common understanding with fellow musicians, who sometimes comment on their playing, sometimes just say hello, sometimes doing nothing, but just being present. Compared with Hebert's (2005) example on a successful band from Japan, the Ishikawa Middle School Band, the parents' involvement in TSM differs significantly to this band. The parents' involvement is hardly considered as an influence on the success of the Japanese band at all, while the parents' involvement in TSM is clearly of importance when it comes to contributing to an environment for the musicians to develop. In the Ishikawa Middle School Band, the role of the peers is considered of vast importance to the development. TSM also have components of peer mentoring, being of importance for the development of the band, but it takes place in a much smaller degree than in Ishikawa Middle School Band. The musicians in TSM do not take direct part in the tutoring of the beginners but hold the status of being more knowledgeable and experienced, and for that reason act as role models to the younger musicians.

The parents have several roles as contributors to the work in TSM; as practical helpers, tutors, motivators, supporters and fans.

#### 4.1.6 ZPD in action

The interaction in the band, promoting a constant expanding of the possibilities to learn is affected by *learning strategies*, *relationships in the band*, *ensemble leadership* and *parental involvement*. These factors overlap in meaning; e.g. *parental involvement* is also a kind of *relationship* or *learning strategies* being influenced by the conductor's *ensemble leadership*.

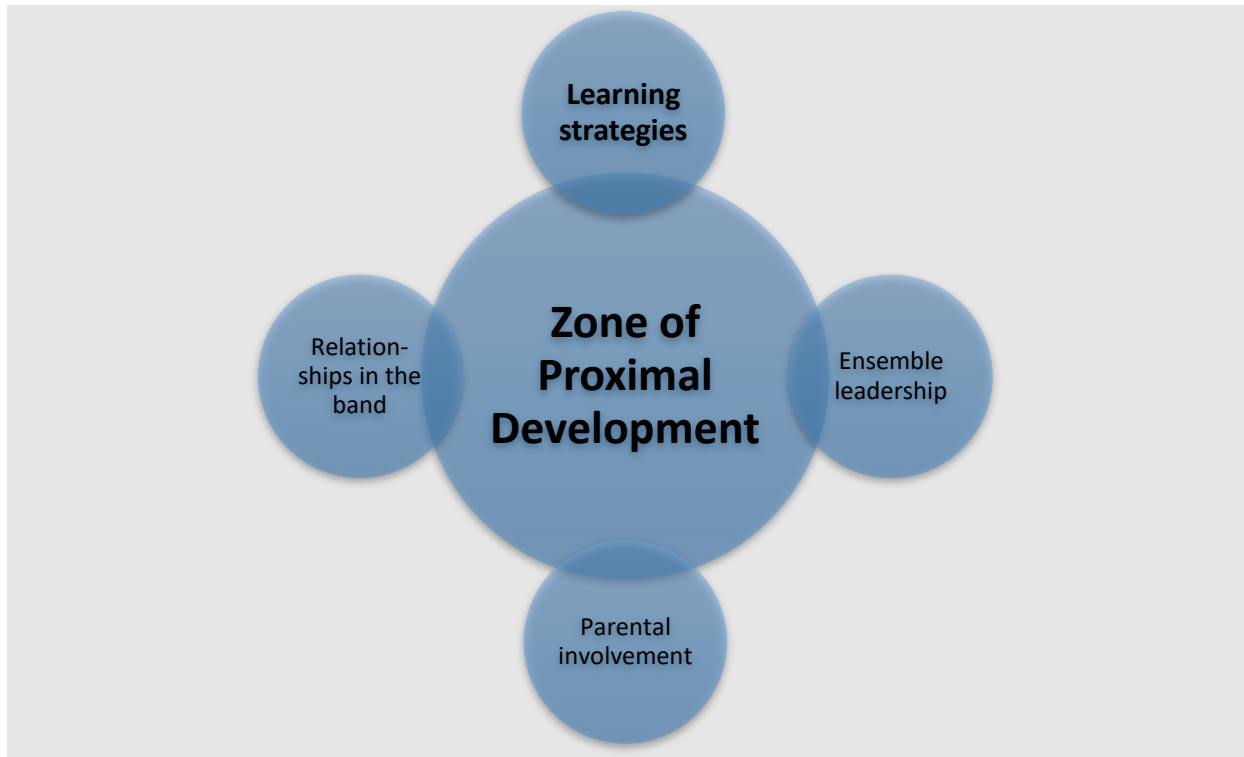


Fig. 16: Factors impacting the ZPD.

The conductor frequently challenging the musicians, contributes to the ZPD expanding and being dynamic. It further impacts the musicians' interaction with each other, creating a culture for knowledge-seeking. The ZPD is a cooperative zone where the musicians are influenced on an individual level by shared interactions. The relation between the impacts on the ZPD is equally important to the musical development on both an individual and collective level.

Looking for situations and actions 'pushing the boundaries' of the ZPD led to a focus on the conductor in the band but also how the conductor's behavior affected the more knowledgeable peers in the band. The observation showed how the conductor constantly pushes the boundaries

of the ZPD using critical questioning and statements meant for involving the musicians in thinking, reasoning and reflecting in order to become more knowledgeable and improve their playing, both on an individual level and as a group. The conductor addresses the younger musicians more gently than the older ones, creating a culture for both including and demanding. In several cases the conductor asked questions in a gentle way, addressing the younger musicians. At the same time, when the question asked was too hard for them to answer, he expected the older musicians to know the answer. This was done several times in a rehearsal and it was balanced between addressing musicians directly and the band in plenary.



This drawing of an artful ZPD shows the different components affecting the learning environment of the musicians. The conductor stretching the ZPD, the older (more knowledgeable) musician helping the younger (less knowledgeable) and the supporting parents being encouraging and proud.

Fig. 17: Artful adaptation of the ZPD.

The observations pointing in the direction of a distinctive culture for recognizing quality and a high level of cooperation for the musicians' age group is explained thoroughly in the previous chapters.

The reason behind the success of TSM as an award-winning school band is no doubt multi-dimensional and there are many opinions about the manners leading to a successful school band.

## 5. CONCLUDING SUMMARY

The motivation for doing this study was influenced by an interest in factors impacting the learning environment in a successful school band. The process of refining the research questions was difficult. In conversation with skillful people from the band environment in Bergen, aspects such as *practice culture, the conductor's personality, the individual instrumental teachers, the school band board's communication with the parents, the tradition and history of the band and the communication from the conductor* were all mentioned as important factors for succeeding as an award-winning school band. But what is the motivation behind a functioning practice culture and what is the band's traditions and history? And does the conductor's personality matter? How to limit the scope to a sensible perspective was a part of the process and was at times very frustrating, as the complexity of impacting factors in a school band is high. The research questions chosen for this study required a base for further understanding of the complex community of a school band promoting a learning environment and generating a high performance result. The possibilities of challenging the boundaries of the ZPD are linked to motivation, strategies from the conductor, balance of critical feedback and encouragement and promoting of a progressive interaction between the musicians.

Playing in a band is a social participation in multiple ways, influenced by *Learning Strategies, Relationships, Leadership Behavior* and *Parental Involvement*, and how these different components interact, leading to a constant pushing of the musician's boundaries, is highly influenced by a well-functioning environment around the musicians. This creates a culture conducive to achieving and has a significant impact on the musicians' Zone of Proximal Development. The way these components act together in a purposeful way is the key to understanding the bands performing success. How the culture has developed into aiming for knowledge and having a shared understanding for wanting to achieve by pushing the limits for development.

*Learning strategies*: shows an environment of expanding the musicians' knowledge by creating a culture for reflection and self-awareness for critical thinking. Demanding the musicians' attention by addressing them directly is a distinct learning strategy in TSM, both training bands and main band. The conductor in the main band has a flair for understanding who to include in

specific situations or context as scaffolding contributors in the zone of proximal development, impacting the learning for less knowledgeable peers. His behavior matters and how he approaches the musicians is of significance to the young musicians' development.

*Relationships in the band:* The relationship with peers was found to be especially important socially. The musicians highlighted *friendship, including and best friends* when asked about their relationship with peers. The conductors and band manager all emphasized social factors as an important part of being in the band. Factors motivating the young musicians to interact towards a common goal and to learn how to make successful strategies is exemplified in the relationship findings. The strategies used to play at a level making the band succeed in contests, are strategies useful for any kind of ambitions as they may lead to the feeling of ownership, pride and belonging and impact the identity of the musicians in a positive way.

*Ensemble leadership:* The conductor's role turned out to be of a bigger importance than I had assumed when starting the work on the thesis. A young musician develops skills in interaction with other peers, instrumental teachers and knowledgeable parents or family members with a relation to the field and this understanding is of great importance in building a successful school band, or in any teamwork-related activity. The conductor in TSM facilitates for this interaction, being an example to the musicians with his way of leading the band.

*Parental Involvement:* The parents in TSM doing voluntary work for the band is of crucial importance for the band's existence. All the practical work behind the scenes is done by parents and is based on being voluntary. Besides the practical work, some of the parents contribute as tutors at seminars and group rehearsals. TSM has a high participation of musically knowledgeable parents contributing as instructors.

The school band environment in general is a multifaceted community of practice, and a successful school band from the Norwegian culture is bound to have some prosperous organizational strategies to be successful. All kinds of school bands could gain from guidance from an award-winning school band on how to improve as a community in many aspects, not necessarily for developing strategies for winning contests, but for the united feeling of belonging and cooperation in a community of practice, essential to the musicians.

“The Norwegians though were the most worthy of champions – led by an MD [Music Director] who led them to victory with a smile, a wink and a thumbs up of support on stage at just about every opportunity he had”.

Malcolm Wood reporting from the European Youth Championship, 2016, 4barsrest.com

### 5.1 Future research possibilities

The band traditions in Norway, and Hordaland especially, are strong when it comes to the high amount and level of the brass bands.

In the future, the successful brass band culture in Hordaland should be further investigated, including the top brass bands (adults) and the strategies they use to achieve a high performing result, leading to winning prizes outside the Norwegian borders. The methods used by the conductors, influenced by the British brass band culture, the musicians’ motivation for spending a high amount of time on a leisure activity and a high amount of voluntary work is just examples of topics that should be further investigated.

The social history of the brass band culture of Hordaland should be investigated from an ethnographic perspective to look for factors impacting a relatively small city like Bergen to currently have 5 brass bands in the top section.

The repertoire of the competing school brass bands could be investigated for comparison with other school bands in Europe to determine the amount of original music performed. School bands in Hordaland frequently commission music directly from composers, who are able to write for them by receiving funds from the local government. How or if this affects musicians’ views of contemporary art music by performing such pieces from an early age should be investigated.

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## Attachments

## Interview guides:

## Conductor/Hovedkorps-dirigent:

- Does your conducting style in TSM differ from the way you conduct other bands? Please describe.

*Er det forskjeller på hvordan du dirigerer TSM i forhold til andre korps? Vennligst beskriv.*

- What are the 5 main points you hope for your musicians to learn through their experience in band?

*Kan du nevne 5 ting du håper musikantene lærer gjennom å spille i korps?*

- Why do you choose to sometimes talk in such an advanced way, being aware of a lot of the band players can't fully understand you?

*Hvorfor velger du enkelte ganger å snakke på en slik avansert måte at mange av musikantene ikke fullt ut forstår deg?*

- How many years have you conducted TSM and for how long have you been working with today's band manager?

*Hvor lenge har du jobbet i TSM og sammen med dagens korpsleder?*

- How do you view your role as an important facilitator for building relations between the musicians?

*Hvordan ser du på din rolle som en betydningsfull tilrettelegger for relasjonsbygging mellom musikantene?*

- Do you have any educational guidelines to follow and where are they from?

*Har du noen læreplaner du følger og hvor er de i såfall hentet fra?*

- What do you think about taking individual considerations for the band members and have you ever felt ethical tested doing or consciously not doing so?

*Hva mener du om å ta individuelle hensyn og har du noen gang vært i en situasjon hvor du har følt deg etisk testet ved å ta hensyn eller bevisst la være?*

- In what ways are TSM including as a **community of practice**, or the opposite, excluding in anyway?

*På hvilke måter er TSM inkluderende som et praksisfelleskap, eller det motsatte, ekskluderende på noen måte.*

- What role does the parents' engagement play in the musical work in the band?

*Hvilken rolle spiller foreldrenes deltagelse i det musikalske arbeidet i korpset?*

- What role does the parents' play engagement in the practical work in the band?

*Hvilken rolle spiller foreldrenes deltagelse i det praktiske arbeidet i korpset?*

Training bands' conductor/Aspirant- & Junior-korps dirigent:

- What are the 5 main points you hope for your musicians to learn through their experience in band?

*Kan du nevne 5 ting du håper musikantene lærer gjennom å spille i korps?*

- Do you attend formal meetings with the conductor of the main band and do you have discussions related to methods and other pedagogical issues?

*Deltar du på formelle møter med dirigenten fra hovedkorpset og har dere diskusjoner rundt metode og andre pedagogiske problemstillinger?*

- Do you feel like you know the style of the main conductor, his methods and work with the musicians?

*Føler du at du kjenner stilen til hovedkorpsdirigenten, metodene han bruker og hvordan han arbeider med musikantene?*

- Do you have any educational guidelines to follow and where are they from?

*Har du noen læreplaner du følger og hvor er de i såfall hentet fra?*

- How big is your focus on preparing the children for a future in a **contest winning** school brass band?

*Hvor stort er ditt fokus på å forberede ungene til en fremtid i et konkurransevinnende skolekorps?*

- How many years have you conducted TSM and for how long have you been working with the present band manager?

*Hvor lenge har du jobbet i TSM og sammen med dagens korpsleder?*

- You give a lot of commands during the playing. Do you suddenly stop when in a concert or contest situation or do you «step down» gradually before the performing situation?

*Du gir mye kommandoer mens musikantene spiller, stopper du plutselig i en konsert eller konkurranse situasjon eller trapper du gradvis ned før en opptreden?*

- In what ways are TSM including as a **community of practice**, or the opposite, excluding in anyway?

*På hvilke måter er TSM inkluderende som et praksisfelleskap, eller det motsatte, ekskluderende på noen måte.*

- What role does the parents' engagement play in the musical work of the band?  
*Hvilken rolle spiller foreldrenes deltagelse i det musikalske arbeidet i korpset?*
- Why do you think the main band in TSM is at such a high level performing?  
*Hvorfor tror du at hovedkorpset i TSM holder et så høyt nivå?*
- What role does the parents' engagement play in the practical work of the band?  
*Hvilken rolle spiller foreldrenes deltagelse i det praktiske arbeidet i korpset?*

Band manager/Korpsleder:

- If your engagement as band manager were a paid job, how big would you estimate the percentage of employment to be?  
*Om ditt engasjement som korpsleder var en betalt jobb, hvor stor ville du anta stillingsprosenten ville være?*
- Why is TSM the best school brass band in Norway?  
*Hvorfor er TSM Norges beste skolekorps?*
- What kind of challenges do you have as a band manager? Please describe.  
*Hvilke utfordringer har du som korpsleder?*
- Have you had any training in communication through your daytime work and how do you value communicational skills? Please describe.  
*Har du hatt noen kurs eller opplæring i kommunikasjon gjennom din dagjobb og hvordan vektlegger du kommunikasjonsferdigheter?*
- What kind of skills learned in a school band do you see as the most important?  
*Hvilke ferdigheter som læres ved å spille i et skolekorps anser du som viktigst?*
- Do you sometimes feel you must compromise with yourself in order to do what is best for the band as a whole?  
*Føler du noen ganger at du må kompromisse med deg selv for å gjøre det som er mest tjenlig for korpset som helhet?*
- How is the relationship with the school's administration? Are you allowed to use an extra classroom if needed without asking for permission?  
*Hvordan er forholdet til skolens administrasjon, har du f.eks tillatelse til å låne et ekstra klasserom ved behov, uten å be om lov?*
- What do you think about taking individual considerations for the band members and have you ever felt ethically challenged by doing or consciously not doing so?  
*Hva mener du om å ta individuelle hensyn og har du noen gang vært i en situasjon hvor du har følt deg etisk testet ved å ta hensyn eller bevisst la være?*

- How many of the parents are active musicians or have been in the past?

*Hvor mange av foreldrene er aktive musikanter eller har vært det i fortiden?*

- What role does the parents' engagement play in the musical work of the band?

*Hvilken rolle spiller foreldrenes deltagelse i det musikalske arbeidet i korpset?*



## Questionnaire:

### Band musicians/Hovedkorps-musikanter:

This is a completely anonymous examination and it is of great importance that you answer as honestly as possible and do not align your answers with other musicians beforehand! You can discuss your answers after submitting at your own choice. Thank you in advance!/  
*Dette er en fullstendig anonym undersøkelse og det er veldig viktig at du svarer så ærlig du kan og ikke samkjører svaret ditt med andre musikanter på forhånd! Dere kan diskutere svarene etter at svarene er levert inn om ønskelig men det er helt valgfritt. På forhånd tusen takk!*

Circle your answer/Sett ring rundt ditt svar:

- Which school are you in; elementary, secondary or high school?  
*Hvilken skole går du på; **grunnskole, ungdomskole eller videregående?***
- What do you think of the amount of time the band spends on practicing each week: is it the right amount, is it too much or too little?  
*Hva synes du om mengden tid korpset bruker på øvelser i uken; det er **riktig mengde, for mye eller for lite.***
- During band practice, does the conductor usually notice if you make a mistake? **Yes, no or sometimes.**  
*Under øvelsen, legger dirigenten vanligvis merke til om du gjør en feil? **Ja, nei, eller av og til.***
- Did your parents play in a school band, **both** or **one**?  
*Spilte dine foreldre i skolekorps, **begge eller en?***
- Do you ever feel the conductor pushes the band too much in order to win a contest: **yes, no, sometimes or just some of the musicians?**

*Føler du noen ganger at dirigenten pusher korpset for mye for å vinne konkurranser:  
Ja, nei, noen ganger, eller kun enkelte musikanter.*

Please give extensive answers:/Vennligst svar utfyllende:

- What motivates you to play in TSM?  
*Hva motiverer deg til å spille i TSM?*
- Please describe your relationship with other band members:  
*Vennligst beskriv ditt forhold til de andre musikantene i korpset:*
- Approximately, how often do you practice at home and does it vary depending on the event coming up, such as preparing for the EYBBC or carolling around Christmas time?  
*Omtrent hvor ofte øver du hjemme og varierer det i forhold til om det nærmer seg EM eller spilling på juletreffester?*
- Why do you think TSM has such a high level, winning a lot of contests and being currently the best school brass band in Norway?  
*Hvorfor tror du TSM holder et veldig høyt nivå og vinner mange konkurranser som det nåværende beste skolekorpset i Norge?*
- What role do you think the parents' involvement has meant for the training in the band and for you as an individual?  
*Hvilken rolle mener du foreldrenes engasjement har betydd for opplæringen i korpset og for deg som musikanter?*
- Have you ever considered leaving the band and for what reason?  
*Har du noen gang vurdert å slutte i korpset og for hvilken grunn?*
- How would your parents, family or friends react if you were to quit the band?  
*Hvordan ville dine foreldre, familie eller venner reagert om du sluttet i korpset?*

## Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

### "miljøet i et konkurransevinnende skolekorps "

Mitt navn er Haldis Bårdsen, jeg er utdannet trombonist fra Griegakademiet og er etter 15 års erfaring som musiker, lærer og dirigent tilbake på skolebenken. Denne gangen ved masterprogrammet til Høgskolen i Bergen, i musikkpedagogikk. Jeg har bakgrunn fra et godt skolekorps i en liten vestlandsbygd og har alltid vært fascinert over hva som rører seg i en slik organisasjon. Valget har falt på Tertnes Skoles Musikkorps og deres vei til suksess og nåværende suksess.

### Bakgrunn og formål

Studien vil innbefatte observasjon av læringsmiljøet i Tertnes Skoles Musikkorps og enkelte intervju av dirigent, korpsleder og tidligere forelder.

Mitt forskningsspørsmål er foreløpig:

Hvordan lykkes lille Tertnes bygd å utvikle et av Norges beste skolekorps?

Deltagelse i studien innebærer at musikantene blir observert i sitt miljø, de anonymiseres i både notater og senere i publikasjonen. Dirigent, korpsleder og tidligere forelder vil være identifiserbare for korpsmiljøet og vurderes derfor publisert med fullt navn.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 15.05.2017.

Alle skriftlige notater vil bli renskrevet over på pc og lagret på Høgskolens forskningsserver.

### Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og korpset kan når som helst trekke sitt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn.

Dersom korpset ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med proff Catharina R Christophersen på tlf: 55 58 59 81.

Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, NSD - Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS.

### Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

På vegne av korpset har jeg mottatt informasjon om studien og muntlig opplyst foresatte og musikanter, og er villig til å delta

Tertnes 23/10 - 2016 

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)



Catharina Christophersen  
Avdeling for lærerutdanning Høgskolen i Bergen  
Postboks 7030  
5020 BERGEN

Vår dato: 18.10.2016

Vår ref: 49961 / 3 / ASF

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

## TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 13.09.2016. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

<i>49961</i>	<i>Tertnes Skoles Musikkorps - en etnografisk case studie.</i>
<i>Behandlingsansvarlig</i>	<i>Høgskolen i Bergen, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
<i>Daglig ansvarlig</i>	<i>Catharina Christophersen</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>Haldis Bårdsen</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstillende kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 15.05.2017, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Amalie Statland Fantoft

Kontaktperson: Amalie Statland Fantoft tlf: 55 58 36 41

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Kopi: Haldis Bårdsen Haldis.Bardsen@stud.hib.no