

An Investigation of Representation and Support in Community Bands:

A Sample Topic Selection Assignment Response for

ENGL 135 at DeVry University in San Antonio

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The materials below address the questions posed to students as they begin to develop topics and papers for ENGL 135: Advanced Composition, as taught at DeVry University in San Antonio. The model is offered in hopes of aiding students in conducting their own work in future terms.

1. What is your topic? Brainstorm five questions about it.

1. Who supports community bands at present?
2. What communities are represented by community bands?
3. Why do the communities that generate community bands generate those they do?
4. What kinds of bands do various communities generate?
5. How might community bands best be supported?

2. How is the topic important to you and how does it affect you? What do you personally hope to gain or accomplish by writing about this topic?

Support and representation within community bands is important to me because I am in a community band. Because I am, how the group's activities are supported is how my activities are supported, and I have a direct stake in that. Additionally, my membership in a group means I am at least tacitly supporting that group's ideologies, including the community identification it represents through its membership. I need to have a firmer handle on what I am aligning with if I

am to ethically align myself with a group. Addressing such issues will help me move ahead with a clear conscience—and perhaps with additional support for myself and others’ joys.

3. Research your topic and provide a brief summary of the current points of view about the topic. Share at least two different/opposing positions on the topic.

Augustin, C. (2010). A descriptive study to determine the opinions of community band members regarding the effectiveness of comprehensive musicianship. *International Journal of Community Music*, 3(2), 175-183. doi: 10.1386/ijcm.3.2.175_1

After introducing the topic and providing context for the study reported in the article, discussion of method (a survey of a mid-sized community wind band) and of results indicate that participants in the community band were largely amenable to educational opportunities afforded by the ensemble. Useful educational strategies emerge, although it must be noted that the sample size in the study is quite small: under 100 respondents. Of note is that the article directly addresses support for instruction in comprehensive musicianship within community bands.

Ibarra., F.P. (2017). Voices from devotional ritual: Practitioners’ unity of purpose to building community in *araquio* musical tradition. *International Journal of Community Music*, 10(2), 171-192. doi: 10.1386/ijcm.10.2.171_1

After providing a historical overview of the *araquio* and some definitions of terms, the author narrates a performance of the form and presents an intermingled interpretation.

Theoretical underpinnings are discussed in advance of methodologies, with implications for community building and generational unity noted. Also noted are the master/apprentice

relationships forged and the reassertions of gender roles concomitant with the performance. Images and figures abound to demonstrate the points discussed in the piece.

4. Describe whom you might choose as your audience. Who are your readers, and what are their needs, motivations, and influences? In what ways will you need to structure your writing to appeal to them?

The expected primary readers are either members of my local community who are in position to offer support to community bands or academic audiences who might have some interest in community organizations and their significance. The former will respond more effectively to pathos appeals than the latter, and they will take a more straightforward, less nuanced and qualified approach.

5. What specific issue will you write about within the larger topic, and what unique angle will you provide?

The more likely focus of the project will be investigating issues of support for community bands. In that line, I will look at how best to secure support for the kind of organization in which I participate, making the case that one or more persons or groups I have yet to identify should provide a particular type of support I have yet to determine. More work is clearly needed.

Should I follow up on representation, I would instead be working on ways community bands generally could increase and maintain their representativeness of their generating communities. Again, specifics will depend on findings yet to be made; more work is needed here, too.