

# Discourse community analysis of the crown point advanced orchestra



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The discourse community that is going to be discussed throughout this essay is orchestra, but more specifically the Crown Point advanced orchestra class. Orchestra is a class elective consisted of four different instruments: violins, violas, cellos, and basses. The violins are split into two different sections, so the class has five different sections. The advanced orchestra class is different from any regular orchestra class because the band plays with them at concerts. When the band joins in, they help create what is known as the symphony orchestra. This essay will be analyzing the Crown Point advanced orchestra through the framework of John Swales' six defining criteria from his article "The Concept of Discourse Community" to prove it is a discourse community.

### Literature Review

A discourse community can be defined as several things, but a basic understanding of one is that it is a community that groups people based on their common interests. The Crown Point advanced orchestra class is a discourse community. Several resources have been used to help prove this to be true. These resources include a John Swales article titled "The Concept of Discourse Community," two articles from Strad magazine, Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia, and Music Educators Journal. One article from Strad magazine that was used is titled "Peak performing" and was written by Lauriel Owen and the second article from Strad magazine is titled "Competitive Advantage" and was written by Pauline Harding. The article from Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia is titled "Orchestra". The last article was from Music Educators journal and is titled "Inside Out: Integrating Creative Practices into the Orchestra Classroom". This article was <https://assignbuster.com/discourse-community-analysis-of-the-crown-point-advanced-orchestra/>

written by Leo Park. These sources were used to help understand what exactly a discourse community is and to help explain how the advanced orchestra class is a discourse community and how it follows Swales' six defining criteria.

## Analysis

The first criteria that is stated in John Swales' article "The Concept of Discourse Community" that helps determine if a certain group can be classified as a discourse community or not says that a "discourse community has a broadly agreed set of common public goals," (Swales, 1987). To rephrase this, one could say it is about a common goal within the group that makes them a discourse community, not the reason why they are in the group. Everyone's decision to be in orchestra is different. It could be that someone's parents force them to be in it, maybe someone just has a passion for music, maybe another person just needs an art credit to help them graduate, or a million other possibilities. Those reasons, however, are not important to be classified as a discourse community. What is important is the goal of everyone involved in the orchestra, and there are several goals when being a part of an orchestra. Some of the main goals include growing as a musician, working together with others, and to make the audience feel something from the music when performing. Leo Park states in his article titled "Inside Out: Integrating Creative Practices into the Orchestra Classroom", "My primary objective as a high school orchestra educator is to help students develop and refine their perceptual and technical acquires as orchestra musicians . . . reading and translating music notation with accuracy and confidence . . . performing in an expressive manner.'" This quote from <https://assignbuster.com/discourse-community-analysis-of-the-crown-point-advanced-orchestra/>

the article helps show what some of the goals are for an orchestra class from a high school music director and how the whole class shares a common goal no matter why they may be in the class.

The second criteria stated in John Swales' article states that a "discourse community has mechanisms of intercommunication among its members" (Swales, 1987). In other words, this means that even though some people don't interact in the group, they all have some form of communication with each other. In orchestra, not everyone talks to everyone in the class. However, all of the instruments interact and communicate with each other in order to make music since they have to work together to stay in time with the director. Another example of the orchestra using communication with each other is through remind. Remind is an app that helps teachers communicate with students. The music conductor for the advanced orchestra uses remind to stay in contact with students outside of school to inform them about practices, homework, and future chair tests.

The third criteria fits in with the first two in John Swales' article, and it states that a "discourse community uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback" (Swales, 1987). This means that the communication within the group is helping work towards the shared goal of the group talked about in the first criteria. In orchestra, the members all have to communicate with each other with their instruments at least if they don't use their voices to communicate. By communicating with each other in this way, the class can help reach their goals of working together and growing as a musician to help improve their musical abilities and make the audience feel the music when they perform it. In a Strad magazine article, <https://assignbuster.com/discourse-community-analysis-of-the-crown-point-advanced-orchestra/>

Laurinel Owen stated, “ I learnt that everyone’s role in the orchestra is important.” This quote is correct because everyone’s role in an orchestra is important, so if they are not all working together to reach their goals through communication, then the community will not succeed in reaching their goals.

The fourth criteria that Swales uses to define the characteristics of a “ discourse community states that a discourse community utilizes and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims”(Swales, 1987). A quote from the same article states that “ such grouping need, as it were to settle down and work their communicative proceedings and practices before they can be recognized as discourse communities,”(Swales, 1987). This means that meetings and practices within a community help lay a foundation of establishment for the community. In orchestra, almost every Monday night, there are rehearsals to help the band and orchestra practice together so they will improve by the time a concert arrives. By going to these practices, the members of the orchestra will be working towards their shared common goals, and can, therefore, be recognized as a discourse community.

The fifth criteria that is talked about in Swales’ article states that “ in addition to owning genres, a discourse community has acquired some specific lexis”(Swales, 1987). This means that a discourse community has its own terminology that its members can understand clearly, while nonmembers, on the other hand, may either not understand it, or they will misinterpret it. If people who are not part of an orchestra or other music-related class hear musicians talking musical terms, they will most likely be very confused and not understand what is being said. For example, while <https://assignbuster.com/discourse-community-analysis-of-the-crown-point-advanced-orchestra/>

reading sheet music, the conductor might tell the orchestra to watch out for a part of the music marked piano or forte. To musicians, they will know that the piano marking means to play quieter and the forte marking means to play louder. However, if a non-member of the orchestra is to hear these words, they might not know what it means or they might misinterpret the meaning of the terms.

The sixth and final criteria in Swales' article states that a "discourse community has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discursal expertise"(Swales, 1987). This means that a discourse community has a standard number of members that begin as new members and leave by voluntary or involuntary means after reaching a specific level of expertise. This describes the crown point orchestra perfectly. Once seniors leave the advanced class because they graduate, they have to be replaced by new students from the intermediate class, and once those students leave the intermediate class to go to advanced, new freshmen will take their place in the intermediate class and the cycle continues. A quote from the Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia says, "The number of players in a modern orchestra can vary from about two dozen or fewer to well over 100." The same source also says, "As 19th-century composers sought new, dramatic ways to express themselves in music, orchestras became larger by early 20th century about 100 players was considered optimal,"("Orchestra," 2018). Like these orchestras, the advanced orchestra has a set number of players needed each year to keep the balance of sound between the instruments, that is why auditions are done each year to see

which members of the intermediate orchestra can make it in and which ones will stay.

## Conclusion

To conclude all of this, the Crown Point advanced orchestra is a discourse community. A discourse community can be defined as a community that groups people together based on a shared common goal. It is a discourse community because it meets all six criteria to identify a group as a discourse community according to John Swales' article titled "The Concept of Discourse Community." Sources besides the John Swales article include articles from *Strad* magazine, New World Encyclopedia, and Music Educators Journal were used to help prove that the orchestra follows the criteria and is, in fact, a discourse community.

## References

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