

CURRENT STUDENT ASSESSMENT PRACTICES
OF HIGH SCHOOL BAND DIRECTORS

By

JOHN P. LACOGNATA

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This work is dedicated to my father, John J. LaCognata, my role model, mentor, and best friend.

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CURRENT STUDENT ASSESSMENT PRACTICES
OF HIGH SCHOOL BAND DIRECTORS

By

John P. LaCognata

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Chair: Timothy S. Brophy
Major: Music Education

Measurement and assessment are becoming increasingly important to all music educators. The purpose of this study was to investigate the following questions: 1) in what specific ways are current high school band directors assessing students in their ensemble classes; 2) what are high school band directors' attitudes toward the assessment process; and 3) how can the results of this research contribute to the development of a student assessment model for bands? The subjects for this study were 454 high school band directors from across the United States.

Results show that the main purpose of student assessment for high school band directors centered on providing their students and themselves with feedback concerning the instructional process in the classroom. Directors reported that performance skills were the most important criteria to assess in their students and the main influences of the assessment methods they use are their personal philosophy of assessment and available class time. Directors reported the best source of preparation for assessing their students came from their colleagues and that they are interested in finding new ways to assess their students. Directors suggest that an effective assessment model for band would be weighted: rehearsal attendance and contribution 34.95%;

performance attendance and contribution 34.70%; and individual testing and evaluation 30.57%.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

While many high school band directors do a very good job of teaching and preparing ensembles for performances, very few have developed and implemented an effective assessment tool to use when assigning grades for their students. Having a way to assign student grades with proper rationale and supporting data is essential in this age of school accountability and grade-point minded students and parents. The days of abstract grading systems or teacher-bias grade assignment are gone. Instrumental music educators can no longer simply grade their students on attendance and perceived effort or interest (Abeles, 1995; Pizer, 1990).

A “Google™ search” of the phrase “high school band grading policy” results in approximately 460,000 hits. Consider the following five examples regarding current grading policies listed in high school band handbooks found on various band web pages. Attention should focus on the selection of specific assessment components, the wording or explanation of that component, and the percent the component is assigned in the overall grading plan.

Examples

Wisconsin

- **Attendance: 30%**

Absences and tardiness disrupt the learning environment. Students need regular day-to-day attendance and must be punctual to maintain a sense of continuity in their program. Even one absence can affect the success and educational outcome for the individual and the entire class on that day. Music rehearsals are particularly difficult to make-up since the process is so experiential. It is impossible to re-create what the other students experienced the preceding day.

Attendance at all performances is critical for every student in the ensemble. Every student in the band has a specific role in the group and an absence is

very noticeable. If you will miss a performance or rehearsal (outside of the school day), please complete a Notice of Planned Absence form. If a student's absence is because of involvement in another school activity, it is your responsibility to notify the director of the activity via the Notice of Planned Absence form. If an emergency situation arises, please notify the director of the situation as soon as is feasible.

For each unexcused absence from a band performance, the final semester grade will be reduced by one letter grade.

- **Assessments: 30%**

The number of assessments will vary each quarter. Each assessment will receive points for the quality of work. Assessments will be given a due date and it is the student's responsibility to see that the assessment is completed on time. Work turned in late will be reduced by one letter grade for each day that it is late. It is the student's responsibility to make up any missed assessments.

Audio recordings may be submitted for playing tests. This can be done by cassette tape, CD, DVD, mp3, wav or any other electronic format that is compatible with the high school's technology capabilities. Difficulties with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility to turn in assessments by the due date.

Typical assessments might include, but are not limited to, any of the following: playing tests (scales, excerpts from literature, etc.) chair auditions, quizzes and/or other written assignments.

- **Participation by Effort, Attitude and Preparation: 30%**

A positive attitude is the underlying ingredient necessary to the success of each ensemble and in turn each member of that ensemble. The student is expected to leave one's ego at the door and become a team player approaching all new music and ideas with an open mind, seeing each as an opportunity to learn. We must work together and encourage one another to achieve success. Full and positive participation in every rehearsal and performance is expected of every band student.

- **Lessons/Sectionals: 10%**

Many things are accomplished in individual or small group settings that cannot be accomplished in full ensemble rehearsals. Therefore, attendance is required at all scheduled lessons and sectionals.

(Wisconsin Lutheran High School Band, 2009)

California

Participation: 25%

The participation grade includes being prepared for class, having your instrument, music, and pencil. Students are expected to actively participate in class. Activities which don't allow students to participate daily will cause a drop in the participation grade. If students are not allowed to participate due to behavior, this will negatively affect their participation grade for the day. Students who have regularly non-working instruments, and delay in getting repairs, will have their participation grade lowered for the days involved.

Performances: 25%

Students are expected to participate in scheduled performances, during or outside of school hours. Very few reasons will be accepted for failing to participate in a scheduled concert. As our concerts are scheduled WELL in advance, ample planning is easy. If students are not in the required uniform for a performance, they will not be allowed to participate, and will receive a zero grade for that performance.

Playing and Written Tests: 50%

Students will be tested during band class on a regular basis. These grades will be averaged and will account for half of the band grade. Tests will be weighted evenly, whether announced or not announced ahead of time. Missed tests must be made up, just as in any other class.

(Heritage School Band, 2008)

New York

Rehearsals: 34%

Preparedness – have all necessary equipment needed for class (i.e., Instrument, music, pencil, marching band lyre/music) and be able to play to the best of your ability. Behavior/Attitude – pay attention, listen to directions, and do not disrupt class or rehearsals by talking or passing notes, etc. with others in the band. Be On Time

Lessons: 34%

Attendance – The number of lessons attended will directly affect student's grade. Each lesson is important to attend when scheduled as students may be assigned group assignments to be worked on together for an evaluation each quarter. Preparedness – practice your assignments. I will be checking band lockers to see if instruments are going home for practice on

weekends. Practice in school during study hall counts!! (6% of total grade)
Responsibility – If you have to miss a lesson (i.e., Test/quiz in class, etc.) let me know in advance and schedule a make-up lesson time. Make-up lessons can receive a maximum score of 8 pts out of the possible 10 pts for regularly scheduled lessons, unless you inform me of the missed lesson in advance.

Events Attendance: 12%

Attend performances the band plays in! Every member is important to the success of the performance. Wear proper attire.

Written/Playing Assignments: 12%

Complete them and hand them in on time. Your grade will be directly affected by whether or not you do these assignments.

Final Project: 10%

(Northeastern Clinton Central School District, 2004-2005)

Washington

Individual Practice/Practice Sheets: 20%

In order for students to improve their playing skills they must practice on their own. Without individual practice a student will simply not improve, nor will they build up the physical and mental stamina needed to make it through a concert. Students will receive Practice Sheets roughly every two weeks. Students log their practice time (which parent(s) verify with their initials), turn the sheets in to the band office by the due date. Practice time will be posted in the grade book and calculated as follows:

- (A) Exceeding Standard = 3 hours per week (1/2 hr. daily)
- (B) Meeting Standard = 2 hours per week
- (C) Approaching Standard = 1 hour per week
- (F) Below Standard = 0 Practice Time

Performance Assessment: 20%

Performance Assessments (playing tests) will be done on assigned material covered in class. Most playing tests involve a student being recorded in a practice room, alone, playing through the assigned music. The teacher will listen to and evaluate each student performance, and provide feedback regarding their skills. In the Concert Band, Jazz Ensemble, and Intermediate Band, some performance assessments may take place in the classroom during rehearsal. Grades for performance assessments will be calculated and posted using the scale above (95=A, 85=B, etc.).

Written Assessments: 10%

Written assessments will be given on material covered in class, such as notation, rhythmic dictation, and music theory, terms/definitions, etc. Written assessments will be graded and posted using the same scale as above.

Daily Activity Assessment: 50%

Activity assessment will indicate a student's understanding and application of proper rehearsal etiquette during daily rehearsals and related band activities (concerts, assemblies, etc.). Proper rehearsal etiquette, simply put, means proper rehearsal manners. This involves teamwork, consideration, respect, LISTENING, etc, and is vital to a positive learning environment in band. Activity Assessment will be calculated and posted using the same scale as above.

(Todd Beamer High School, 2009)

Texas**Participation: 25%**

The student will receive a grade for each before and after school sectional and rehearsal during a grading period. The student will be on task on focused during all rehearsals. The student will have instrument, music, pencil, and supplies. The student will mark music and take notes as needed. An unexcused absence from a before or after school rehearsal or sectional will lower a student's participation average of the six weeks by 20 points. Tardies lower a student's participation average by 5 points.

Skills: 25%

The student will be expected to improve individual music skills. The students' individual skill development will be evaluated through taped music tests, individual playing tests, scale tests, and written tests. The student will be evaluated on improvement of ensemble skills during daily rehearsals.

Fundamentals: 25%

The student will be expected to improve performance fundamentals. The student will be evaluated for improvement of music fundamentals through daily observation during the "basics" part of each rehearsal and during sectionals. The student will be expected to demonstrate correct posture, hand position, embouchure, air production, articulation and attentiveness as monitored during rehearsals. The student will be expected to develop a historical knowledge of the literature relative to his/her respective instrument.

Performance: 25%

The student will receive a grade for each performance during a grading period. Performances will be counted as major exams. The number of performances will be determined by the performance calendar. If no public performance occurs during a grading period, the performance grade will be based upon informal classroom performances determined by the director.

(Lake Highlands Area Band Club, 2008)

Table 1-1. Summary of example assessment components and percentage assignment.

Example number	Assessment component	Assigned percentage
1	Attendance	30
	Assessments	30
	Participation	30
	Lessons/sectionals	10
2	Participation	25
	Performances	25
	Playing/written tests	50
3	Rehearsals	34
	Lessons	34
	Event attendance	12
	Written/playing assignments	10
4	Individual practice/practice sheets	20
	Performance assessments	20
	Written assessments	10
	Daily activity assessment	50
5	Participation	25
	Skills	25
	Fundamentals	25
	Performance	25

Observations

The first observation concerning these excerpts involves the variety of components used in these grading policies. Components incorporated in the excerpts included attendance, events attendance, assessments, playing tests/assignments, written tests/assignments, participation, rehearsals, daily activity assessment, lessons, sectionals, performances, and individual practice. We assume each director has selected individual assessment components in an effort to reinforce important aspects of their ensemble class and/or enforce policies they feel are essential to the efficient

operation of their band program. While there appears to be certain commonalities in the design or purpose of the components selected by individual directors, there is not an agreement of what specific components should be incorporated in their grading policies. One basic characteristic of the individual assessments components does exist. Each of these assessment components can be divided into two distinct categories: musical, and non musical. Musical components mentioned in the excerpts include playing and written tests/assignments, performances, lessons, and sectionals. Examples of non musical components are participation, attendance, effort, and attitude. It is evident that each director has combined assessment components from each of these categories in their grading policies.

The second observation concerning these excerpts involves the wording or explanation associated with each individual assessment component. There is no evidence from these excerpts of any standard definitions for the components, nor does there seem to be a commonly accepted way to incorporate these components into an overall assessment tool. Each director appears to be isolated when defining how and why individual components are being included in their grading policies. Directors are required to create their own explanation and rationale associated with each component they select.

The final observation of these excerpts is the variety of emphasis the directors place on the different assessment components. Some directors place nearly equal weights to each assessment component (i.e., 30%, 30%, 30%, 10%), while others place much more weight on one component versus its counterparts (i.e., 50%, 25%, 25%). There is great variety in the importance each individual assessment component is

assigned in the included grading policies. Further, it becomes the job of each director to create a justification for assigning emphasis to the various components used. There is no evidence of a generally accepted model or plan for weighing the various assessment components in an assessment tool.

In the process of grading their students, band directors must 1) select appropriate assessment components, 2) define those components to ensure they are accurately measuring what is intended, and 3) combine and weigh the various components to produce an effective assessment tool. Each of these decisions is inter-related and affects the validity of their assessment tool. There is little evidence to suggest there is a widely accepted assessment model that secondary band directors can refer to when designing their grading policies.

Significance of the Problem

Assessment has become an important and visible part of today's educational environment. In many states, schools are assessed and assigned a letter grade based on how they score in certain areas (Miller, 2007). These grades are made public, reported through the media, and listed on department of education websites. Schools receiving high marks are praised and often receive additional funding from state and federal agencies. Schools receiving failing marks are placed on probation. Often a sense of crisis can be felt throughout that learning community. Administrators are often fired and teachers questioned in an effort to bring that grade up the next year (Paswaters, 2006). These school grades have changed the way teachers and administrators approach curriculum, class assignment, and scheduling (Eyeran, 2002; Lopez, 2006). The concept of school grades has also changed the way students and parents view grading and assessment in each of their classes (Lehman, 1997).

A problem for many band directors is the lack of training concerning grading and student assessment. Grading systems are rarely if ever discussed in an undergraduate music education curriculum, and most discussions on assessment only apply to general education courses, which have little or no application in a performance-based music ensemble class. There is little guidance for music educators on how to properly design an assessment tool. Further, there are no commonly accepted assessment models that educators can copy and adapt to their specific situation (Tracy, 2002).

An early study (MENC, 1953) divided the undergraduate music education curriculum into four categories: general culture, basic music, musical performance, and professional education. Since that study, there have been numerous articles and dissertations concerned with the subject of educating music educators (Mathison, 1971; Wilbur, 1955). An examination of the current curriculum of undergraduate music education majors includes the following components: music theory, ear training, music history, instrument techniques courses, piano, conducting, applied music study, general education courses, general studies, ensembles, and a student teaching internship (Meaux, 2004).

The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) emphasizes the importance of assessment training in the undergraduate music education curriculum. As stated in their handbook under the sub-heading of *Teaching Competencies* the following statement addresses this topic.

An understanding of evaluative techniques and ability to apply them in assessing both the musical progress of students and the objective and procedures of the curriculum (National Association of Schools of Music, 2009, p. 100).

We continue to observe developments in the music education curriculum as collegiate teachers make an effort to address the needs of future music educators. However, there still exists the need to examine and refine what is offered to these students in an effort to set them up to be successful teachers. One area currently overlooked in preparing these music educators is the subject of student grading and assessment (Reid, 2005).

Another factor that has placed a great deal of attention on classroom assessment is college entrance requirements. It is becoming more competitive for high school students to gain acceptance into many colleges and universities (Chapman, 2004). Students begin concerning themselves with entrance exam scores and their high school grade-point average (GPA) before they ever arrive at high school. This results in a great deal of attention given to each grade placed on their transcript. Teachers are held accountable for every mark they assign students with the understanding of how it may affect their future college plans (Cope, 1996).

The problem of proper assessment and grading is further compounded by the pressures and time constraints placed on high school band programs and the perception by directors that the process of assessment is time consuming and tedious (Lehman, 1997). Most high school band directors begin their school year with a marching performance every Friday night, and rehearsals during and after school many nights of the week. Many directors would argue that they barely have enough time to prepare their ensembles for these public performances and do not have the luxury of dealing with assessment in any detail. Bennett Reimer further discusses this view in his book *A Philosophy of Music Education*:

Performance directors are driven to perform fine concerts; that is how their success is judged. This is further intensified in the community of school music teachers, whose values, shaped by the surrounding forces center strongly on producing the best possible players, singers, and groups. The emphasis in the music program is almost completely on performance, and that emphasis over the years has garnered strong support from both parents and school administrators (Reimer, 1989).

In addition, many high school band programs enroll over a hundred students and the idea of tracking and accounting for each student in terms of assessment becomes daunting to most directors (Chiodo, 2001).

There is a growing need for the development of an effective student assessment model for high school bands. An effective model should be easy to implement and should address the important musical, educational, and organizational issues common to most band programs. An effective model should also motivate students to develop on their instruments and have a positive experience in their high school music careers.

There currently is not a widely accepted model for assessment in the high school instrumental ensemble class. While there are generally accepted models for warm-ups, ensemble tuning, and even literature selection, nothing in the way of assessment models is typically discussed or practiced. Each band director is individually responsible for development and implementation of an assessment tool for use when grading his or her students. While each assessment tool needs to have individual flexibility in relation to the specific situation (school, director, etc.), I believe certain assessment components and methods of implementation apply to all band programs. Despite the many differences among band programs a great many fundamental elements are common to all. These elements become the framework for the assessment tool implemented by those directors.

With little research done in the area of student assessment, the question becomes “how do we find or develop an accurate assessment model that can be used by secondary band directors when grading their students?” Theories and assumptions can only go so far when we are dealing with this very real topic. In addition to the study of assessment model building, I believe a great deal can be learned from studying the individual assessment systems that current band directors have developed for their band programs. In the end, these are the experts in operating instrumental classrooms in our schools. These are the people running our high school band programs across the country. This is the one group that should understand the issues and challenges in assessing students and assigning grades to students participating in high school band programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate current student assessment practices of high school band directors in the United States. The study will also investigate the directors’ attitudes toward the student assessment process. The end goal of the study is to develop a valid and practical student assessment model that can be used by high school band directors. The development of this model will be guided by new research results in the form of a national survey. The following research questions guided this study:

1. In what specific ways are current high school band directors assessing students in their ensemble classes?
2. What are high school band directors’ attitudes toward the assessment process?
3. How can the results of this research contribute to the development of a student assessment model for bands?

Delimitations

1. While all levels of music education would benefit from an effective student assessment model, this study specifically dealt with the high school (9th to 12th grade) level. Many similarities exist from level to level (especially middle school and high school band). However, the pressure placed on performance ensembles at the high school level from the school and surrounding community dictate many aspects of their program, making it unique.
2. While all ensemble disciplines in a high school music program (band, chorus, and orchestra) share many of the same challenges in terms of student grading and assessment, many factors are unique to each discipline. In this study, the scope of the investigation was limited to classes involving band performance-based ensembles.
3. Sample size for this study was limited to approximately 5,000 subjects and only included responses from high school band programs in the United States whose directors were members of The National Association for Music Education (MENC). This was necessary because the largest available national database for high school band directors is maintained by MENC. Further, the largest random sample the researcher could acquire from MENC was 5,000 subjects. The sample should be sufficient to generalize results of the questionnaire to all U.S. high school band programs whose directors are members of MENC.

Definition of Terms

ASSESSMENT: an observation of what a student knows and is able to do. Assessment is the process of collecting, describing, and analyzing information about student performance or program effectiveness in order to make educational decisions.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT: any assessment technique other than traditional norm-referenced or criterion-referenced pencil-and-paper tests, that uses strategies for collecting and analyzing information.

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT: assessment techniques that gather information about students' ability to perform tasks found in real-world situations.

CRITERION-REFERENCED TEST: a measurement of achievement of specific criteria or skills in terms of absolute levels of mastery. The focus is on performance of an individual as measured against a standard or criteria, rather than against the performance of others who take the same test, as with norm-referenced tests.

EVALUATION: the collection and use of information (assessments) to make informed educational decisions.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT: an ongoing assessment made in an educational program for the purpose of improving the program as it progresses.

MEASUREMENT: the use of a systematic methodology to observe behaviors in order to represent the degree of performance ability, task completion, and concept attainment.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: an evaluation in which students are asked to engage in a complex task, often involving the creation of a product. Student performance is rated based on the process the student engages in and/or based on the product of his/her task. Many performance assessments emulate actual workplace activities or real-life skill applications that require higher-order processing skills. Performance assessments can be individual or group-oriented.

PERFORMANCE TASK: a demonstration in which a student is able to show his or her ability to use learned material in real-world situations.

PORTFOLIO: a file of student work centered in a particular topic or content area.

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT: an analysis of a collection of student work to show student achievement and attainment of standards in a specific content area. Student progress is decided by reviewing the collected works in reference to previously conceived criteria.

RUBRIC: a set of guidelines for giving scores. A typical rubric states all the dimensions being assessed, contains a scale, and helps the rater place the given work properly on the scale.

SELF-ASSESSMENT: analysis of one's own achievement or abilities.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: the judgment of students' capabilities in a subject, formed from information collected from performance tasks directly related to well-defined, educationally sound performance criteria.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT: an assessment, administered at the conclusion of an education program, used to determine the overall effectiveness of that program.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review presents a description and synthesis in the areas identified as central to the present study: definition of assessment, assessment history, assessment in education, assessment in music education, student assessment in music, assigning grades to band students, and the development of an assessment model. The review will conclude with a discussion of recent research in the area of student assessment in the music classroom as they are related to the purposes of the present study.

Definition of Assessment

Assessment can be defined as “the process of documenting knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs. Assessment can focus on the individual learner, the institution, the learning community, or the educational system as a whole” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2009). While this definition appears adequate, our profession lacks agreement on the terminology used in assessment research. Other terms commonly associated with assessment include evaluation, measurement, and testing. These terms are often used interchangeably, causing much confusion regarding the names and labels associated with current assessment techniques and principles (Bessom, 1980).

Hart (1994) attempts to clarify these discrepancies by providing separate definitions for each specific term. He defines *assessment* as gathering information about what students know and can do. Teachers collect this information in a variety of ways including observing students, examining their work, and testing their knowledge and skills. He defines *evaluation* as a process that involves interpreting the information

gathered from assessment, as a means of determining whether the students have learned what the teacher wanted them to learn. A *test* is defined as a type of assessment instrument or tool used to determine whether a student has achieved the main goals of instruction.

An additional term often associated with assessment is grading. *Grading* can be defined as the process of reporting and recording student progress (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2009). Hoffer (2000) said the teacher ultimately “needs to establish clear-cut criteria for grading, consistent with the overall evaluation procedures of the school”. The teacher’s role relating to grades can be complex. The common goal of this process should be to make the assigned grades as fair, consistent, and objective as possible (Brookhart, 1993).

Philosophical Rationales of Assessment

Contemporary philosophical views on assessment are based on the earlier schools of thought on the subjects of learning and education. This literature review will begin with an examination of three basic philosophical schools and their views on learning and assessment.

Rationalism

Rationalism (often referred to as idealism) maintains that a person’s consciousness of what is perceived is an integral part of reality. The central thesis of rationalism is that knowledge is a fixed body of truth that applies in all times and places. It began with Socrates (470?-300 B.C.) and Plato (427-347 B.C.) in ancient Greece, and proponents include Rene Descartes (1596-1650), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Georg Hegel (1770-1831), and a number of English and American philosophers.

Probably the greatest strength of rationalism is its conscious intellectual approach to reality, the way reality is known, and the values that should be held. Another strength of rationalism is its stability. It provides conclusions that are not going to be buffeted about, by each novel breeze or whim. What is true is true, always was true, and always will be true.

Rationalists have a rather great interest in evaluating students' learning. They see evaluation as an important part of education. Traditionally the rationalists, especially Socrates, followed the dialogue procedure in which a teacher and student probed and searched together to uncover truth. Over the ages, the emphasis changed more to students learning what was believed to be valuable and lasting. Student learning is evaluated not just on factual knowledge or skill development; but rather from more subjective, more probing, and comprehensive evaluations of the students' work (Abeles, 1995).

Empiricism

The roots of Empiricism (often called realism) reach back to Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). The heart of realism is the acceptance of "what is clear to everyone." Things are what they appear to be; not representations of some greater but invisible reality. Empiricists believed the road to truth is through observation and scientific evidence. Some of the important names associated with Empiricism include Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), John Locke (1632-1704), and the American philosopher-psychologist William James (1842-1910).

The main strength of empiricism lies in its practical quality. Empiricists take whatever information they have and work with it as best they can, even though they

realize their knowledge is not perfect or complete. In short, this philosophical position deals with reality as it can best be known.

Like rationalists, empiricists are interested in evaluating the results of instruction. However, they are more interested in the acquisition of specific information and skills (the ones deemed necessary to function in society and an area of work). Empiricists see teachers as central in the educational process. Teachers largely decide what will be taught and how it will be taught. If they are not the only source of information, teachers tell students where to locate it (Abeles, 1995).

Pragmatism

The roots of pragmatism go back to Heraclitus (sixth to fifth centuries B.C.) and the Sophists in ancient Greece. Heraclitus emphasized the idea that all things change; nothing is permanent. The logic of pragmatism is the scientific method. People associated with pragmatism include Francis Bacon (1561-1626); Auguste Comte (1798-1857); and American philosophers Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), and John Dewey (1859-1952).

The strength of pragmatism lies in its attention to the process of uncovering the truth. It does not depend on what one thinks is natural, or on mental cognition, or on perception of the world. Instead it proposes the scientific method as the best means for determining reality.

Logically, pragmatists are more interested in evaluation than are the holders of other philosophical positions, since consideration of the results is a part of the scientific process. The evaluation, however, is not concerned solely with what content has been learned, but concentrates on the methods of learning used by the teacher. Pragmatists see teachers as agents who impart to the young the techniques for living and acquiring

knowledge. Teachers also instruct students how to meet the new situations that will inevitably arise; in a sense, the students are educated for change (Abeles, 1995).

Abeles, Hoffer, and Klotman (1995) suggest three reasons why all music educators should think about philosophical matters as they relate to teaching (research). One reason for doing this is that all teachers make decisions as part of their work, and most of these decisions have philosophical implications. A second reason for considering such matters is that basic understandings and beliefs provide, or at least should provide, a sense of direction and perspective. A third reason for thinking about philosophical topics is that teachers should be consistent in the different actions they take.

A basic understanding of these three philosophical viewpoints (rationalism, empiricism, and pragmatism) provides some background for making research decisions concerning assessment. Examining the differences and similarities in how each viewpoint approaches education, evaluation, and assessment can provide strength to future directions in these fields.

Assessment History

While some view assessment as an outgrowth of educational reform, its history can be traced back more than 4,000 years. As early as 2,000 BC, there is evidence that civil service testing in China was established in an effort to select employees based on merit rather than preference. In 200 BC, Socrates developed and used conversational methods of assessment to test his students' ability to describe and rhetorically defend their stated views and opinions. In addition, early Olympic Games included the evaluation of poets and musicians as well as athletes (Cole, 1995).

More recently, when America entered World War I in 1917, tests were needed to determine who was fit for officers' training school at a time when the U.S. Army was drafting large numbers of soldiers. The Army Alpha test, the first widely distributed multiple-choice test, determined intelligence by measuring verbal ability. Upon discovering that many of the military recruits were functionally illiterate, the Army produced a second test. The Army Beta test used mazes and puzzles to measure intelligence and required no specific language skills (Thorndike, 2005).

Educational testing appeared in the United States during the 18th century in the form of oral exams given by university faculty to determine the quality of their students' academic performance. Edward Thorndike's 1904 publication, *An Introduction to the Theory of Mental and Social Measurements*, became the foundation for much of the testing effort in the early 1900s and earned him the recognition as the "father of educational measurement" (Mabry, 1999).

The beginning of standardized testing can also be traced to the work of Alfred Binet who developed the use of intelligence testing in Paris, France, in the early 20th century. City and educational leaders asked Binet to develop a test to help determine which students would be more apt to succeed, and which might be more apt to fail. Binet's work led to the creation of the first intelligence tests, and the model for the intelligence quotient known as IQ. The resulting success of the 1913 *Stanford-Binet* test led to the creation of many new achievement and aptitude tests from the 1920s through the 1950s. Revised forms of some early 20th century tests are still used today, such as the *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*, the *Stanford-9*, and the *Scholastic Assessment Test* (Trice, 2000).

In the 1830s, Horace Mann devised the first standardized written exams in Massachusetts and Connecticut. His 1846 *Boston Survey* was the first large-scale test printed for use in assessing student achievement in the areas of grammar, geography, history, philosophy, geometry, astronomy, writing, and math. By the middle of the twentieth century, educational and psychological testing became a lucrative business. Many new standardized tests were published including the *American College Test*, and the *General Aptitude Test Battery*. In 1947, Henry Chauncey founded the *Educational Testing Service*, which continues to provide tests and other services to the education community (Kancianic, 2006).

America's 1941 entry into World War II required the creation of many new batteries of tests. Louis Leon Thurstone's refinement of factor analysis procedures enabled tests to categorize individuals across several dimensions. The success of the factor analysis method resulted in fewer military dropouts and the creation of several taxonomies of human behavior. In particular, psychologist Benjamin Bloom's (1971) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* dominated assessment and educational psychology textbook chapters (McMillan, 2003).

The current state of assessment has been greatly influenced by technology. With the invention of the computer in the 1960s, data could be gathered, stored, and analyzed with greater efficiency and less cost. Current technology makes it possible to assess large populations in various locations and have statistical results of data instantaneously. This type of technology can also be programmed to guide and adapt an assessment to address the specific responses of an individual, allowing countless options in assessment formats.

Assessment tests are currently used in a number of settings. In education assessments, aptitude and achievement tests are used for a variety of purposes. Career assessment tests are used for job placement and employment-screening tests by companies to help determine the skills and knowledge of future employees. In addition, there are personality-type assessments, and assessment tests used by government agencies to determine need for admittance in specialized programs.

Assessment in Education

According to John Dewey (1916) the role of assessment should be to interact with instruction to help the child realize full growth through successive habit formations. Active habits involve thought, invention, and initiative in applying capacities to new aims. Dewey also said (1910) concepts enable us to generalize, extend and carry over our understanding from one thing to another. It would be impossible to overestimate the educational importance of arriving at concepts. They apply in a variety of situations, are in constant referral, and give standardized, known points of reference. Without this conceptualizing, nothing is gained that can be carried over to the better understanding of new experiences. The deposit is what counts, educationally speaking.

Dewey stressed the importance of assessment being applicable to course content and its logical outreach of the material being presented in the classroom. Assessment of material should reinforce important concepts related to the content being studied. The idea of applying these concepts to related material is important in Dewey's approach to assessment and education. Dewey emphasized means as being equal to ends; that is, the way one gains information is as important as the information itself (Abeles, 1995).

Assessment is needed to appraise student progress, to provide guidance and motivation for learning, and to identify areas where improvements are needed in either instruction or the program (Colwell, 1982). Assessment should also serve as a useful and essential tool in the classroom. It can be used to evaluate student progress, set standards, guide instruction, and communicate student progress to parents and administrators (Farrell, 1997).

In 2001, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (Linn, 2005) developed guidelines for teacher competencies in assessment. They recommended that successful teachers should be able to

1. Create a variety of assessment tasks and materials for assessing student learning
2. Plan assessments before planning instruction
3. Present assessments at appropriate times in the instructional sequence
4. Ensure that students understand what they are expected to know and be able to do
5. Ensure that students understand how they will be assessed, upon what criteria they will be judged, and how this information will help them to improve
6. Use a variety of meaningful student self-assessment techniques

In addition, our federal government has had a huge impact on assessment in education. The federal government invested \$1.3 billion in public education through the *Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965*. With this significant financial investment came a heightened expectation of student performance and accountability (Mark 1999). In 1983, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) reported many shortcomings in the American Education system, including a steady decline in standardized test scores. The most recent legislation influencing student assessment has been the *No Child Left Behind Act*

(*NCLB*) of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The NCLB act requires subject-specific accountability for student learning which has resulted in large-scale testing at the state level.

Effective assessment measures reveal even more than what students know and understand. They must also indicate how those new understandings evolved. Assessment serves as evidence of the broadening and deepening of students' capacities to solve sophisticated problems, make sensitive judgments, and complete complex projects. It would seem that the development of a complete inventory of assessment types and how to implement these techniques would be of great assistance for educators and administrators (Farrell, 1997).

Assessment in Music Education

Reimer states the following in regard to music tests and testing:

The profession needs much more experience in gathering and presenting evidence about the growth of essential musical behaviors, and we need, as well, good tests to help us gather and present this evidence. Tests in the future will be more holistic, more oriented to real-world problem solving and processing of musical information and the making of musical judgments and decisions; that is, to the measurement of musical intelligence in a variety of manifestations. Such tests and other modes of professional evaluation will add to our status as a bona fide curriculum and add to our professional expertise. Tests can be abusive, as we know all too well, but they can also be powerful aids in effective education (Reimer, 1989).

Reimer continues:

We are already expert at assessing performance skills and must continue to refine this expertise. Especially important will be improvements in regard to giving out students a variety of specific musical performance problems to solve, involving technique, notation, stylistic interpretation, ensemble, and so forth. We also need to evaluate how performers engage themselves intelligently in dealing with problems of process – how they structure a performing problem they are faced with, what imaginative ways they employ to solve it, how they use their musical understanding as an aid, the steps they go through, and their critical judgments about their solutions. We must continue to evaluate the growth of skills, but we must pay far more attention

to assessing the growth of musical intelligence and musical independence as demonstrated by problem solving as relevant to performance (Reimer, 1989).

Brophy (2000) defines one of the purposes of assessment in the music classroom as the opportunity to obtain evidence of the musical growth and progress of students. For the teacher, assessment can also be used to guide instruction and aid in the choice of teaching strategies. Another reason assessment is important is to further validate the music program with parents, students, and administrators. Finally, assessment can provide evidence of accountability for student learning.

Four music national assessments have been administered to students in the United States. In 1971, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) administered the first national music assessment to students in three age groups: 9, 13, and 17 years. The purposes of the test were to determine what the music students knew, what they could do, and their attitudes toward music education. The NAEP brought together scholars, teachers, and curriculum specialists to develop the objectives for this assessment. In association with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) of Princeton, New Jersey, the following broad categories of objectives were used in the first of these national music assessments.

1. Perform a piece of music
2. Read standard musical notation
3. Listen to music with understanding
4. Be knowledgeable about some musical instruments, some of the terminology of music, methods of performance, some of the standard literature of music, and some aspects of the history of music
5. Know about musical resources of the community and seek experiences by performing music

6. Make judgments about music, and value the personal worth of music.

Results of the assessment indicated that while students' attitudes toward music were positive, their performance on the exercises was largely quite low (Mark 1996).

The NAEP administered a second national music assessment in 1978. The same age groups were measured. However, the objectives for this assessment changed from the first.

1. Value music as an important realm of human experience
2. Perform music
3. Create music
4. Identify the elements and expressive controls of music
5. Identify and classify music historically and culturally.

Some criticisms of the second assessment: it did not include performance assessment like the first (due to a lack of funding), and the results were underreported. Overall, the information from the two National Assessment reports were of great potential value to the music education profession, but actually had little influence on practices (Mark 1996).

The next assessment was not administered until 1997 because of a lack of funding and concern for arts education. By means of funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the assessment project was administered by the Council of Chief State School Officers. This assessment was largely based on the National Standards for Arts Education and measured all of the arts disciplines (music, arts, dance, and theater). Only eighth-grade students were administered the test, which measured student's knowledge and ability in creating, performing, and responding. Overall results indicated that while students who participated in music activities performed better than those who did not, a great deficit in students' music knowledge and skills existed (Mark 1996).

The most recent national assessment took place in 2008 and was again administered by NAEP. Findings were published by NAEP in their series, the Nation's Report Card: Arts 2008 (Music and Visual Arts). The assessment was given to a nationally representative sample of 7,900 eighth-grade public and private school students (half in music, half in visual arts). The music portion of the assessment measured students' ability to respond to music in various ways. Students were asked to analyze and describe aspect of music they heard, critique instrumental and vocal performances, and demonstrate their knowledge of standard musical notation and music's role in society. The average responding score for music was reported on an NAEP scale of 0 to 300. Scores ranged from 105 (for the lowest-performing students) to 194 (for the highest-performing students). In both music and visual arts, scores were higher for White and Asian students compared to Black and Hispanic students. Scores were also higher for female students versus their male counterparts. Scores were significantly lower for lower-income students (eligible for free/reduced lunch) than those not eligible. In the music assessment, scores were higher for private school versus public school students, and eighth-graders attending city schools had a lower average responding score than students who attended suburban, town, or rural schools. Approximately one-third of the students participated in a musical activity such as band, choir, or orchestra (National Assessment of Education Progress, 2008).

Student Assessment in Music Education

The music classroom is a unique environment in the school setting. The variety in activity and subject matter require the music educator to approach classroom assessment very carefully. The National Association for Music Education (MENC)

provides the following guidelines for music classroom assessment (MENC: The National Association for Music Education):

Assessment should be standards-based and should reflect the music skills and knowledge that are most important for students to learn.

Assessment of student achievement should not be based on the skills and knowledge that are easiest to assess nor on those for which ready-made assessment devices are available. Instead, it should be based on the extent to which each student has met the standards established, and it should reflect the priorities of the instructional program. Assessment should not be based primarily on where the student ranks relative to a particular class or group. It should be based on whether the student has met specific criteria. In these performance standards, separate criteria have been established for basic, proficient, and advanced levels of achievement.

Assessment should support, enhance, and reinforce learning.

Assessment should be viewed by both students and teachers as a continuing, integral part of instruction rather than as an intrusion into (or interruption of) the process of learning. The assessment process should itself be a learning experience, and it should not be conducted or viewed as separate from the learning process. Students should regard assessment as a useful tool rather than as a source of fear or anxiety. They should use it as a means of further learning and as a means of measuring their own progress. When assessment tasks are designed to provide information concerning the extent to which students meet standards that have been established for them, teachers can adjust their instructional programs so as to be more effective.

Assessment should be reliable.

Reliability refers to consistency. If an assessment is reliable, then another assessment of the same skills or knowledge will produce essentially the same results. For assessment to be reliable, every student must be assessed by identical procedures and the assessors must share the same levels of expectation so that a student's score does not depend on who is doing the scoring.

Assessment should be valid.

Validity means that the assessment technique actually measures what it claims to measure. The mental processes represented by the scores correspond to the mental processes being assessed. No measurement instrument should be used to measure something it was not designed to measure. If there is a mismatch between assessment strategies and the objectives of the curriculum, the assessment strategies are not valid for that curriculum.

Assessment should be authentic.

Authentic assessment means the assessment tasks reflect the essential nature of the skill or knowledge being assessed. The student should actually demonstrate a music behavior in an authentic or realistic situation rather than merely answer written questions about it. For example, the ability to play the recorder should be assessed by having the student play the recorder; not by having the student answer test questions concerning fingerings, hand position, phrasing, and note-reading. Assessment does not need to be based on multiple-choice tests or even on paper-and-pencil tests, though those techniques have their uses.

Portfolios, performance-based assessment, and other techniques of authentic assessment have been used successfully by music educators for many years; however,

these techniques cannot by themselves solve the assessment problems facing educators. A portfolio is simply a collection of samples of a student's work taken periodically for a specific purpose throughout the instructional process. Those samples must still be assessed, and the assessment requires careful thought about what should go into the portfolio and also great care in developing suitable assessment strategies and appropriate scoring procedures. Assessment should take a holistic view of music learning. It should not concentrate on isolated facts and minutiae; but should deal with broad concepts, "whole" performances, and complete works of music. Authenticity, like reliability, is a prerequisite to validity.

The process of assessment should be open to review by interested parties.

Although assessment of music learning can best be carried out by qualified music teachers, it is important that students, parents, and the public be given sufficient information and help so they too can make judgments about the extent to which music learning is taking place in their schools. If their evaluations are faulty, it should be because of their lack of professional qualifications and not because of lack of information concerning the assessment process. It is especially important that students know what they are to be assessed on, how they are to be assessed, and what criteria will be used to judge their achievement. When appropriate, they should be allowed to participate in developing the criteria by which their work will be assessed.

These guidelines can assist the music educator in making important decisions concerning assessment in the music classroom. However, the added requirements of performance-based ensembles and the larger number of students a teacher deals with at one time make assessment in this environment especially challenging. Four types of assessment (Goolsby, 1999) can be used for evaluation in the instrumental classroom

in a relatively straightforward manner: placement, summative, diagnostic, and formative assessments.

1. Placement assessments include auditions, challenges, and seating assignments, all aimed at determining a student's abilities in order to properly place the student in a program.
2. Summative assessments include concerts, festivals, recitals, and other events where the final "product" of the group's learning is publicly demonstrated and evaluated.
3. Diagnostic assessment is used to determine where learning difficulties exist. The most obvious and frequently used tool in instrumental music is error detection.
4. Formative assessment is concerned with the regular monitoring of students to make sure learning is taking place. One requirement for effective formative assessment is students' clear understanding of what they should learn.

A wide variety of assessment components have been discussed in the area of instrumental music education (Antmann, 2007; Asmus, 1999; Burrack, 2002; Chiodo, 2001; Cope, 1996; Dirth, 2000; Goolsby, 1999; Hanzlik, 2001; Kancianic, 2006; McCoy, 1991; Norrington, 2006; Pizer, 1990; Reid, 2005; Sears, 2002; Sherman, 2006; Simanton, 2000; Stauffer, 1999; Tracy, 2002). Each component should have a purpose in the broader assessment tool. Each component should also support the goals and instruction of the classroom (Asmus, 1999). The following are commonly used music assessment tools:

ATTENDANCE (concert, rehearsal): accounting for a students' participation in an event. Attendance may also incorporate penalties for students arriving late or leaving early.

COMPUTER MUSIC THEORY PROGRAMS: music theory programs that are computer generated.

CONDUCT/DISCIPLINE: assessing a student based on their behavior.

PARTICIPATION: to take part in an event or activity.

PRACTICE LOG/JOURNAL: a self-reported record of an individual's practice.

PLAYING TEST: a performance demonstration by the student on the student's instrument. The material for a playing test varies but may consist of band music, etudes, scales, rudiments, or audition music.

PORTFOLIO: a collection of supporting material.

REQUIREMENT CHECKLISTS: a list of accomplishments students progress through at their own pace.

SELF-ASSESSMENT: a student's assessment of his or her own work.

SIGHT-READING TESTS: a performance demonstration by the student (on the student's instrument) of music he or she is not previously familiar with.

TEACHER OBSERVATIONS: any assessment that relies on observable behavior of a student by the teacher.

WRITTEN TESTS: any test or quiz in written form.

A teacher should focus on assessment options that occur naturally in a music context, that are authentic to your classroom, and that are congruent with your instructional goals (Stauffer, 1999). Given the importance of assessment, music teachers need a management system that is as efficient and effortless as possible, while still producing detailed information about individual students (Chiodo, 2001).

Current educational research suggests that teachers should develop and use "authentic" performance strategies designed to allow students to demonstrate what they have learned and further what they can do with their knowledge (Asmus, 1999). Authentic assessments involve the use of alternative strategies for collecting and analyzing information. Students are expected to demonstrate what they have learned by drawing on their knowledge, abilities, and past achievements to solve problems that require them to perform under "real-world" conditions (U.S. Department of Education, 1996).

Assigning Grades to Band Students

The assignment of grades is a complex topic in educational assessment. The grade serves as the primary way a teacher communicates a student's progress and achievement. Suggestions for establishing grading systems for performing arts ensembles have been offered by many of the leading experts on music education (Bowman, 1984; Boyle, 1987; Branum, 1988); but very little research has examined the actual grading practices of ensemble directors.

The National Association for Music Education (MENC) conducted a survey concerning grading practices in 1997. Results showed that music teachers were responsible for assigning grades to a large range of students (from twenty-five to one thousand) and the majority did this using traditional letter grades (A, B, C, D, F). Most teachers who responded assigned grades based on performance-based criteria; while others used criteria such as attendance, effort, behavior, and attitude. Finally, some teachers used precise criteria and point systems, while others used grading procedures that were imprecise (MENC 1998).

Attendance, effort, behavior, and attitude have long been an important part of music classes. However, it is important to separate non musical criteria from the grading process. Effort, behavior, and attitude are difficult (if not impossible) to grade objectively. Attendance can be graded objectively, but does not represent a student's musical understanding or achievement. There are many reasons that music teachers use these non musical criteria when determining students grades. With the large numbers of students music teachers have, it can be difficult to thoroughly and accurately assess all of them on musical criteria. Also, categories such as attendance,

effort, and behavior are important to productive music rehearsals; so many teachers may feel it is necessary to include them in grading practices (MENC 1998).

In another study concerning grading practices, Drake (1984) found that attendance and participation were the principle criteria for assigning grades to students in performing groups. Attitude, preparation, and satisfactory performance were rarely mentioned as criteria for grades. McCoy (1988) found similar results when investigating the grading practices of high school band and choral directors. Ninety-five percent of the reported grading systems included some type of nonmusic criteria such as attendance and behavior. The study also found that seventy-five percent of these grading systems included criteria related to performance (psychomotor criteria), sixty-six percent included criteria related to attitude (affective criteria), and forty-two percent included criteria related to factual knowledge about music (cognitive criteria).

Bradford (2003) states that students, parents, and administrators benefit when curriculum-based assessment is used by teachers. Students see grades not as subjective rewards or punishments, but as accurate reflections of knowledge and achievement. They become more confident and independent. Parents find it easier to gauge their students' progress and understand the development of their student in regard to the performing ensemble. Administrators begin to see music as an academic class, rather than solely a venue for entertainment.

Developing Music Assessment Models

The next section is a review of existing assessment models developed in the last forty years in the area of art and, more specifically, music. These models advanced the study of student assessment and serve as a guide to educators, enhancing the options available in the classroom.

Arts PROPEL

Since 1967, a research group at the Harvard Graduate School of Education has investigated the development of learning processes in children and adults. The name Arts PROPEL is an acronym for *Production* (making music by singing, playing an instrument, or composing); *Perception* (listening to music); and *Reflection* (thinking about what one does, both in words and in the appropriate symbol system) (Mark 1996). Project Zero was founded by the philosopher Nelson Goodman to study and improve education in the arts. Goodman believed arts learning should be studied as a serious cognitive activity. Project Zero's mission "is to understand and enhance learning, thinking, and creativity in the arts, as well as humanistic and scientific disciplines, at the individual and institutional levels." David Perkins and Howard Gardner served as co-directors of Project Zero from 1972 to 2000, when the current director, Dr. Steve Seidel, was named. Over the years, Project Zero has maintained a strong research commitment in the arts. Much of its work takes place in American public schools, particularly those that serve disadvantaged populations (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2010).

In 1985, a joint project among Project Zero, the Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania) Public Schools, and the Educational Testing Service observed and documented music learning for two years. Their findings determined that students are the constructors of knowledge. Understanding occurs when students organize, manipulate and apply concepts themselves. In addition, it was found that students learn best when they actively perform and create. The Arts PROPEL instructional and assessment strategies are based on helping the student develop independence and expertise in learning the procedural knowledge associated with music. This model encourages the use of

portfolios in order for students to examine their progress over time. Portfolios may include video and/or audiotapes of student performance, teacher evaluations, and student self-evaluations (Sears, 2002).

Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance (CMP)

The Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance Project (CMP) was initiated in Wisconsin in 1977 as a reaction to performance-based music programs that were accused of producing outstanding performance groups without developing a depth of musical understanding. The CMP is a process of instruction that promotes “performance with understanding,”

The project began with a group of respected ensemble teachers selected from a diverse group of school districts. The group developed and tested a process for planning rehearsal instruction to include performance skills and also general knowledge about music. In the CMP model the teacher serves as a facilitator who, in addition to rehearsing selected works, questions the students on a variety of subjects including musical style, composer background, form, keys, and other music knowledge.

Student involvement in the learning process is an important aspect of the CMP model. Teachers are instructed to involve students in a variety of hands-on activities including listening, analyzing, arranging, composing, discussing, and evaluating music. The students are encouraged to recognize these activities as “real-life” applications of musical knowledge; not isolated classroom exercises. Student involvement can also extend to concert performances in the form of students researching and writing program notes, or demonstrating important musical traits of a given piece of music to the audience. Student involvement is also encouraged in the process of assessment. The CMP model promotes the use of self and peer assessments through recordings of their

own performances. Student portfolios are also used in an effort to help students become independent learners possessing the ability to make decisions about their own work, including possible direction for future study (Pontious, 2008).

State Collaborative Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS)

In 1994, the Council of Chief State School Officers established the State Collaborative Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) to assist states in developing standards and assessment tools. The SCASS ARTS is a nation wide group addressing the refinement of arts education assessment. Its objective is to develop assessment materials for the large-scale, district-level, and classroom-based assessment in dance, music, theater, and visual art.

According to the SCASS website, “the group has developed and implemented a web-based item development process that uses professional development training at the state level, the submission of items to a website where they are screened for content and assessment accuracy by a panel of experts according to criteria developed by the group, and either sent back to the originator or advanced to the final pool.”

The SCASS ARTS roster currently includes representatives from California, Louisiana, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and New Jersey. The group offers numerous aids to educators concerning arts assessment including an Arts Handbook, an Arts Assessment Glossary, and an Arts Assessment Bibliography. In addition, the group (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2009) offers the following publications for purchase:

1. Guidelines for Video-Taping Performance Assessment
2. Presentation Materials from the National Arts Assessment Institute

3. Arts Education Assessment Consortium Year-End Report and Collection of Refined Exercises
4. Collection of Unrefined Arts Assessment Exercises Developed for the 1997 NAEP Arts Education Assessment.

Current Research

Previous researchers designed studies to identify current assessment practices music educators are implementing. Each study has unique purposes and results but is related to the current study and influenced how this study was designed. This review will conclude with a summary of the research and a discussion on the implications for the current study.

Antmann (2007) designed a survey to determine assessment methods and grading practices of middle school band directors. Subjects selected for his study were middle school band directors (N=59) of successful middle school band programs throughout the state of Florida.

Of the twenty-seven surveys returned, Antmann discovered that the most commonly used assessment tool in middle school band classes is the individual playing test. Other frequently used assessment components included practice journals, self student assessments, and requirement checklists. The categories these directors found important to assigning grades included playing tests, participation, concert attendance, conduct/discipline, and attendance (rehearsals).

The study revealed some common assessment and grading habits of successful teachers. These include regular assessment of a student's ability to perform on instruments and to read and notate music; assessment of musical skills and abilities during performance; musicianship requirements when determining student grading; and non musical criteria such as attendance, participation, and conduct (Antmann, 2007).

In 2002, Sears developed a study whose purpose was to describe how instrumental music educators document and assess their student's progress. The study specifically targeted whether instrumental music is formally assessed and what types of assessment are currently in use by middle school instructors in southeastern Massachusetts.

Forty-two instructors completed a survey; results showed 61% of teachers surveyed consider a student's attendance as criteria for assessment. Almost 90% of these instructors consider a student's effort as a part of the assessment. The most common assessment components identified were scale performance tests and practice logs. Teachers also used portfolios, method books, concerts worksheets, and quizzes as assessment strategies.

Sears recommended that all arts educators take time to customize teaching materials with appropriate assessments. "We have a myriad of options available to us. There is no shortage of available rubrics for us to modify. There are endless ways to build a portfolio over the length of a student's instrumental study. None of this is accomplished with a check mark for attendance or a pat on the back for effort. The extra time we take will help provide our students with a meaningful experience in the arts" (Sears, 2002).

Hanzlik (2001) examined the types and frequency of assessment methods used by Iowa high school band directors and their attitudes toward such assessment. He also examined the effects of selected teacher-background variables in teachers' attitudes toward assessment. Of the 200 band directors randomly surveyed from the

400 high schools listed in the 1988-89 Iowa High School Music Association's membership list, 154 surveys (77%) were returned.

Assessment practices used by band directors 80% of the time were playing band music/scales/rudiments, sight-reading music, teacher observations, and playing etudes. Assessment practices such as student journals, portfolios, reflective writing teacher surveys and student displays were never used by at least 80% of the band directors.

Band directors in Iowa indicated the assessment practices they used most often were related to the psychomotor task of playing an instrument. The other five assessment practices identified by Iowa band directors as being used most often: contest ballots, concert attendance, teacher observation, student discussion, and sight-reading. The instructional process in Iowa band rooms emphasized performance learning and not cognitive or affective learning (Hanzlik, 2001).

In 2006, Kancianic investigated relationships among characteristics of high school band directors and their school settings, purposes and use of classroom assessment methods, and factors that influence the use of classroom assessments. The National Association for Music Education (MENC) provided a membership list from which 2,000 high school band directors were selected by simple random sampling. The overall survey return rate was 39.75% (N=795); the usable response was 31.7% (N=634).

Classroom assessments used by high school band directors tend to focus on evaluating student performance skills. Students are not generally involved in the planning or execution of assessment. Those who teach more band classes use student self-assessment more often. High school band directors use practice logs less frequently. Three prevalent issues emerged from the results: teacher autonomy, the

role of assessment training, and teacher workload. Lack of time was viewed as a major impediment to assessment (Kancianic, 2006).

Sherman (2006) researched the following questions: “What tools are currently used for assessment in band programs in public high schools?”; “Who performs the assessments?”; “Is there a distinction between assessment and grading?”; and “Is the process accepted by all constituencies?” A survey was distributed to a random sample of 500 high school band directors from the Eastern Region of Music Educators National Conference (National Association for Music Education). Participation was voluntary; the response rate was statistically significant, with 158 useable responses.

There is some degree of consistency among high school band directors about the types of materials used for assessments, the way assessments were performed, and calculation and conversions in assigning grades. Most directors included some means for assessing their students’ attendance and demeanor or behavior during contact hours. Terms used to describe these items were rehearsal technique, class participation, class preparation, and effort. Disturbing perspectives on the issues of assessment and grading were as follows: 1) too much time consumption, 2) assessments only served the purpose of grade justification; and 3) some directors tend to give up during the process and succumb to assigning A’s to all of their students simply to eliminate any backlash (Sherman, 2006).

Simanton (2000) included the following purposes for his study: (a) examine current assessment and grading practices in American high school bands; (b) gauge local satisfaction with current assessment and grading practices; and (c) investigate variations in practice satisfaction based on regional, school, and band director variables.

Data were collected (via surveys) from 202 high school band directors using a regionally stratified sample, the six regions comprising the Music Educator's National Conference (MENC).

On average, 56% of band grades come from non-performing criteria (attendance, participation, and attitude). Performance of band music accounts for another 25.9% of band grades. The remainder of student grades comes from a combination of technique and other practices (mostly quizzes and practice logs). Within these criteria weights, grading appears to be rather generous. Band directors report giving A's to 75.4% of their students and B's to another 16.3% (Simanton, 2000).

In 1999, Hill investigated assessment procedures, assessment attitudes, and grading policies currently used in band classrooms in Mississippi public schools. Data were obtained from 327 student members of the Mississippi Bandmasters' Association State Band Clinic, 93 members of the Mississippi Bandmasters Association, and 38 randomly selected public school administrators.

Results indicated grades were an important part of the instrumental classroom and students were motivated to make good grades. All three survey groups indicated non-music criteria such as attendance, participation, and attitude were used in determining students' nine-week grades. While traditional forms of evaluation such as portfolios and paper-and-pencil tests were recognized as useful in the band classroom, 0-25% of the nine-week grade comprised these assessment types (Hill, 1999).

Finally, in 2001, McCreary examined methods and procedures currently used in evaluating secondary school instrumental (band and orchestra) students, and compared student perceptions and their teacher perceptions of assessment. Survey respondents

comprised 467 secondary instrumental music students and their ten respective teachers on the island of Oahu, (state of Hawaii).

Findings indicated that instrumental music teachers predominantly used traditional forms of assessment. Paper and pencil tests, playing tests, practice time, and attendance and/or attitude were used to evaluate their students, with a preference for playing tests and practice time. Eighty percent of the teachers and 93% of the students surveyed responded that “none or mostly none” of the grade was based on journals and/or portfolios. A relatively equal balance was found between music and non-music assessment criteria. Results showed that most students and teachers perceived that the criteria of playing tests comprised roughly half of the grade and the non-music criteria of attendance and/or attitude comprised the other half of the grade (McCreary, 2001).

Summary of Research: Study Implications

First, there is great similarity in the way these studies were developed and carried out. All included a researcher-developed survey with survey groups ranging from 27 to 634. Most of the studies were fairly regional in their make-up, dealing mostly with band programs from an individual state. In all cases, researchers suggest future studies in this area should include a wider cross-section of teachers in various parts of the country.

Second, all studies were interested in finding commonalities among music educators in the using assessment components in their current practice of grading students. Results of these studies indicate a wide spread use of performance-based tests and non-music criteria to establish student grades. Portfolios, journals, and student self-assessment were rarely used by teachers in these studies.

Third, many studies separated the assessment components into either a musical or non musical category. Some studies also examined what percent of the student's grade comprised each of these categories.

Farrell (1997) says, "There is no one right way to assess students. Balancing assessment strategies to use a variety of formats is most likely to result in reliable and valid information. Expanding our assessment practices has enormous implications because assessment is tied to the content of the curriculum, to what teachers do in the classroom, and to the standards we set for." Farrell's statement is important to consider as we address the topic of current assessment practices. We observe many commonalities in assessment approaches but continue to witness a wide variety of assessment tools being implemented by directors across the country. Any effort to construct a general assessment model should keep in mind that each teaching situation is unique. A good model should have the ability to be applied to different teaching environments and still remain effective in its results.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This chapter includes an explanation of the methodology and procedure used in this study. The chapter will begin with a definition of the research method used in the study followed by a description of the participating subjects, procedures, and data collection method. The chapter will continue with a description of the statistical procedures and conclude with an examination of a pilot study administered by this researcher on the subject of student assessment in bands.

Research Method

The research method of this study was descriptive, administering a survey to collect data. Surveys represent one of the most common types of quantitative research. Survey research is the method of gathering data from respondents thought to be representative of some population, using an instrument composed of closed structure or open-ended items (questions). Creswell (2002) states that surveys help describe the trends in a population (p. 421). Survey research is an efficient method for gathering data from a large population and “is a common and valuable approach to determine status” (Abeles H, 1992, p.231).

Subjects

Subjects for the study consisted of high school band directors, teaching in the United States, who are members of the MENC: The National Association for Music Education. The MENC maintains the complete population of directors on the NetForum 2.2 customized database.

The sample size for the study was limited to 5,000 as this was the maximum number random sample MENC could provide. Alreck and Settle (2004) said a sample

larger than 10% of the target population is rarely necessary, because as sample size increases, sampling error decreases. Creswell (2002) suggested using a sample size of 350 for survey research, and Sudman (1976) recommended using at least 1,000 participants for a national survey.

Simple random sampling was used to select participants from the MENC list. A simple random sample is preferred to other sampling procedures as it represents the target population more accurately and gives each member of the sampling frame an equal probability of selection (Alreck, 2004). The MENC provided a randomly selected list of 5,000 directors from a total population of approximately 15,000 using the reports function of the NetForum 2.2 database.

Procedures

The questionnaire (discussed in detail in the *data collection* section) was converted to a web document using SurveyMonkey™ and was administered electronically using the internet. Participants were notified of the study through an email generated by MENC which included (a) the topic of the study, (b) approximately how long the questionnaire will take to complete, (c) the deadline for completion of the questionnaire, and (d) a link to the questionnaire. The MENC also sent out a reminder one week before the questionnaire deadline.

Data Collection

A questionnaire was designed to collect data on the assessment practices of high school band directors. The questionnaire was based on questionnaires and surveys used in earlier research (Hanzlik, 2001; Hill, 1999; Kancianic, 2006; McCreary, 2001; Sherman, 2006; Simanton, 2000). The questionnaire used in this study was constructed using a combination of open and closed-ended questions. Closed-ended question

designs included (a) mutually exclusive answers, (b) exhaustive response categories, (c) numerical rating scales, and (d) semantic differential scaling systems. The questionnaire was designed in five sections: 1) Background Information, 2) Grading Information, 3) Assessment Philosophy, 4) Assessment Information, and 5) Assessment Model (Appendix A).

The *Background Information* section is divided into three areas: (a) high school/community information, (b) band program information, and (c) director information. The high school/community section provided data on (a) type of school, (b) school enrollment, and (c) the type and socio-economic status of the community in which the school is located. The band program section provided information on (a) band program enrollment, (b) the number of students involved in concert band(s), (c) the number of concert bands, (d) the average number of students in each concert ensemble, and (e) the total number of minutes each concert band meets per week. The director information section provided data on the directors' (a) years of teaching experience, (b) the number of years spent in their current position, (c) their educational background, and (d) the number of band directors employed at the school.

In the *Grading Information* section, directors were asked to provide (a) specifics concerning the type of grades they assign and (b) how those grades are incorporated into the school grading system. Specific data requested included (a) the number and duration of marking periods; (b) the type of grade assigned and its affect on the student's overall GPA; and (c) if a weighted grading system is used at the school, how the band grade is weighted.

The *Assessment Philosophy* section provided questions associated with why directors assess their students and asked them to rate the importance of a variety of criteria related to assessment. Questions include (a) how important are the following purposes of student assessment, (b) what importance do you place on the following criteria in the evaluation of your band students, and (c) how important are the following assessment categories in a student assessment model for bands. This section also required directors to address what factors influence their decisions concerning student assessment and what has best prepared them to make decisions concerning student assessment.

The *Assessment Information* section presented specific questions about the way directors assess the students in their concert bands. The questions in this section asked directors to provide (a) the specific assessment components they use and the percentage these components are assigned in the band grade, (b) the procedure for data collection they use, (c) what materials they used in performance-based tests, and (d) the importance of varying characteristics in their assessment design.

The final section, *Assessment Model*, includes one question asking the directors to create what they believe to be a balanced assessment tool by assigning percentages (totaling 100%) to the following three assessment components: (a) individual testing and evaluation, (b) performance attendance and contribution, and (c) rehearsal attendance and contribution.

Statistical Procedures

Results of the questionnaire produced a data set that was quantitatively analyzed. The researcher used a variety of descriptive statistics to summarize and explain the results of the information collected.

In the *Background Information* and *Grading Information* sections, the researcher used the categorical information gathered to describe the subject who responded to the questionnaire and his or her teaching situation. The results of these questions were analyzed for measures of central tendencies (mean) in an effort to better understand the range of categories the questionnaire data came from. The researcher used appropriate charts and graphs to illustrate this information.

Statistical analysis for the *Assessment Philosophy* and *Assessment Information* sections differed for each question. Based on the design of the question, different statistical analyses were done. For rating questions, a mean score analysis determined the most common response. For questions using rankings, a mean response was reported in descending mean order to accurately show the highest ranking response to the question. Measures of variability (in the form of standard deviation) were used on all questions to indicate what commonalities are present among directors' responses. Statistical analysis for the final section (*Assessment Model*) showed the mean responses to the question about the importance placed on the assessment components by participating directors.

Pilot Study

A pilot study (LaCognata, 2010) was administered in 2008. Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman (2000) said a pilot study has the potential to provide useful information relative to the design of the main study. The pilot included 158 high school band directors, 61 from North Carolina and 97 from Missouri. Participants were invited via email to complete a survey through the website *SurveyMonkey.com* addressing student assessment in the high school band ensemble class. A designated band director in each state distributed email invitations. The designated band directors were sent an

electronic cover letter of invitation, and they forwarded this through their respective listserves to high school directors in their states. Participants were asked to complete the survey within a two-week period. Of the 158 directors contacted, a total of 45 completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 28%.

The purpose of this study was to gather information about the assessment practices used in secondary band programs from a sample of in-service band directors. The 45 directors who responded provided valuable data discussed in the context of the research questions that guided this inquiry.

Research Question 1: In what specific ways are high school band directors assessing students in their ensemble classes?

Findings of this study indicate that participation, performances, and performance-based tests are the primary ways directors are assessing students in their band ensemble classrooms. Attendance and conduct/discipline also play a vital role in this process. These results were consistent with those of McCreary (2001) who found that playing tests were among the most popular assessment methods used by directors. In addition, Sherman (2006) found an emphasis on performance in regard to student assessment. Sherman also found that attendance and participation were important assessment components used by the directors. Finally, Kancianic (2006) also found that the classroom assessments used by high school band directors tend to focus on the evaluation of student performance skills.

Results of the study indicated that portfolios, peer assessments, and requirement checklists were assessment components rarely used by directors. Hanzlik (2001) had similar findings stating that assessment practices such as student journals, portfolios,

reflective writing, teacher surveys and student displays were never used by at least 80% of band directors.

Research Question 2: What frequency are assessments components being implemented by high school band directors?

The directors indicated a wide variety in frequency of use, concerning individual assessment components by directors. On a weekly basis, results indicated that participation, attendance, conduct/discipline, and attitude are the most frequently used components. Performance-based tests and written tests/worksheets are most often used monthly, and performances are used per grading period by directors to assess their students. Kancianic (2006) found similar results in frequency of use of performance-based tests by teachers. Students playing in small ensembles, playing alone for the teacher, playing alone in front of the class, and playing with others in a concert all rank among the top 10 most frequently used assessment components.

The least frequently used components are portfolios, Smart Music™, peer assessment, and computer-assisted programs. Again, Kancianic (2006) echoed these results, finding students creating portfolios and students using computers to assess their learning were among the least frequent assessment components directors used to assess their students.

Research Question 3: What degree of importance do the high school band directors give to (a) individual testing and evaluation, (b) performance attendance and contribution, and (c) rehearsal attendance and contribution in an assessment model?

Results of the current study indicate directors assign the following percentages to the three listed assessment components: 34.72%, individual testing and evaluation; 32.79%, performance attendance and contribution; and 31.79%, rehearsal attendance and contribution. The importance placed on these components by the directors is also

evident in the directors' use of assessment components: performances, performance-based tests, participation, and attendance grades ranked as the top four responses, receiving the highest percentage allocation by directors. The next two ranked assessment components were written test/worksheets and attitude grades.

The fact that directors cited an almost-perfect balance among the three suggested assessment components may indicate a starting place in the development of an assessment model for high school band ensemble classes. Certainly, incorporating these assessment components seems necessary in the band classroom for successful student assessment. The pilot study provided valuable feedback that was used to guide the present study (Appendix B).

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The MENC sent a random sample of 5,000 high school band directors from across the United States an emailed invitation to participate in the survey. Because of incorrect or changed addresses, 500 emails were immediately returned as undeliverable. Of the 4,500 directors who received the email, a total of 607 directors followed the survey link and opened the survey. From that group, 454 directors completed the survey, resulting in a total response rate of 10% of the original sample; and of the 607 responding directors, 75% completed the survey. Description and analysis of the survey results are presented in conjunction with the questions as they appear on the questionnaire.

Background Information

Question 1: Type of school.

The school type of the directors participating in the questionnaire showed that a large percentage teach in public schools. Results were as follows: Public = 89.6% (407 schools), Private = 8.6% (39 schools), Charter = 0.9% (4 schools), and Other = 0.9% (Figure 4-1).

Question 2: Number of students (9th to 12th grade) enrolled at your high school.

School enrollment of the 454 schools showed a more balanced representation in each of the five population categories, with smaller schools having higher percentages. Results were as follows: 1 to 500 students = 32.4% (147 schools); 501 to 1,000 students = 22.2% (101 schools); 1,001 to 1,500 students = 20.5% (93 schools); 1,501 to 2,000 students = 12.8% (58 Schools); and 2,001 or more students = 12.1% (55 schools) (Figure 4-2).

Question 3: In what type of community is the school located?

The community-type results again showed representation in each category, with Urban/Inner City schools being the least represented at 11.7% (53 schools). The remaining results were Suburban = 31.9%, (145 schools), Town = 26.9% (122 schools), and Rural/Remote = 29.5% (134 schools) (Figure 4-3).

Question 4: What is the socio-economic status of the community?

While the socio-economic status of the community showed representation in each category, almost half of the schools reported Low/Middle at 42.3% (192 schools), and a small percentage of schools reported High at 4.4% (20 schools). The remaining results were Low = 11.2% (51 schools), Middle = 22.9% (104 schools), and Middle/High = 19.2% (87 schools) (Figure 4-4).

Question 5: Total number of students involved in the band program.

The size of the band programs participating directors taught had representation in each of the five categories. Results were as follows: 1 to 50 students = 26.7% (121 schools); 51 to 100 students = 34.4% (156 schools); 101 to 150 students = 22.2% (101 schools); 151 to 200 students = 9.5% (43 schools); and 201 or more students = 7.3% (33 schools) (Figure 4-5).

Question 6: Number of students involved in concert band(s).

The number of students involved in concert bands also had representation in each category with 1 to 50 students = 38.1% (173 schools); 51 to 100 students = 33.0% (150 schools); 101 to 150 students = 17.4% (79 schools); 151 to 200 students = 6.6% (30 schools); and 201 or more students = 4.8% (22 schools) (Figure 4-6).

Question 7: Number of concert bands at your school.

The number of concert bands being taught showed the following results: 1 concert band = 53.1% (241 schools), 2 concert bands = 27.8% (126 schools), 3 concert bands = 14.3% (65 schools), 4 concert bands = 3.1% (14 schools), and 5 or more concert bands = 1.8% (8 schools) (Figure 4-7).

Question 8: Average number of students in each concert band.

Finally, the average number of students in each concert band showed representation in each of the five categories: 1 to 15 students = 4.0% (18 schools); 16 to 30 students = 19.8% (90 schools); 31 to 45 students at 30.4% (138 schools); 46 to 60 students = 29.7% (135 schools); and 61 or more students = 16.1% (73 schools) (Figure 4-8).

Question 9: Years of experience teaching high school band (including this year).

Most participants have been teaching 17 or more years (36.8%, 167 directors). Remaining results: 1 to 4 years = 19.8% (90 directors); 5 to 8 years = 18.3% (83 directors); 9 to 12 years = 15.6% (71 directors); and 13 to 16 years = 9.5% (43 directors) (Figure 4-9).

Question 10: Years teaching in your current position (including this year).

Almost half of the directors had taught 1 to 4 years = 40.5% (184 directors). Remaining results were as follows: 5 to 8 years = 21.4% (97 directors); 9 to 12 years = 12.8% (58 directors); and 13 to 16 years = 7.7% (35 directors); and 17 or more years = 17.6% (80 directors) (Figure 4-10).

Question 11: Highest degree earned in music/music education.

Most directors reported having a master's degree (55.5%, 252 directors). Many had a bachelor's degree (40.3%, 183 directors). One director is teaching with an

associate's degree, sixteen earned doctoral degrees, and two directors reported post doctoral study (Figure 4-11).

Question 12: Number of band directors employed at your school.

More than half of the directors manage the band program alone (69.2%, 314 schools). Other results: 1.5 directors = 8.1% (37 schools); 2 directors = 16.3% (74 schools); 2.5 directors = 2.4% (11 school); and 3 or more directors = 4.0% (18 schools).

Grading Information

Question 13: How many marking periods does your school have per year?

Directors reported a variety of grading periods, from 2 semesters to 12 grading periods. Most directors indicated 4 grading periods (quarter system) (mean = 4.48, median = 4, mode = 4).

Question 14: How many weeks long is a typical marking period?

The length of the grading period also varied, from 4.5 weeks to 18 weeks. Most directors indicated that 9 weeks was the typical length of a grading period (mean = 9.49, median = 9, mode = 9).

Question 15: What type of grade do you assign at the end of a marking period?

Most directors indicated that they assign a letter grade (54.2%, 246 schools). The next largest group said they assign number grades (31.5%, 143 schools) at the end of a grading period. Other results: No grades assigned = 0.2% (1 school), Pass/Fail = 0.2% (1 school), Written Comments = 0.2% (1 school), and Combination of types = 13.7% (62 schools) (Figure 4-12).

Question 16: Does the grade given in your band ensemble class affect the student's overall grade point average (GPA)?

Most directors reported that the grade given in the band ensemble class affects the student's overall grade point average (GPA) at 95.2% (432 schools). Only 4% (18 schools) of directors indicated that the band grade does not affect students' GPA, and 0.9% (4 schools) cited other circumstances.

Question 17: Is there a weighted grading system being used in your school?

Most directors reported that a weighted grading system (higher-level classes assigned more value in the students overall GPA) is used in their schools (64.5 %, 293 schools).

Question 18: Is there a weighted option in the grade given in your band ensemble class?

Of 293 schools who indicated they have a weighted grading system, only 19.8% (90 schools) of directors said there was a weighted option in the grade given in their band ensemble class. Directors reporting yes indicated a weighted grade was assigned in the following instances: top ensemble, upper-level students (11th and 12th graders), honors credit option, or students choosing to do extra work or participate in extra assessments.

Assessment Philosophy

Question 19: How important are the following purposes of student assessment?

Participants were presented with a list of sixteen purposes for assessing students in band. Directors rated the importance of these purposes, using a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (not important) to 5 (extremely important). *To provide feedback to students (M = 4.63) and to determine what concepts students are failing to understand (M = 4.45) were among the most important purposes. To determine whether students*

were practicing at home ($M = 3.37$) and to rank students according to individual performing levels ($M = 2.81$) were the least important purposes of student assessment (Table 4-1).

Question 20: How important are the following criteria in the evaluation of your band students?

Participants were asked to rate the importance of ten different criteria in the evaluation of their band students. The rating scale was a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not important) to 5 (extremely important). The *ability to play an instrument in an ensemble* ($M = 4.26$) and *individual playing ability on an instrument* ($M = 4.16$) were rated among the most important. The *ability to improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniment* ($M = 2.32$) and the *ability to compose music* ($M = 2.02$) were rated as the least important (Table 4-2).

Question 21: How important are the following assessment categories in a student assessment model for band?

Participants were asked to rate the importance of four assessment categories in a student assessment model for bands. *Summative assessment* (i.e., concerts, festivals, recitals) was ranked at the most important ($M = 4.27$); *formative assessment* (i.e., playing tests) was ranked second ($M = 4.03$). *Diagnostic assessment* (i.e., error detection) was ranked next ($M = 3.89$) and *placement assessment* (i.e., auditions, challenges) was ranked the least important ($M = 3.27$) (Table 4-3).

Question 22: How influential are the following factors on the assessment methods you use?

Respondents were presented with a list of sixteen factors that might influence their choice of assessment methods. Participants rated the level of influence using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not influential) to 5 (extremely influential). The

directors' *personal philosophy of education* ($M = 4.38$) and *the objectives or goals of your class* ($M = 4.31$) had a high degree of influence on the choice of assessment method. *Requirements set by the school district* ($M = 2.73$) and *the assessment method implemented in the high school band program you attended* ($M = 2.16$) had a low degree of influence (below the moderately influential response). Also influential in determining assessment methods were *the amount of available class time* ($M = 4.20$), *the demands of the ensemble's performance schedule* ($M = 3.90$), and *the expectations of your students* ($M = 3.53$) (Table 4-4).

Question 23: How do you feel the following have prepared or are preparing you to assess the students in your band program?

Participants were asked to rate how well eight different factors have prepared (or are preparing) them to assess the students in their band program. *Discussions with colleagues* ($M = 3.98$) and *clinic at professional conference* ($M = 3.64$) had the highest response rate, while *state or district standards* ($M = 2.72$) and *teacher in-service sessions* ($M = 2.27$) had the lowest response rate (Table 4-5).

Assessment Information

Question 24: Which of the following assessment components do you use to determine a student's grade?

Participants were presented with a list of sixteen assessment components and asked to select which they use to determine a student's grade. The two most prevalent components used by directors were participation (95.6%) and performances (92.1%). The two least prevalent were peer assessment (9.5%), and portfolios (7.5%) (Table 4-6).

Question 25: Please enter the percentage of each component you use to determine your grades.

Using the same list of assessment components, participants were then asked to enter the percentage of each component used in determining their grades. Again *performances* (26.63%) and *participation* (22.27%) were assigned the highest percentages, and *portfolios* (6.67%) and *peer assessments* (5.72%) were assigned the lowest percentages (Table 4-6).

Question 26: Which of the following procedures for data collection do you use when assessing your students?

From a list of twelve options, participants were asked which procedures for data collection you use when assessing your students. *Teacher observation* (88.0%), *students play individually in class* (85.4%), and *students play in a group in class* (80.0%) were the most used procedures. *Students record themselves playing in a group* (13.1%), *Smart Music™* (13.1%), and *computer-assisted program* (5.1%) were the least used procedures for collecting assessment data (Table 4-7).

Question 27: If you use performance-based tests when assessing students, what materials do you utilize?

Participants who use performance-based tests in the assessment of their students were asked to select what materials they use from a list of seven options. The two most prevalent responses were *scales/rudiments* (93.3%) and *band music* (92.4%). *Method book exercises*, *sight-reading*, *etudes*, and *audition music* were also selected by about half of the participants. Other materials directors use includes chamber ensemble music, chorales, and rhythm sheets (Table 4-8).

Question 28: The following is a list of characteristics that have been traditionally used in assessment models of band students.

Participants were asked to rate the importance of fifteen characteristics traditionally used in assessment models of band students. The range of responses rated each of the characteristics between *moderately important* and *extremely important* response options. *Reflects the music skills and knowledge that are most important for students to learn* ($M = 4.32$); *supports, enhances, and reinforces learning* ($M = 4.29$); and *is reliable and valid* ($M = 4.25$) were rated as the most important. The least important characteristics were *includes a variety of assessment components* ($M = 3.69$); *is open to review by interested parties* ($M = 3.49$); and *includes both musical and non musical components* ($M = 3.15$). There were no characteristics rated below the *moderately important* response option by directors (Table 4-9).

Question 29: Rate your agreement level with the following statements concerning assessment.

Participants were asked to rate their agreement level of eight statements concerning assessment. Statements ranged from the satisfaction of directors, students, parents, and administrators with current band assessment practices to the level of interest in finding other ways to assess students (Table 4-10).

Assessment Model

Question 30: Using the following three assessment components: (a) individual testing and evaluation, (b) performance attendance and contribution, and (c) rehearsal attendance and contribution, assign percentages (totaling 100%) to create what you believe to be a balanced assessment tool for band students.

The final survey question asked participants to assign percentages of weight that overall components should have in a balanced assessment tool for band. Directors assigned the following mean percentages to these components: (a) individual testing

and evaluation = 30.57% ($SD = 13.78$); (b) performance attendance and contribution = 34.70% ($SD = 13.38$); and (c) rehearsal attendance and contribution = 34.95% ($SD = 12.86$) (Figure 4-13).

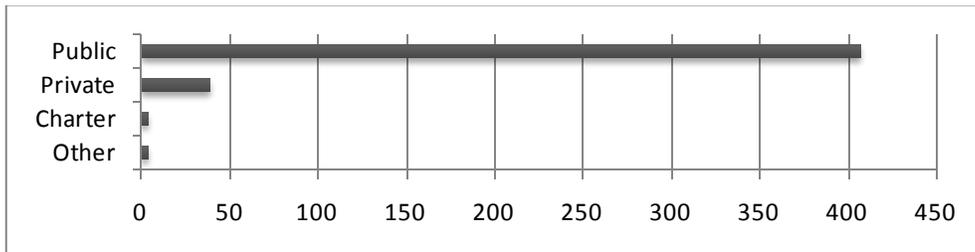


Figure 4-1. School type (N = 454)

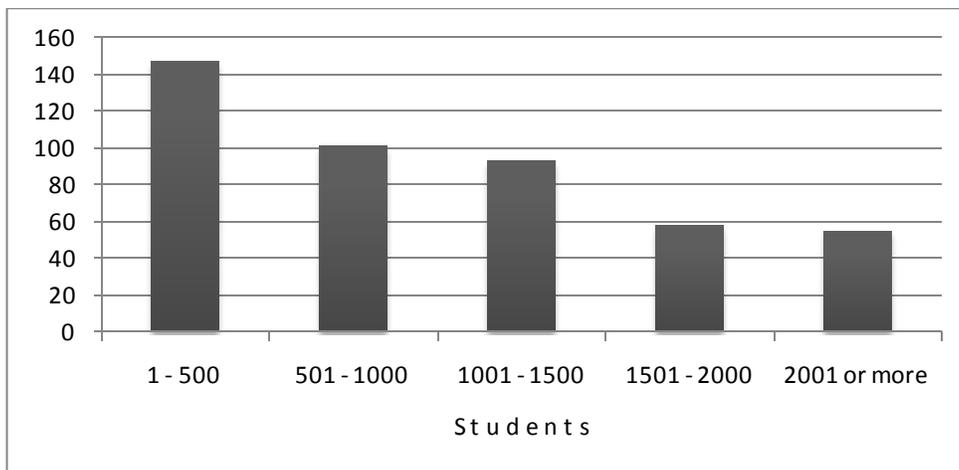


Figure 4-2. School enrollment (N = 454)

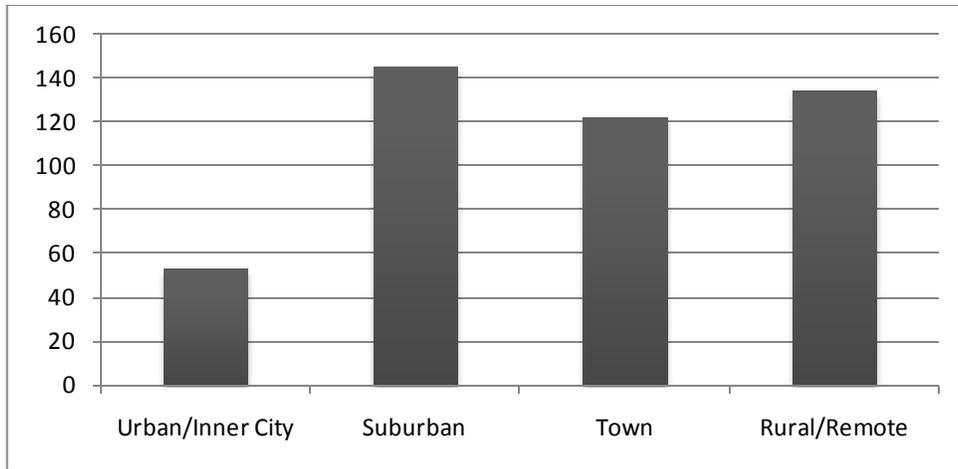


Figure 4-3. Community-type of school (N = 454)

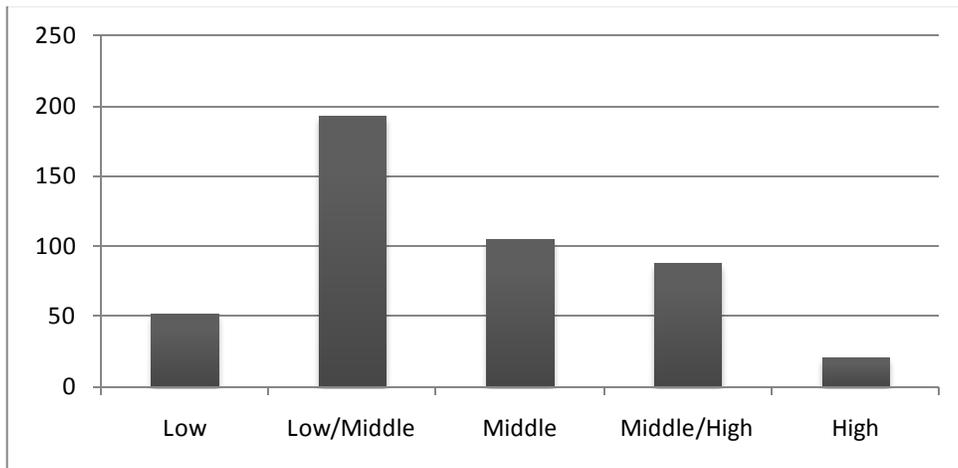


Figure 4-4. Socio-economic status of school community (N = 454)

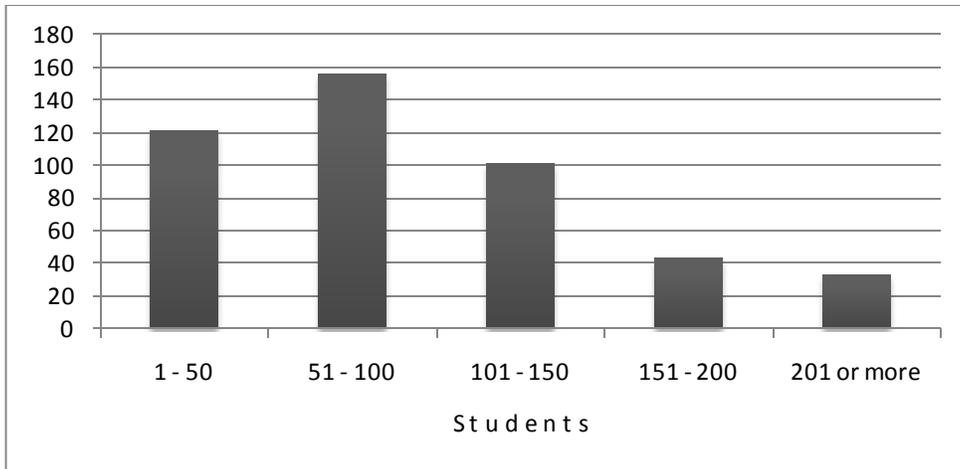


Figure 4-5. Student enrollment in band program (N = 454)

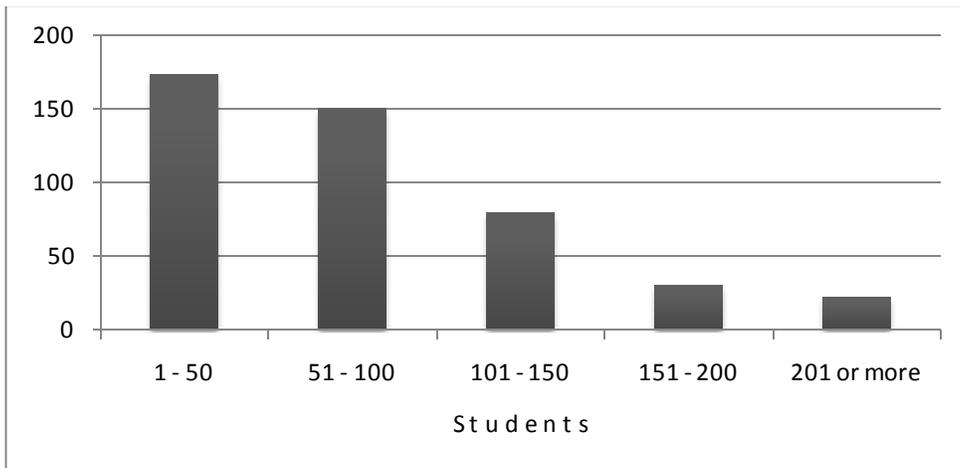


Figure 4-6. Student enrollment in concert band(s) (N = 454)

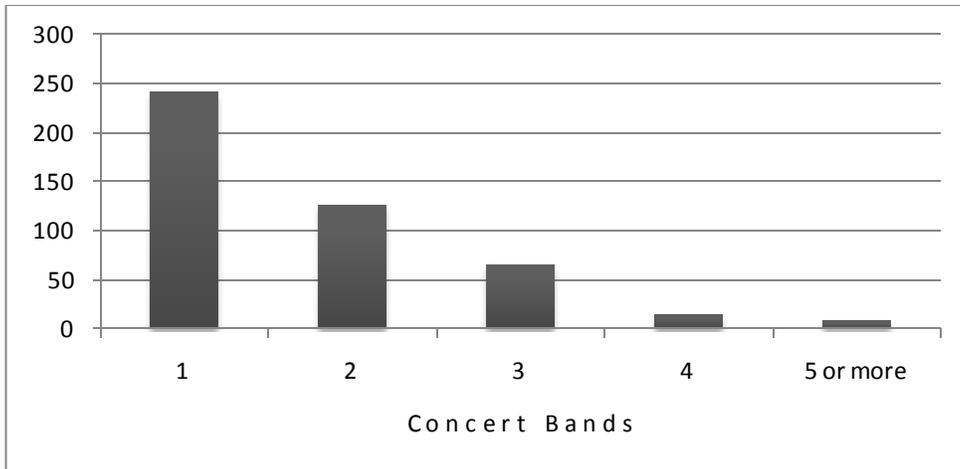


Figure 4-7. Concert bands per school (N = 454)

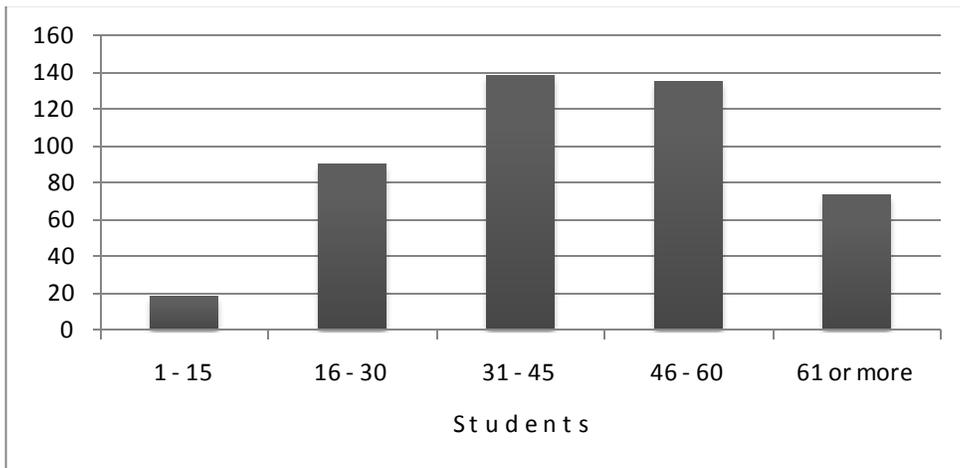


Figure 4-8. Average number of students per concert band (N = 454)

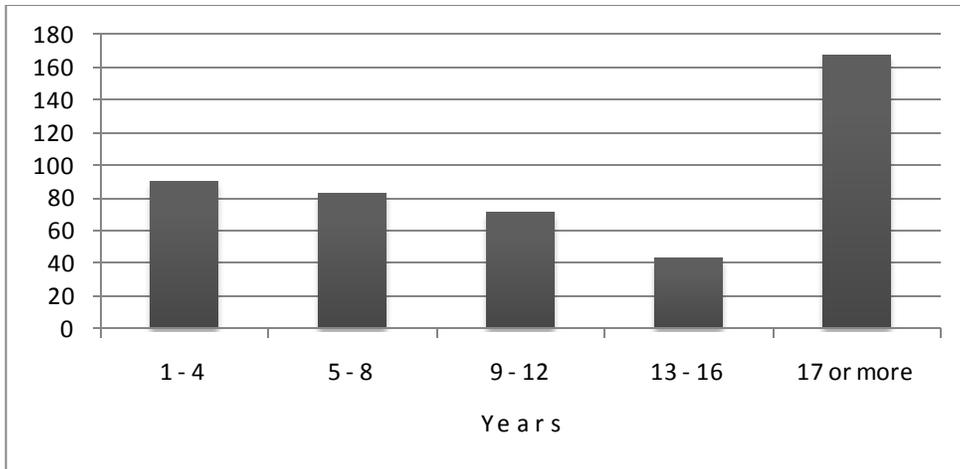


Figure 4-9. Director's years of teaching experience (N = 454)

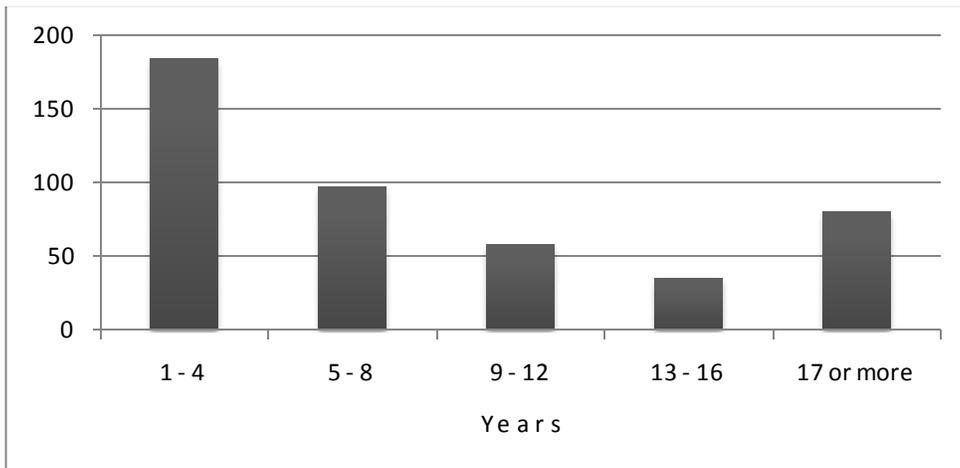


Figure 4-10. Director's years teaching at current school (N = 454)

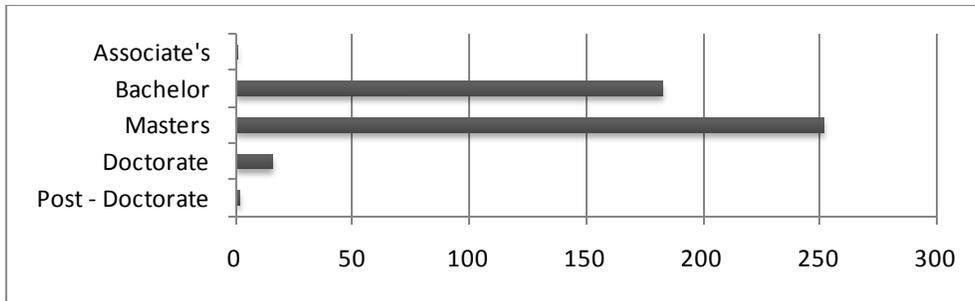


Figure 4-11. Director's education level (N = 454)

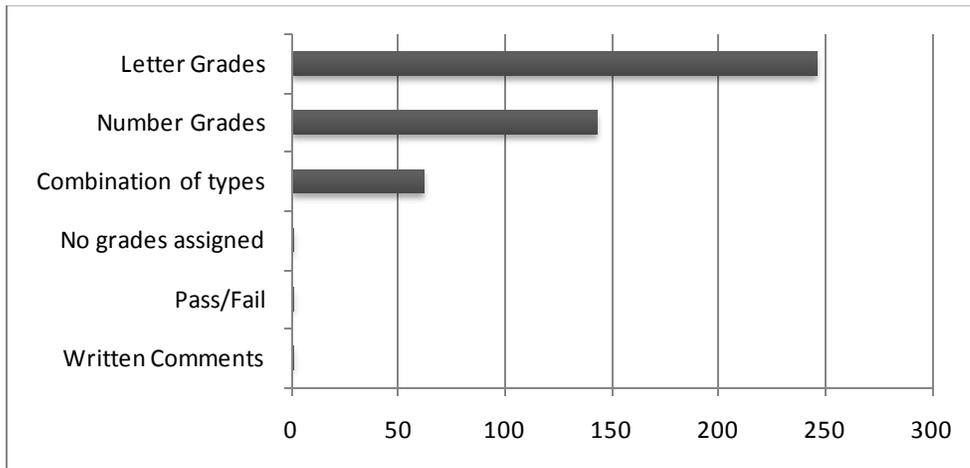


Figure 4-12. Grade types assigned (N = 454)

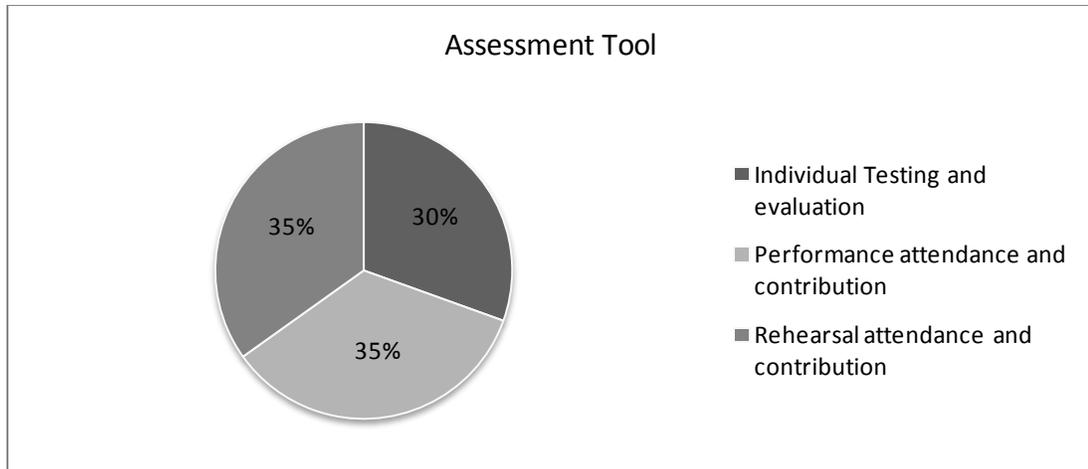


Figure 4-13. Create a balanced assessment tool (N = 454)

Table 4-1. Importance of purposes of assessment (N = 454)

Purpose	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
To provide feedback to students	4.63	0.64
To determine what concepts students are failing to understand	4.45	0.78
To determine what concepts students are understanding	4.41	0.76
To determine whether instruction has been successful	4.33	0.81
To demonstrate student accountability for learning	4.27	0.80
To determine future instructional direction	4.26	0.82
To identify individual student abilities	4.23	0.87
To set or maintain class standards	4.11	0.90
To provide feedback to parents	4.05	0.84
To help students prepare for public performance	4.00	0.97
To determine the level of musical preparedness for public performance	3.97	1.01
To establish or maintain credibility for the band program	3.85	1.15
To identify general class abilities	3.81	1.02
To motivate students to practice their instruments	3.75	1.05
To determine whether students are practicing at home	3.37	1.17
To rank students according to individual performance levels	2.81	1.27

Table 4-2. Criteria importance in the evaluation of band students (N = 454)

Criteria	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Ability to play an instrument in an ensemble	4.26	0.80
Individual playing ability on an instrument	4.16	0.89
Ability to evaluate music and music performances	3.92	0.93
Ability listening to, analyze, and describe music	3.54	1.06
Ability to understand the relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts	3.15	1.07
Ability to understand music in relation to history and culture	3.13	1.04
Knowledge of music theory	3.05	0.90
Knowledge of music history	2.51	0.88
Ability to improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniment	2.32	0.92
Ability to compose music	2.02	0.89

Table 4-3. Importance of assessment categories (N = 454)

Category	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Summative assessment	4.27	0.84
Formative assessment	4.03	0.89
Diagnostic assessment	3.89	0.94
Placement assessment	3.27	1.20

Table 4-4. Factors influencing assessment methods (N = 454)

Factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Your personal philosophy of education	4.38	0.76
The objectives or goals of your class	4.31	0.73
The amount of available class time	4.20	0.89
The demands of the ensemble's performance schedule	3.90	1.05
The expectations of your students	3.53	1.15
The number of students enrolled in the class	3.36	1.28
Available equipment (computers, recording)	3.29	1.21
Professional development you have participated in	3.11	1.16
Influence from your music colleagues	3.11	1.14
Your undergraduate coursework	3.07	1.17
The expectations of your students' parents	3.04	1.15
The expectation of your school principal	3.02	1.20
Your graduate coursework	2.94	1.38
Influence from professional organizations	2.80	1.11
Requirements set by the school district	2.73	1.22
The assessment method implemented in the high school band program you attended	2.37	1.27

Table 4-5. Assessment preparation ($N = 454$)

Preparation option	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Discussions with colleagues	3.98	0.95
Clinics at professional conference	3.64	1.05
Graduate coursework	3.07	1.37
Professional organizations	3.06	1.08
Undergraduate coursework	3.04	1.22
National standards	2.83	1.03
State or district standards	2.72	1.12
Teacher in-service sessions	2.27	1.18

Table 4-6. Assessment components used with the assigned percentage assigned ($N = 454$)

Assessment component	Response % (Count)	Weighted % (Count)
Participation	95.6 (433)	22.27 (394)
Performances	92.1 (417)	26.63 (375)
Performance-based tests	88.7 (402)	20.54 (342)
Attendance	77.7 (352)	18.67 (287)
Conduct/discipline	69.8 (316)	12.23 (251)
Written tests/worksheets	58.1 (263)	11.11 (228)
Attitude	54.1 (245)	12.51 (219)
Extra credit (lessons, concert attendance)	47.7 (216)	10.25 (126)
Practice log/journal	28.0 (127)	12.19 (118)
Sight-reading tests	24.5 (111)	7.34 (92)
Student self-assessment	22.5 (102)	8.10 (89)
Smart Music™	12.8 (58)	11.79 (56)
Requirement checklists	12.8 (58)	7.47 (45)
Computer-assisted programs	9.9 (45)	7.68 (37)
Peer assessment	9.5 (43)	5.72 (43)
Portfolios	7.5 (34)	6.67 (39)

Table 4-7. Data collection procedures (N = 454)

Procedure	Response % (Count)
Teacher observation	88.0 (397)
Students play individually in class	85.4 (385)
Students play in a group in class	80.0 (361)
Short answer test or assignment	39.0 (176)
Students record themselves playing individually	33.0 (149)
Student self-assessment	31.5 (142)
Multiple choice test or assignment	28.4 (128)
Practice log or record	26.2 (118)
Essay question test or assignment	25.1 (113)
Students record themselves playing in a group	13.1 (59)
Smart Music™	13.1 (59)
Computer-assisted program	5.1 (23)

Table 4-8. Materials used in performance-based tests (N = 454)

Material	Response % (Count)
Scales/rudiments	93.3 (418)
Band music	92.4 (414)
Method book exercises	56.5 (253)
Sight-reading	48.2 (216)
Etudes	42.2 (190)
All-state / district /county / or honor band audition music	40.6 (182)
Solo literature	25.9 (116)

Table 4-9. Importance of characteristics of assessment models (N = 454)

Characteristic	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Reflects the music skills and knowledge that are most important for students to learn	4.32	0.76
Supports, enhances, and reinforces learning	4.29	0.78
Is reliable and valid	4.25	0.82
Assists in motivating student to learn and develop	4.21	0.82
Aligns with instruction	4.12	0.86
Is understood by all parties involved (i.e., students, parents)	4.06	0.90
Is time efficient	4.06	0.88
Is relatively easy to administer and maintain	4.03	0.90
Requires a student to demonstrate a music behavior in an authentic or realistic situation	4.02	0.89
Assists in the preparation of music for performances	3.96	0.95
Includes appropriate grading rubrics	3.88	1.02
Includes regularly scheduled assessment opportunities	3.74	0.98
Includes a variety of assessment components	3.69	0.95
Is open to review by interested parties	3.49	1.12
Includes both musical and non musical components	3.15	1.14

Table 4-10. Agreement level with statements concerning assessment (N = 454)

Statement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I would be interested in finding other ways to assess my students	4.29	0.86
My school administrators are satisfied with the current band assessment practices	4.09	0.77
My assessment practices foster the individual musical development of my students	3.89	0.87
My assessment practices are good enough to ensure quality instruction	3.87	0.83
My students' parents are satisfied with the current band assessment practices	3.82	0.76
My students are satisfied with the current band assessment practices	3.68	0.81
I am satisfied with my current band assessment practices	3.54	0.93
My assessment and grading practices are similar to those of most of the band directors I know	3.51	0.97

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents a discussion of the results of the current study with reference to past research in this area as well as the previously discussed suggestions for teachers concerning student assessment by various professional organizations. The discussion section is presented in the five questionnaire categories: 1) Background Information, 2) Grading Information, 3) Assessment Philosophy, 4) Assessment Information, and 5) Assessment Model. Conclusions are presented within the context of the research questions that guided this study, followed by implications for music education and future research suggestions in the area of band student assessment.

Discussion of the Results

Background Information

Participants included a representative sample of band directors from across the United States. While only 10% of the sample (N = 4,500) completed the survey, the total of 454 completed questionnaires makes this one of the largest completed studies in this area of research. The limited response rate was likely the result of numerous variables including the band directors' busy schedules, interest and comfort with the topic, and the method of invitation and follow-up administered. Members may not give their full attention to all emails distributed by MENC and the study was restricted to one follow-up email to encourage directors to participate.

The 454 directors completing the survey teach at schools that are representative of high schools in the United States. The school type, school size, community type, and socio-economic categories were all represented. These directors also represent a balance of all categories of band program size and the administration of the concert

band component of their programs in relation to ensemble enrollment and size. Finally, the sample includes directors who have a variety of years of teaching experience and years teaching in their current positions. Most directors had at least a master's degree in music/music education.

Grading Information

A wide variety of grading systems are used by school systems across the country. The number of grading periods along with their duration varied greatly in the sample, as did the type of grade the directors assign at the end of a marking period. This variation of systems would have to be accounted for in any projected assessment model and may explain the uniqueness of each director's assessment system.

Band directors reported that 95.2% of the grades they assign to students in band ensemble classes affect the student's grade point average. This encouraging result supports the decision to include the arts as a core class in the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001* (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). A disappointing and somewhat contradictory result was that only 19.8% of those directors teaching in a school offering a weighted grading system had the option of issuing a weighted grade to their band students.

Assessment Philosophy

The assessment philosophy section of the questionnaire provided valuable feedback from directors including the motivation behind their assessment choices, their views on assessment issues, and the factors that influence their assessment decisions.

Purpose

The sixteen purposes directors rated are divided into three categories: instructional purposes (I); performance purposes (P); and external purposes (E).

Instructional purposes (I) relate to the process of teaching and learning and the feedback associated with that process (i.e. *to provide feedback to students, to determine what concepts students are failing to understand, to determine what concepts students are understanding, to determine whether instruction has been successful, to demonstrate student accountability for learning, and to determine future instructional direction*). Performance purposes (P) are associated with any aspect of individual or group performance ability or levels (i.e. *to identify individual student abilities, to help students prepare for public performance, to determine the level of musical preparedness for public performance, to identify general class abilities, and to rank students according to individual performance levels*). External purposes include factors that do not directly relate to the instructional or performance aspects of the classroom (i.e. *to set or maintain class standards, to provide feedback to parents, to establish or maintain credibility for the band program, to motivate students to practice their instruments, and to determine whether students are practicing at home*).

The purposes of student assessment considered most important by the directors were to provide their students and themselves with feedback concerning the instructional process in the classroom (*to provide feedback to students, to determine what concepts the students are failing to understand, to determine what concepts the students are understanding, and to determine whether instruction has been successful*). These results were consistent with findings of the pilot study (2008) and align with the MENC guideline (MENC: The National Association for Music Education, 1998): assessment should support, enhance, and reinforce learning.

The purposes of student assessment considered least important by the directors centered on motivation and placement of students (*to motivate students to practice their instruments, to determine whether students are practicing at home, and to rank students according to individual performance levels*). Again, these results were consistent with findings of the pilot study and indicate directors are not concerned with external factors associated with student assessment.

It is important to note that the current study may indicate a shift in the directors' purpose for student assessment from previous research. The sixteen purposes presented to the directors can be divided into three basic categories: instructional purposes, performance purposes, and external purposes. Results of the current study clearly rank these categories: 1 = instruction purposes, 2 = performance purposes and 3 = external purposes (Table 5-1).

Earlier findings by Kancianic (2006), Hanzlik (2001), and Hill (1999) found a much greater emphasis on performances purposes (i.e., *to help students prepare for public performance, and to determine the level of musical preparedness for public performances*); ranking instructional purposes second. Consistent findings in the research show external purposes (i.e., *to establish or maintain credibility for the band program, and to provide feedback to parents*) least important to directors.

Criteria

The ten criteria directors rated are divided into four categories which can be related to Bloom's taxonomy of learning domains (Bloom, 1971): performance criteria (P); critical thinking criteria (CT); knowledge criteria (K); and creative criteria (C). Performance criteria (P) align with Bloom's psychomotor domain, relating to the manual or physical skills associated with musical performance (i.e. *ability to play an instrument*

in an ensemble, and individual playing ability on an instrument). Critical thinking criteria (CT) relate most with Bloom's cognitive domain, and to a lesser extent the affective domain, and are associated with the evaluation, analysis, description, and understanding of music in relation to other areas (i.e. *ability to evaluate music and music performances, ability listening to, analyze, and describe music, ability to understand the relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts, and ability to understand music in relation to history and culture*). Knowledge criteria (K) is directly associated with Bloom's knowledge domain and relates to mental skills or recall in relation to music (i.e. *knowledge of music theory, and knowledge of music history*). Creative criteria (C) are associated with Bloom's knowledge and psychomotor domains and encompass the mental and physical compositional and improvisational skills associated with music (i.e. *ability to improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniment, and ability to compose music*).

The assessment criteria directors deemed most important in the evaluation of their band students centered on performance skills (i.e., *ability to play an instrument in an ensemble, and individual playing ability on an instrument*). This result was expected with the understanding that the classes in question are performance-based ensembles with the primary purpose of preparing music for performance. The next category directors found important involved some type of critical thinking including evaluating and describing music and musical performances. Included with this category were understanding music and its relationship with other arts disciplines, outside disciplines, and music in relation to history and culture. The assessment criteria the directors deemed least important revolved around music knowledge and external performance

skills not directly associated with the performance of traditional concert band literature (i.e., *knowledge of music theory and history, and the ability to improvise melodies, variations, accompaniments, and compose music*)

The original survey question (#20) and criteria responses were designed to investigate if high school band directors were assessing their students based on the national standards for music education. These nine standards were offered to our profession by the Music Task Force (MENC, 2008) on March 11, 1994, in association with the Goals 2000: Educate America Act.

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

The directors most valued criteria associated with standards 1 and 2, with mean response levels of $M = 4.26$ and $M = 4.16$ respectively. Standards 7 and 6 followed, with mean response levels of $M = 3.92$ and $M = 3.54$. While the next standards ranked are 8 and 9, their corresponding mean levels of $M = 3.15$ and $M = 3.13$ fall just above the *moderately important* response option. Standards 3 and 4, along with music theory and music history knowledge, all fall around or below the *moderately important* response option, with standard 4 ($M = 2.02$) approaching the *not important* response

option. These findings are consistent with current research by Zitek (2008), Schopp (2008), Diehl (2007), and Antmann (2007) who found that band directors' curricular activities and assessment are centered on the actual playing of music versus the creation of new music, either through composition or improvisation (Table 5-2).

Category

The assessment category considered most important by directors was summative assessment (i.e., concerts, festivals, recitals) followed by formative assessment (i.e., playing tests). As these two categories of assessments align with the objectives of performance-based ensembles, this result was expected, with both categories reporting strong responses ($M = 4.27$ and $M = 4.03$). Diagnostic assessment (i.e., error detection) and placement assessment (i.e., auditions, challenges) were considered less important by the directors, but still received above-average mean responses of $M = 3.89$ and $M = 3.27$. These results indicate that the directors are assessing their students using assessments from all four categories which align with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (Linn, 2005) suggestion: *create a variety of assessment tasks and materials for assessing student learning.*

Influence

The sixteen factors directors rated are divided into five categories: personal philosophy (P); class time (CT); logistics (L); training (T); and external factors (E). Personal philosophy (P) relates to the director's opinion or view on assessment (i.e. *your personal philosophy of education, and the objectives or goals of your class*). Class time (CT) includes any factors relating to perceived time constraints (i.e. *the amount of available class time, the demands of the ensemble's performance schedule, and the number of students enrolled in the class*). Logistics (L) include available resources (i.e.

available equipment, computers, and recording devices). Training (T) relates to any education or training the director has experienced (i.e. *professional development you have participated in, your undergraduate coursework, your graduate coursework, and the assessment method implemented in the high school band program you attended*). External factors (E) include external expectations or influences (i.e. *the expectation of your students, the expectations of your students' parents, influence from your music colleagues, influence from professional organizations, and requirements set by the school district*).

The factors that most influence the assessment methods used by directors centered on personal philosophy, available class time, and logistics (i.e., *the objectives or goals of your class, the demands of the ensemble's performance schedule, and available equipment*). Training (i.e., *undergraduate and graduate course work and professional development*) and external factors (i.e., *the expectations of students, students' parents, and school principal, and influence from music colleagues and professional organizations*) least influenced assessment methods directors use (Table 5-3). These results are consistent with the pilot study responses and other research by Kancianic (2006) and Kitora (2001), who found that band directors are influenced more by internal goals and objectives related to musical performance than by external requirements or expectations set by others.

Preparation

The eight preparation methods directors rated are divided into three categories: colleagues (C); training (T); and external methods (E). Colleagues (C) relate to preparation gained from other music educators (i.e. *discussions with colleagues, and clinics at professional conference*). Training (T) relates to any education or training the

director has experienced (i.e. *graduate coursework, undergraduate coursework, and teacher in-service sessions*). External methods (E) refer to outside organizations or published standards (i.e. *professional organizations, national standards, and state or district standards*).

Directors considered their colleagues the best source of preparation for assessing students in their band program. Directors responded strongly for *discussions with colleagues* ($M = 3.98$) and *clinics at professional conference* ($M = 3.64$) as the methods that prepared them best for the task of student assessment. Directors considered their training (i.e., *graduate and undergraduate course work*) and external methods (i.e., *professional organization, national or state standards*) to have *moderately well prepared* or *not well prepared* them, with a range of response (mean values between 3.07 and 2.27) (Table 5-4).

Assessment Information

Results from the Assessment Information section of the questionnaire provided specific information about how the directors are currently assessing their students. This section also asked the directors to reflect on the importance of specific assessment-model characteristics and to reflect on the effectiveness of their current assessment method.

Components

The sixteen assessment components the directors commented on are divided into two categories: musical (M) and non musical (N). The musical components (M) relate to any and all aspects of music (i.e. *performances, performance-based tests, written tests/worksheets, practice log/journal, sight-reading tests, Smart Music™, requirement checklists, computer-assisted programs, and portfolios*). Non music components (N)

are external music (i.e. *participation, attendance, conduct/discipline, attitude, student self-assessment, and peer assessment*).

Assessment components used by most of the directors were *participation, performances, and performance-based tests*. *Attendance* and *conduct/discipline* were also used by many directors. Assessment components used by fewer than ten percent of the directors include *computer-assisted programs, peer assessments, and portfolios*.

The four most frequently selected components were also assigned the most weight in the directors' overall assessment method: *performances* (26.63%); *participation* (22.27%); *performance-based tests* (20.54%); and *attendance* (18.67%). The least-weighted components were *sight-reading tests* (7.34%); *portfolios* (6.67%); and *peer assessment* (5.72%).

These findings were virtually identical to the pilot study and mirrored component usage results from research conducted by Antmann (2007), Sears (2002), and Sherman (2006). Directors place clear emphasis on components that reinforce the preparation of performance materials and the performances themselves. Directors also stress the importance of "team" related concepts such as *participation, attendance, and conduct/discipline* in assessing their students. These concepts become extremely important in the setting of performance-based ensembles, where the success of the group is relies on each member fulfilling individual responsibilities. Directors indicate the use of both musical and non musical assessment components in their overall assessment method (Table 5-5).

Data collection

The twelve data collection procedures that directors commented on are divided into three categories: classroom method (C); outside of the classroom method (O); and

test or assignment (T). Classroom method (C) relates to all data collection procedures occurring in the classroom (i.e. *teacher observation, students play individually in class, and students play in a group in class*). Outside of the classroom method (O) relates to data collection procedures not occurring in the classroom (i.e. *students record themselves playing individually, student self-assessment, practice log or record, students record themselves playing in a group, Smart Music™, and computer-assisted programs*). Test or assignment (T) includes any written evaluation (i.e. *short answer test or assignment, multiple choice test or assignment, and essay question test or assignment*).

The most-used methods for data collection occur in the classroom and involve performance-based activities. Over 80% of the directors use teacher observations, and students playing individually or in a group, when assessing their students. Other data-collection methods used by far fewer directors include outside-the-classroom methods (i.e., *students recording themselves playing individually or in a group, practice log or record, and Smart Music™*) and written and knowledge-based methods (i.e., *short answer, multiple choice, or essay question tests or assignments*) (Table 5-6).

Characteristics

Characteristics of student assessment considered most important by the directors align with the guidelines provided by the MENC for music classroom assessment. Assessing the *most important music skills and knowledge* and using assessment to *support, enhance, and reinforce learning* were most valued by directors, as well as having assessments that are *reliable and valid*. Other characteristics considered important and aligning with MENC's guidelines include having assessments that are *understood by all parties involved*, and having assessments that *require a student to*

demonstrate a music behavior in an authentic or realistic situation. Characteristics considered less important by directors include using appropriate grading rubrics, including regularly scheduled assessment opportunities; and including a variety of assessment components.

The directors also rated *time-efficient*, and *relatively easy to administer and maintain*, as important characteristics of an assessment model. This supports research by Kancianic (2006), Chiodo (2001), and Sherman (2006) who found that the main problem directors perceive with student assessment is time constraints in dealing with large numbers of students.

Reflection

When reflecting on eight statements concerning their assessment practices, directors agreed most strongly with the statement *I would be interested in finding other ways to assess my students* ($M = 4.29$) and only moderately agreed with the statement *I am satisfied with my current band assessment practices* ($M = 3.54$). These results create a sense of optimism for the future of student assessment in high school band programs. Not only have the directors identified assessment as an area of concern, but they have also indicated a willingness to explore new assessment methods.

Directors rated *school administrators' satisfaction with the current band assessment practices* highest ($M = 4.09$); with *students' parents* ($M = 3.82$); the *students themselves* ($M = 3.68$); and *themselves* ($M = 3.54$) following. The groups less directly involved in the assessment process (*school administrators* and *students' parents*) are more satisfied. The individuals most directly involved (i.e. *directors* and *students*) are the less satisfied with the assessment process. Directors also responded at slightly above the moderately agree level that their assessment practices *foster the*

individual musical development of their students (M = 3.89), and that their assessments are good enough to ensure quality instruction (M = 3.87)

Assessment Model

In assigning weight values to the three assessment components in this study, in an effort to create a balanced student assessment model for bands, directors assigned similar weight to the two performance-oriented components (rehearsal attendance and contribution [$M = 34.95\%$] and performance attendance and contribution [$M = 34.70\%$]); and only slightly less weight to the assessment component (individual testing and evaluation [$M = 30.57\%$]). These weight distribution results were very similar to pilot study findings, reinforcing the idea that directors suggest an equal distribution among the three assessment components (Table 5-7).

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate current student assessment practices of high school band directors.

Research Question 1: In What Specific Ways are Current High School Band Directors Assessing Students in Their Ensemble Classes?

Results show that participation, performances, and performance-based test are the primary components high school band directors are using to assess the students who participate in their programs. These individual assessment components are typically responsible for 20 to 25% of the student's grade; and when combined with other components, comprise a total assessment plan that includes both musical and non musical assessment components. Directors primarily rely on in-class data collection methods (that include teacher observation) and playing tests (that require

students to play their instruments individually and in a group setting). These playing tests typically consist of scales/rudiments and band music.

Research Question 2: What are High School Band Directors' Attitudes toward the Assessment Process?

Results show that the main purpose of student assessment for high school band directors centered on providing their students and themselves with feedback concerning the instructional process in the classroom. Directors reported that performance skills were the most important criteria to assess in their students and the main influences of the assessment methods they use are their personal philosophy of assessment and available class time. Directors reported the best source of preparation for assessing their students came from their colleagues. Directors are interested in finding new ways to assess their students.

Research Question 3: How Can the Results of this Research Contribute to the Development of a Student Assessment Model for Bands?

The five examples of current grading policies included in the introduction (Wisconsin, California, New York, Washington, and Texas) demonstrated an inconsistency in a) the selection of assessment components; b) the weight assigned to the component in the overall grading plan; and c) the explanation of the component. A proposed assessment model should address these inconsistencies by incorporating the ideas and attitudes of current band directors, the experts in operating instrumental music classrooms in our schools.

Results show that directors assign a balance among the three suggested components of a student assessment model for bands. These three components comprise the most frequently used assessment components reported by the directors and include musical and non musical traits (Table 5-8).

The following explanation and definition for individual components stem from results of the study (specifically, the assessment philosophy and assessment information sections) in regard to purpose, criteria, category, influence, data collection, and characteristics. During the construction of this model, effort has been made to effectively blend the music criteria (i.e., musical preparation, musical execution) with the non music criteria (i.e., attendance, conduct attitude, materials).

Rehearsal attendance and contribution

The attendance of each member of the ensemble at all rehearsals is critical to the success of the ensemble. Attendance will be graded in terms of present, excused absence; unexcused absence (also refers to tardiness and early dismissals). Contribution (as graded through teacher observation) reflects how a student fulfills individual responsibilities to the ensemble. Contribution includes the following areas: conduct, attitude, musical preparation, and materials (instrument, music, accessories, etc). Students will receive a weekly grade for rehearsal attendance and contribution.

Performance attendance and contribution

The attendance of each member of the ensemble at all performances is critical to the success of the ensemble. Attendance will be graded in terms of present, excused absence; unexcused absence (also refers to tardiness and early dismissals). Contribution (as graded through teacher observation) reflects how a student fulfills individual responsibilities to the ensemble. Contribution includes the following areas: conduct, attitude, musical preparation, musical execution, and materials (instrument, music, accessories etc.). Students will receive a grade per performance.

Individual testing and evaluation

Students will participate in a performance-based assessment (playing test) each week. The material for the assessments will include scales/rudiments and band music. Students will also have four written tests (one per grading period) addressing basic music knowledge (including applicable music theory and history) (Table 5-9).

The following represent a synthesis of the ideas and concepts directors have indicated as important to an assessment model. The specific grading scale and grade-

type assignment are flexible and can be altered to the specific school requirements at each director's school (Figure 5-1).

Implications for Music Education

This study provides a broad view of secondary band directors' current assessment practices. Many components of the assessment process were investigated and conclusions were discussed in view of results. These results provide a better understanding of what is happening, and to a certain degree, why directors make their assessment choices. The following discussion revolves around what could (or in some cases should) be taking place concerning student assessment in band classes.

Directors responding to the survey stated that they are interested in finding other ways to assess their students. The following discussion provides alternatives concerning student assessment that band directors may have not yet explored.

Purpose

The purposes of student assessment considered most important by directors were to provide their students and themselves with feedback concerning the instructional process. This is encouraging and may indicate a shift in emphasis away from performance-based purposes found in previous research. A logical outcome of this shift might include increased emphasis on the *individual testing and evaluation* component of a student assessment model and decreased emphasis on the performance-based components (*performance attendance and contribution, and rehearsal attendance and contribution*).

Criteria

Directors continue to emphasize criteria centered on performance in their assessment decisions (i.e. *ability to play an instrument in an ensemble, and individual*

playing ability on an instrument). Performance remains an important part of the high school band program. However, in an effort to develop well-rounded musicians, other criteria should be emphasized in both assessment and curricular decisions. Band directors should be striving to produce musicians, not just music. Assessment criteria rated lowest by directors were *knowledge of music theory, knowledge of music history, ability to improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniment, and ability to compose music*. Having musicians with better understandings of these music fundamentals would only serve to enhance future performances, not detract from them. Directors should make efforts to find creative ways to incorporate this important musical knowledge into their rehearsals. Their assessment decisions should reinforce acquisition of this knowledge.

An example of incorporating music theory, history, improvisation, and composition into the preparation of a piece of music for performance is the use of *Variations on a Korean Folk Song* by John Barnes Chance. The use of the pentatonic scale in each of the folk song melodies could be the basis of lessons in music theory. Regarding music history, the use of Korean folk songs could initiate a discussion on the musical nationalism that flourished in the mid-nineteenth century. Music improvisation could be experimented with by having students create melodies using only the notes of the A-flat pentatonic scale heard at the opening of the piece. Music composition could be addressed by having students compose their own “folk song” using the pentatonic scale as the basic material for the melodic and harmonic elements of the piece.

The next step in this process would be for the director to assess the content taught in the various areas. The music theory and history components could easily be

assessed in written form. The improvisation would most likely be assessed through teacher observation in class while the students complete the activity. The composition could either be assessed in written form or through a performance of the students' works by student groups. The most important step in this process is to assess the information taught to students. This sends a clear message to all involved in the learning process that this information is important and valued in addition to preparing the piece for performance. Incorporating the comprehensive musical education of students serves to enhance and support musical performances.

Preparation

Directors responded that their colleagues were the best source of preparation for assessing students in their band programs (*discussion with colleagues*, and *clinics at professional conference*). Directors also reported that their undergraduate and graduate coursework only moderately prepared them for student assessment, and that professional organizations and standards (national, state and district) were preparing them to an even lesser degree. These results indicate a major disconnect among the current music education curriculum, our professional organizations, and practicing music educators.

Efforts should be made to better address the topic of student assessment (especially in ensemble situations) during the training of our future music educators. Assessment methods should be discussed and models suggested to students before they are sent into the classroom. In addition, our professional organizations should continue to develop programs and support research addressing student assessment. These organizations can play an important role in the direction of student assessment in the future.

Data Collection

Most directors use in-class performance-based activities when collecting assessment data on their students. More than 80% of the directors assess their students while they *play individually in class*, and *play in a group in class*. Materials most used by directors on performance-based test are scales/rudiments (93.3%) and band music (92.4%). The survey did not investigate how these performance-based tests (playing tests) were administered by the directors. How tests are administered determines their effectiveness. In many instances, playing tests are used as a threat and are initiated after a certain level of frustration is experienced by the director because of a lack of student preparation. The following is a suggested method of incorporating playing tests into a student assessment plan.

Playing tests can be an excellent assessment method for directors. Playing tests align with the performance objectives of the ensemble, foster individual preparation and practice, emphasize the individual's responsibility to the ensemble, and hold students accountable for musical development on their instrument. When used properly, playing tests save rehearsal time and improve the overall quality of performances. As with other assessment methods, playing test should be given on a regular basis (weekly) and should align with in-class content. The schedule of the specific content of playing tests should be logical and should emphasize important musical fundamentals as well as the preparation of major performances.

In addition to in-class performance-based activities, other data collection methods should be explored by band directors. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment in secondary band rooms have remained static for the past 50 years. In view of our current technology, a variety of alternatives are available to today's music

educator, to assist in instruction and assessment. Results show that the least-used procedures for collecting assessment data were Smart Music™ (13.1%) and computer-assisted programs (5.1%). Directors must be willing to explore these procedures and find ways to incorporate them into their programs.

Suggested Model

A suggested model of student assessment should incorporate results of current research, suggestions and recommendation from professional organizations, and practical experience gained from the classroom. This model serves as a guide, remaining flexible to allow band directors the freedom to modify according to their specific teaching situation.

The three main assessment components incorporate both musical and non musical criteria; individual testing and evaluation, performance attendance and contribution, and rehearsal attendance and contribution. Weight of the components is adjusted to emphasize testing and evaluation of both performance-based skills and music knowledge criteria (music theory and music history). Resulting percentages are individual testing and evaluation = 40%; performance attendance and contribution = 30%; and rehearsal attendance and contribution = 30%.

In both the *performance attendance and contribution* and *rehearsal attendance and contribution* components, the category of *attitude* has been replaced with *behavior*. Directors reported that most of their student assessment involves teacher observation. Behavior can be accurately observed (empirical). Attitude is a hypothetical construct that cannot be accurately measured through observation, and therefore becomes difficult to quantify when assessing students and assigning grades.

The remainder of the model is supported by results of this study and aligns with current student assessment practices of high school band directors (Figure 5-2).

Future Research

Future research in the area of student assessment should attempt to develop a globally accepted assessment model for use by directors in high school band programs. Such a model could be incorporated into both the undergraduate and graduate music education curriculum, giving prospective music educators the knowledge and tools to effectively assess their students.

1. A similar study could be administered to exemplary high school band directors (i.e., directors who have had bands perform at the Midwest Band Clinic) to offer “expert” information on assessment practices. These results could further justify the construction of an assessment model.
2. Student assessment studies in other school music genres (i.e., chorus, orchestra) to determine commonalities and differences in strategies and practice.
3. Student assessment studies in other grade levels (i.e., middle school, college) to determine commonalities and differences in strategies and practice.
4. Investigation of student assessment from the perspectives of students, parents, and school administrators.
5. Longitudinal study of student assessment in relation to educational and informational in-services designed for music educators.
6. Experimental study testing the effect of a specific student assessment model on student learning and ensemble development.

The results of this study represent an important first step in improving student assessment in high school bands in that they reveal current assessment methods and the factors that underlie the reasons those methods are used. These findings stimulate questions for investigation and discussion about how new student assessment methods might encourage a more comprehensive curriculum while supporting the goals and objectives of these performance-based ensembles. Few would dispute the proposition

that the music education profession would benefit from the development of a comprehensive band assessment model. The findings of this study suggest that such a model would strengthen band assessment practices, improve the reliability and validity of student assessment data, and, as a result, positively influence band curriculum, classroom instruction, and performance preparation. As a profession, we are obligated to continue this work as we endeavor to attain one of our most important goals – the improvement of student music learning.

Table 5-1. Assessment purposes including category (N = 454)

Purpose	Category	M
To provide feedback to students	I	4.63
To determine what concepts students are failing to understand	I	4.45
To determine what concepts students are understanding	I	4.41
To determine whether instruction has been successful	I	4.33
To demonstrate student accountability for learning	I	4.27
To determine future instructional direction	I	4.26
To identify individual student abilities	P	4.23
To set or maintain class standards	E	4.11
To provide feedback to parents	E	4.05
To help students prepare for public performance	P	4.00
To determine the level of musical preparedness for public performance	P	3.97
To establish or maintain credibility for the band program	E	3.85
To identify general class abilities	P	3.81
To motivate students to practice their instruments	E	3.75
To determine whether students are practicing at home	E	3.37
To rank students according to individual performance levels	P	2.81

I = Instructional purpose, P = Performance purpose, E = External purpose

Table 5-2. Assessment criteria including categories and national standard (N = 454)

Criteria	Standard	Category	M
Ability to play an instrument in an ensemble	1	P	4.26
Individual playing ability on an instrument	2	P	4.16
Ability to evaluate music and music performances	7	CT	3.92
Ability listening to, analyze, and describe music	6	CT	3.54
Ability to understand the relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts	8	CT	3.15
Ability to understand music in relation to history and culture	9	CT	3.13
Knowledge of music theory		K	3.05
Knowledge of music history		K	2.51
Ability to improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniment	3	C	2.32
Ability to compose music	4	C	2.02

P = Performance, CT = Critical Thinking, K = Knowledge, C = Creative

Table 5-3. Factors influencing assessment methods including categories (N = 454)

Factor	Category	M
Your personal philosophy of education	P	4.38
The objectives or goals of your class	P	4.31
The amount of available class time	CT	4.20
The demands of the ensemble's performance schedule	CT	3.90
The expectations of your students	E	3.53
The number of students enrolled in the class	CT	3.36
Available equipment (computers, recording)	L	3.29
Professional development you have participated in	T	3.11
Influence from your music colleagues	E	3.11
Your undergraduate coursework	T	3.07
The expectations of your students' parents	E	3.04
The expectation of your school principal	E	3.02
Your graduate coursework	T	2.94
Influence from professional organizations	E	2.80
Requirements set by the school district	E	2.73
The assessment method implemented in the high school band program you attended	T	2.37

P = Personal Philosophy, CT = Class Time, L - Logistics, T = Training, E = External

Table 5-4. Preparation methods including category (*N* = 454)

Preparation option	Category	<i>M</i>
Discussions with colleagues	C	3.98
Clinics at professional conference	C	3.64
Graduate coursework	T	3.07
Professional organizations	E	3.06
Undergraduate coursework	T	3.04
National standards	E	2.83
State or district standards	E	2.72
Teacher in-service sessions	T	2.27

C = Colleagues, T = Training, E = External methods

Table 5-5. Assessment components usage including category (*N* = 454)

Assessment component	Category	Response % (Count)
Participation	N	95.6 (433)
Performances	M	92.1 (417)
Performance-based Tests	M	88.7 (402)
Attendance	N	77.7 (352)
Conduct/Discipline	N	69.8 (316)
Written tests/Worksheets	M	58.1 (263)
Attitude	N	54.1 (245)
Extra Credit (lessons, concert attendance)	M/N	47.7 (216)
Practice Log/Journal	M	28.0 (127)
Sight-reading Tests	M	24.5 (111)
Student Self-assessment	N	22.5 (102)
Smart Music™	M	12.8 (58)
Requirement Checklists	M	12.8 (58)
Computer-assisted Programs	M	9.9 (45)
Peer Assessment	N	9.5 (43)
Portfolios	M	7.5 (34)

M = Musical, N = Non musical

Table 5-6. Data collection procedures including category (N = 454)

Procedure	Category	Response % (Count)
Teacher observation	C	88.0 (397)
Students play individually in class	C	85.4 (385)
Students play in a group in class	C	80.0 (361)
Short answer test or assignment	T	39.0 (176)
Students record themselves playing individually	O	33.0 (149)
Student self-assessment	O	31.5 (142)
Multiple choice test or assignment	T	28.4 (128)
Practice log or record	O	26.2 (118)
Essay question test or assignment	T	25.1 (113)
Students record themselves playing in a group	O	13.1 (59)
Smart Music™	O	13.1 (59)
Computer-assisted program	O	5.1 (23)

C = Classroom Method, O = Outside of the classroom method, T = Test or Assignment

Table 5-7. Weighted component results compared to pilot study results (N = 454)

Assessment component	<i>Current Study %</i>	<i>Pilot Study %</i>
Rehearsal attendance and contribution	35	33
Performance attendance and contribution	35	33
Individual testing and evaluation	30	34

Table 5-8. Student assessment model: Stage one

Assessment Component	Weight %	Explanation
Rehearsal attendance and contribution	35	
Performance attendance and contribution	35	
Individual testing and evaluation	30	

Table 5-9. Student assessment model: Stage two

Assessment Component	Weight %	Explanation
Rehearsal attendance and contribution	35	The attendance of each member of an ensemble at all rehearsals is critical to the success of the ensemble. Attendance will be graded in terms of present, excused absence; unexcused absence (also refers to tardiness and early dismissals). Contribution (as graded through teacher observation) reflects how a student fulfills individual responsibilities to the ensemble. Contribution includes the following areas: conduct, attitude, musical preparation, and materials (instrument, music, accessories, etc.). Students will receive a weekly grade for rehearsal attendance and contribution.
Performance attendance and contribution	35	The attendance of each member of the ensemble at all performances is critical to the success of the ensemble. Attendance will be graded in terms of present, excused absence; unexcused absence (also refers to tardiness and early dismissals). Contribution (as graded through teacher observation) reflects how a student fulfills individual responsibilities to the ensemble. Contribution includes the following areas: conduct, attitude, musical preparation, musical execution, and materials (instrument, music, accessories etc.). Students will receive a grade per performance.
Individual testing and evaluation	30	Students will participate in a performance-based assessment (playing test) each week. The material for the assessments will include scales/rudiments and band music. Students will also have four written tests (one per grading period) addressing basic music knowledge (including applicable music theory and history).

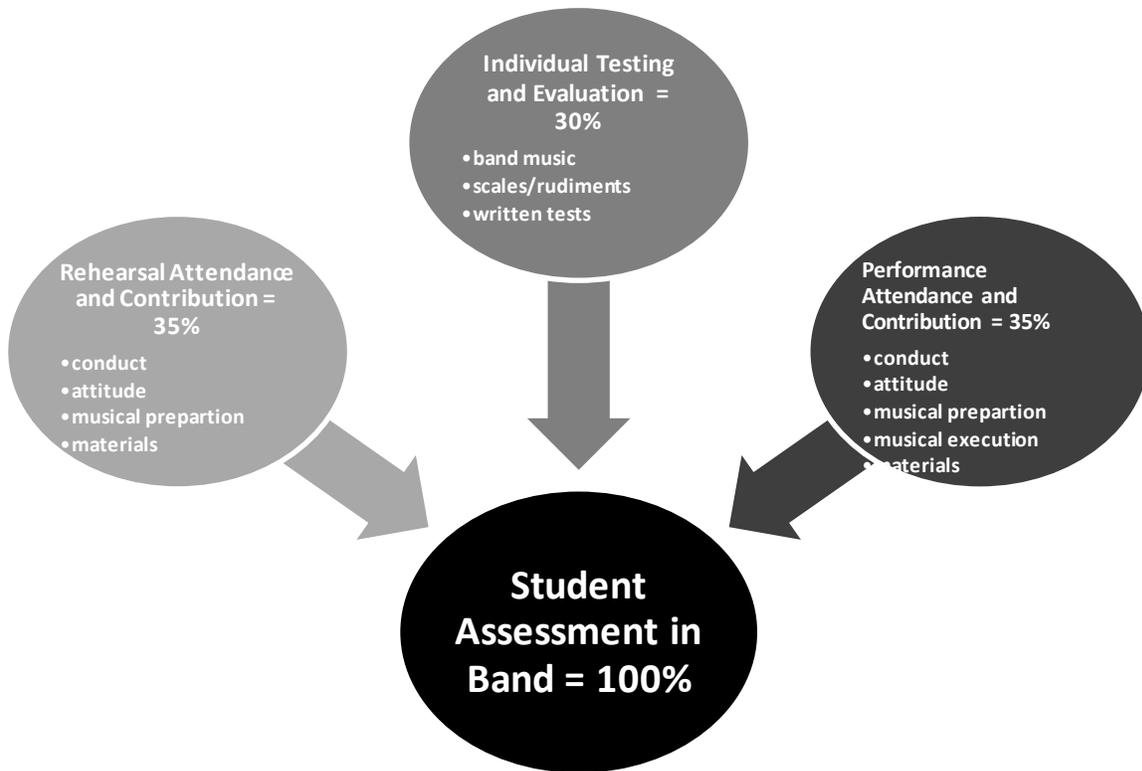


Figure 5-1. Current student assessment practices

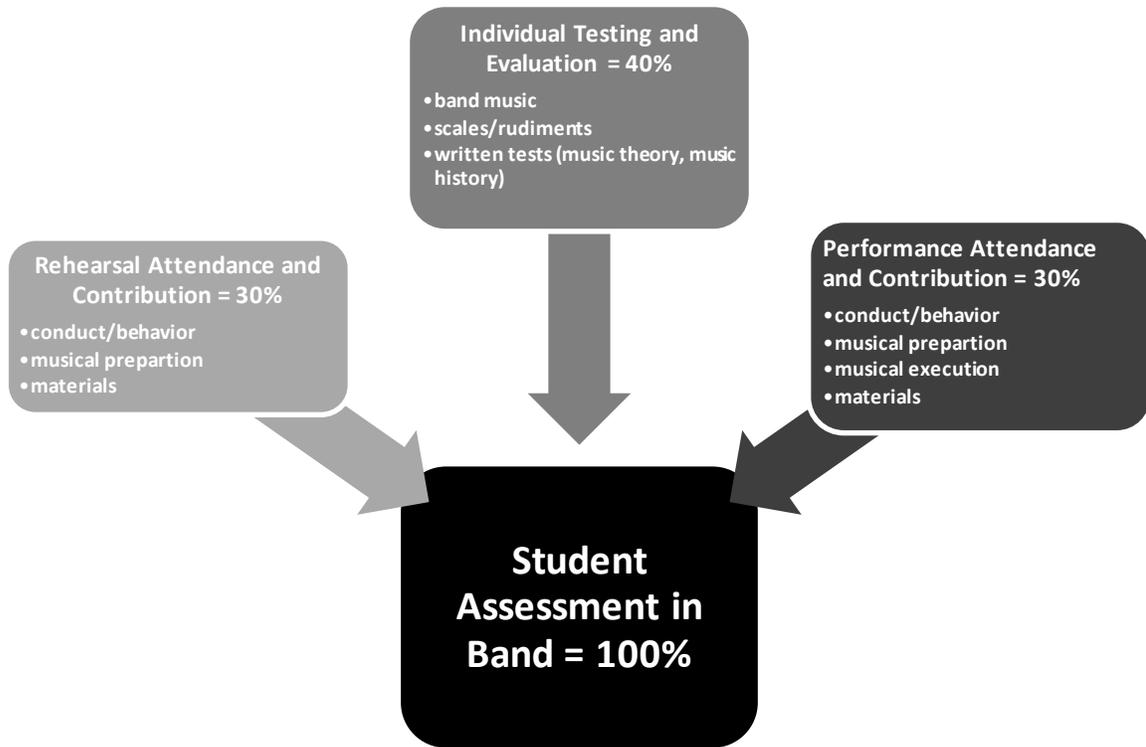


Figure 5-2. Student Assessment Model

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

Student Assessment Practices of High School Band Directors

Background Information

Please provide the following background information concerning your school, band program, and teaching experience.

1. Type of school:

Public Private Charter Other

2. Number of students (9th – 12th grade) enrolled in your high school:

1 - 500 501 - 1000 1001 - 1500 1501 - 2000 2001 or more

3. In what type of community is the school located?

Urban/ City (high population) Suburban (associated with a larger city)
Town (moderate population) Rural/Remote (low population)

4. What is the socio-economic status of the community?

Low Low/Middle Middle Middle/High High

5. Total number of students involved in the band program:

1 - 50 51 - 100 101 - 150 151 - 200 201 or more

6. Number of students involved in concert band(s):

1 - 50 51 - 100 101 - 150 151 - 200 201 or more

7. Number of concert bands at your school:

1 2 3 4 5 or more

8. Average number of students in each concert band:

1 - 15 16 - 30 31 - 45 46 - 60 61 or more

9. Total number of minutes each concert band meets PER WEEK:

10. Years of experience teaching high school band (including this year):

1 - 4 5 - 8 9 - 12 13 - 16 17 or more

11. Years teaching in your current position (including this year):

1 - 4 5 - 8 9 - 12 13 - 16 17 or more

12. Highest degree earned in music/music education:

Associate's Bachelor Masters Doctorate Post – Doctoral

13. Number of band directors employed at your school:

1 1.5 2 2.5 3 or more

Grading Information

Please provide the following information concerning your student grading process.

14. How many marking periods does your school have per year?

15. How many weeks long is a typical marking period?

16. What type of grade do you assign at the end of a grading period?

No grades assigned Pass/Fail Letter Grades Number Grades

Written Comments Combination of types (please explain) _____

17. Does the grade given in your band ensemble class affect the student's overall GPA?

Yes No Other (please explain) _____

18. Is there a weighted grading system being used in your school (higher level classes assigned more value in the students overall grade point average)?

Yes No

19. Is there a weighted option in the grade given in your band ensemble class?

Yes No If yes, please explain _____

Assessment Philosophy

Please provide your opinion to the following philosophical questions concerning student assessment.

20. How important are the following purposes of student assessment?

(1 = not important . . . 5 = extremely important)

a) to provide feedback to students	1	2	3	4	5
b) to provide feedback to parents	1	2	3	4	5
c) to identify individual student abilities	1	2	3	4	5
d) to identify general class abilities	1	2	3	4	5
e) to determine whether instruction has been successful	1	2	3	4	5
f) to determine what concepts students are understanding	1	2	3	4	5
g) to determine what concepts students are failing to understand	1	2	3	4	5
h) to determine future instructional direction	1	2	3	4	5
i) to demonstrate student accountability for learning	1	2	3	4	5
j) to establish or maintain credibility for the band program	1	2	3	4	5
k) to determine the level of musical preparedness for performance ...	1	2	3	4	5
l) to help students prepare for performance	1	2	3	4	5
m) to determine whether students are practicing at home	1	2	3	4	5
n) to motivate students to practice their instruments	1	2	3	4	5
o) to set or maintain class standards	1	2	3	4	5
p) to rank students according to individual performance levels	1	2	3	4	5

21. What importance do you place on the following criteria in the evaluation of your band students?

(1 = not important . . . 5 = extremely important)

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) individual playing ability on an instrument..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) ability to play an instrument in an ensemble..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) knowledge of music history..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) knowledge of music theory..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) ability to improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniment..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f) ability to compose music..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g) ability listening to, analyze, and describe music..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h) ability to evaluate music and music performances..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| i) ability to understand the relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j) ability to understand music in relation to history and culture..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

22. How important are the following assessment categories in a student assessment model for bands?

(1 = not important . . . 5 = extremely important)

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Placement assessments (i.e., auditions, challenges) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) Summative assessments (i.e., concerts, festivals, recitals) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) Diagnostic assessment (i.e., error detection) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) Formative assessment (i.e., playing tests) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

23. How influential are the following factors have on the assessment methods you use?

(1 = no influential . . . 5 = extremely influential)

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) your personal philosophy of education | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) the amount of available class time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) the objectives or goals of your class | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) the demands of your ensemble's performance schedule | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) the number of students enrolled in the class | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f) professional development you have participated in | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

g) influence from music colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
h) influence from professional organization	1	2	3	4	5
i) requirements set by the school district	1	2	3	4	5
j) the expectations of your students	1	2	3	4	5
k) the expectations of your students' parents	1	2	3	4	5
l) the expectation of your school principal	1	2	3	4	5
m) available equipment (computers, recording)	1	2	3	4	5
n) your undergraduate coursework	1	2	3	4	5
o) your graduate coursework	1	2	3	4	5
p) modeled after the high school program you attended	1	2	3	4	5

24. How do you feel the following have prepared or are preparing you to assess the students in your band program?

(1 = not well prepared . . . 5 = very well prepared)

a) undergraduate coursework	1	2	3	4	5
b) graduate coursework	1	2	3	4	5
c) national standards	1	2	3	4	5
d) state or district standards	1	2	3	4	5
e) teacher in-service sessions	1	2	3	4	5
f) clinics at professional conference	1	2	3	4	5
g) discussions with colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
h) professional organizations	1	2	3	4	5

Assessment Information

Please provide information concerning assessing the students in your largest concert band.

25. Which of the following assessment components do you use to determine a student's grade (select all that apply)?

- a) attitude
- b) attendance
- c) computer-assisted programs
- d) conduct/discipline
- e) extra credit (lessons, concert attendance)

- f) participation
- g) peer assessment
- h) performance-based (playing) tests
- i) performances
- j) portfolios
- k) practice log/journal
- l) requirement checklists (scales, exercises)
- m) sight-reading tests
- n) Smart Music™
- o) student self-assessment
- p) written tests/worksheets

26. Please enter the percentage of each component you use to determine your grades. Leave unused components blank. Be sure that the total adds up to 100%.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| a) attitude grades | _____ % |
| b) attendance grades | _____ % |
| c) computer programs grades | _____ % |
| d) conduct/discipline | _____ % |
| e) extra credit | _____ % |
| f) participation | _____ % |
| g) peer assessment | _____ % |
| h) performance-based tests | _____ % |
| i) performances | _____ % |
| j) portfolios | _____ % |
| k) practice log/journal | _____ % |
| l) requirement checklists | _____ % |
| m) sight-reading tests | _____ % |
| n) Smart Music™ | _____ % |
| o) student self-assessment | _____ % |
| p) written tests/worksheets | _____ % |

27. Which of the following procedures for data collection do you use when assessing your students (select all that apply)?

- a) students play individually in class
- b) students play in a group in class
- c) students record themselves playing individually
- d) students record themselves playing in a group
- e) multiple choice test or assignment
- f) short answer test or assignment
- g) essay question test or assignment
- h) computer-assisted program
- i) Smart Music™
- j) practice log or record
- k) teacher observation
- l) student self-assessment
- l) other (fill-in)

28. If you use performance-based tests when assessing students, what materials do you utilize (select all that apply)?

- a) scales / rudiments
- b) band music
- c) sight-reading
- d) all-state / district / county / or honor band audition music
- e) method book exercises
- f) etudes
- g) solo literature
- i) do not use performance-based tests

29. The following is a list of characteristics that have been traditionally used in assessment models of band students. Rate the importance of these characteristics in your assessment design.

(1 = not important . . . 5 = extremely important)

- a) assists in the preparation of music for performances 1 2 3 4 5
- b) includes a variety of assessment components 1 2 3 4 5

c) aligns with instruction	1	2	3	4	5
d) is understood by all parties involved (i.e., students, parents)	1	2	3	4	5
e) includes appropriate grading rubrics	1	2	3	4	5
f) assists in motivating students to learn and develop	1	2	3	4	5
g) reflects the music skills and knowledge that are most important for students to learn	1	2	3	4	5
h) supports, enhances, and reinforces learning	1	2	3	4	5
i) is reliable and valid	1	2	3	4	5
j) requires a student to demonstrate a music behavior in an authentic or realistic situation	1	2	3	4	5
k) is open to review by interested parties	1	2	3	4	5
l) includes regularly scheduled assessment opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
m) includes both musical and non musical components	1	2	3	4	5
n) is time efficient	1	2	3	4	5
o) is relatively easy to administer and maintain	1	2	3	4	5

30. Rate your agreement level with the following statements concerning assessment.

(1 = strongly disagree . . . 5 = strongly agree)

a) I am satisfied with my current band assessment practices	1	2	3	4	5
b) My students are satisfied with the current band assessment practices	1	2	3	4	5
c) My students' parents are satisfied with the current band assessment practices	1	2	3	4	5
d) My school administrators are satisfied with the current band assessment practices	1	2	3	4	5
e) My assessment practices are good enough to ensure quality instruction	1	2	3	4	5
f) My assessment practices foster the individual musical development of my students	1	2	3	4	5
g) My assessment and grading practices are similar to those of most of the band directors I know	1	2	3	4	5
h) I would be interested in finding other ways to assess my students .	1	2	3	4	5

Assessment Model

Please answer the following question concerning an assessment model.

31. Using the following three assessment components, (a) individual testing and evaluation, (b) performance attendance and contribution, and (c) rehearsal attendance and contribution, assign percentages (totaling 100%) to create what you believe to be a balanced assessment tool for band students:

- | | |
|---|--------|
| (a) individual testing and evaluation | _____% |
| (b) performance attendance and contribution | _____% |
| (c) rehearsal attendance and contribution | _____% |

Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire

APPENDIX B PILOT STUDY RESULTS

Survey results are presented in three categories: 1) Demographic Information, 2) Grading Information, and 3) Assessment Information.

Demographic Information

The school enrollment of the 45 schools showed representation in each of the five population categories. The results were as follows: 1 to 500 students = 31.1% (14 schools); 501 to 1,000 students = 13.3% (6 schools); 1,001 to 1,500 students = 28.9% (13 schools); 1,501 to 2,000 students = 20.0% (9 Schools); and 2,001 or more students = 6.7% (3 schools). While the community-type results showed representation in each category, over half of the schools reported Suburban = 53.3%, (24 schools). The remaining results were Small Town = 22.2% (10 schools); Rural/Remote = 15.6% (7 schools); and Urban/Inner City = 11.1% (5 schools). Finally, the socio-economic status of the community also showed representation in each category: Low = 13.3% (6 schools); Low/Middle = 35.6% (16 schools); Middle = 15.6% (7 schools); Middle/High = 28.9% (13 schools); and High = 11.1% (5 schools).

The size of the band programs participating in the study indicated a wide variety with almost half consisting of between 101 and 150 students. The results were as follows: 1 to 50 students = 20.0% (9 schools); 51 to 100 students = 20% (9 schools); 101 to 150 students = 46.7% (21 schools); 151 to 200 students = 13.3% (6 schools); and no schools reported more than 201 students enrolled in band ensemble classes. The total number of ensemble classes being taught in each band program ranged from 1 to 5 (or more). Those results showed: 1 ensemble = 13.3% (6 schools); 2 ensembles = 20.0% (9 schools); 3 ensembles = 31.1% (14 schools); 4 ensembles = 15.6% (7

schools); and 5 or more ensembles = 22.2% (10 schools). The number of concert ensembles being taught showed similar results: 1 concert ensemble = 20.0% (9 schools); 2 concert ensembles = 26.7% (12 schools); 3 concert ensembles = 26.7% (12 schools); 4 concert ensembles = 4.4% (2 schools); and 5 or more concert ensembles = 22.2% (10 schools). Finally, the average number of students in each concert ensemble results showed almost half ranging from 46 to 60 students (42.2%, 19 schools). The remaining results showed: 1 = 15 students at 4.4% (2 schools); 16 = 30 students at 8.9% (4 schools); 31 = 45 students at 22.2% (10 schools); and 61 or more students at 22.2% (10 schools).

Participants revealed that almost half have been teaching 17 or more years (42.2%, 19 directors). Remaining results: 1 to 4 years = 20.0% (9 directors); 5 to 8 years = 15.6% (7 directors); 9 to 12 years = 8.9% (4 directors); and 13 to 16 years = 13.3% (6 directors). The years teaching in their current positions showed a very balanced result: 1 to 4 years = 28.9% (13 directors); 5 to 8 years = 22.2% (10 directors); 9 to 12 years = 20.0% (9 directors); 13 to 16 years = 8.9% (4 directors), and 17 or more years = 20.0% (9 directors). The results showed that all directors have received at least a bachelor's degree (48.9%) with more than half possessing a master's degree (66.7%). None of the respondents reported associates, doctorate, or post doctoral degrees. Finally the number of directors employed at each school results showed almost half of the directors manages the band program alone (44.4%, 20 schools). Other results: 1.5 directors = 4.4% (2 schools); 2 directors = 24.4% (11 schools); 2.5 directors = 2.2% (1 school); and 3 or more directors = 24.4% (11 schools).

Grading Information

The directors reported a variety of grading periods, from 2 semesters to 12 grading periods. However, the majority of the directors indicated 4 grading periods (quarter system). The length of the grading period also varied, from 4.5 weeks to 18 weeks. Here the majority of the directors indicated that 9 weeks was the typical length of a grading period. A large majority of the directors indicated that they assign a letter grade (80.0%, 36 schools); with the remainder reporting to assign number grades (20.0%, 9 schools) at the end of a grading period. One hundred percent of the directors responded that the grade given in the band ensemble class affects the student's overall GPA (grade point average).

Finally, while 71.1% (32 schools) reported that their school uses a weighted grading system only 17.8% (8 schools) reported that the band ensemble class grade is weighted. Responses of the 8 directors showed how their band ensemble class grade is weighted in their grading system: (a) Students may enroll as juniors and seniors Band III and IV Honors. These are weighted courses with respect to overall GPA; (b) Band taken for honors credit during the student's junior and senior year carries more weight; (c) Students 10th grade and above can contract to earn a weighted grade by fulfilling a number of additional achievements beyond the class period; (d) An upperclassman, under certain rare circumstances can get honors credit for top ensemble participation. This mainly hinges on meeting certain performance criteria (all-district or all-state band, one rating at festival, etc.); (e) The grade is a combination of performance activities and learning activities; (f) Entry level classes are 1.0. Performing ensembles are weighted 1.2 to 1.6. Students can get .2 higher for participation in all-district band in the fall term and district solo and ensemble contest in the spring; (g) Band is automatically weighted

to equal any other college-prep class grade; (h) Honors Credit available for grades 10-12. Students must perform a jury and write a research paper.

Assessment Information

Table B-1 shows the percentages and counts of the directors' use of selected assessment components to determine a student's grade in their ensemble classes. The two most prevalent components used by directors were participation (95.6%) and performances (95.6%). The two least prevalent were portfolios (6.7%) and peer assessment (6.7%). Additional assessment components offered by directors include rhythm dictation, extra credit (i.e., lessons, outside groups), and credit for attending concerts and recitals (ones in which the student is not performing).

Table B-1. Directors' use of assessment components (*N* = 45)

Assessment component	Response % (Count)
Participation	95.6 (43)
Performances	95.6 (43)
Performance-based tests	91.1 (41)
Attendance	82.2 (37)
Conduct/discipline	66.7 (30)
Written tests/worksheets	57.8 (26)
Attitude	55.6 (25)
Practice log/journal	31.1 (14)
Sight-reading tests	15.6 (7)
Computer-assisted programs	13.3 (6)
Smart Music™	11.1 (5)
Student self-assessment	11.1 (5)
Requirement checklists	8.9 (4)
Peer assessment	6.7 (3)
Portfolios	6.7 (3)

Table B-2 shows how frequently each assessment component is used by the director in determining the student's grade in their ensemble class. Participation (84.4%), attendance (75.6%), and conduct/discipline (60.0%) are used weekly by many directors. Sight-reading tests, computer-assisted programs, Smart Music™, student

self-assessment; requirement checklists, peer assessments, and portfolios are rarely used by directors.

Table B-2. Frequency of use of assessment components ($N = 45$)

Assessment component	Weekly %	Monthly %	Grading period %	Semester %	Never %
Participation	84.4	2.2	13.3	0.0	0.0
Performances	4.4	24.4	55.6	11.1	4.4
Performance-based Tests	35.6	37.8	11.1	8.9	6.7
Attendance	75.6	4.4	11.1	0.0	8.9
Conduct/Discipline	60.0	0.0	17.8	2.2	20.0
Written tests/Worksheets	8.9	20.0	17.8	13.3	40.0
Attitude	48.9	0.0	13.3	2.2	35.6
Practice Log/Journal	20.0	6.7	11.1	0.0	62.2
Sight-reading Tests	2.2	2.2	8.9	8.9	77.8
Computer-assisted Programs	0.0	4.4	6.7	6.7	82.2
Smart Music™	0.0	6.7	0.0	6.7	86.7
Student Self-assessment	0.0	4.4	6.7	8.9	80.0
Requirement Checklists	4.4	2.2	6.7	6.7	80.0
Peer Assessment	2.2	2.2	8.9	2.2	84.4
Portfolios	0.0	2.2	2.2	6.7	88.9

Respondents were presented with a list of sixteen factors that might influence their choice of assessment methods. Participants rated the level of influence using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all influenced) to 5 (extremely influenced). The directors' personal philosophy of education ($M = 4.44$) and the amount of available class time ($M = 4.04$) had a high degree of influence on the choice of assessment method. Requirements set by the school district ($M = 2.40$), influence from a professional organization ($M = 2.16$), and modeling after the high school program they attended ($M = 2.13$) had a low degree of influence. Also influential in determining assessment methods were the objective or goals of the class ($M = 3.76$), the demands of the ensemble's performance schedule ($M = 3.76$), and the number of students enrolled in the class ($M = 3.38$) (Table B-3).

Table B-3. Factors that influences assessment methods ($N = 45$)

Factor	Rating mean
Personal philosophy of education	4.44
Amount of available class time	4.04
Objectives or goals of the class	3.98
Demands of the ensembles performance schedule	3.76
Number of students enrolled in the class	3.38
Influence from your music colleagues	3.00
Professional development	3.00
Expectation of the students	2.98
Modeled after a colleague's program	2.82
Graduate coursework	2.58
Expectation of your school principal	2.56
Undergraduate coursework	2.53
Expectation of the students' parents	2.49
Requirements set by the school district	2.40
Influence from a professional organization	2.16
Modeled after the high school program you attended	2.13

Participants were also presented with a list of sixteen possible purposes for assessing students in band. The directors rated the importance of these purposes using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important). Directors responded that providing feedback to students ($M = 4.49$) and identifying student needs ($M = 4.38$) were among the most important purposes. To determine whether students were practicing at home ($M = 3.47$), to establish or maintain credibility for the band program ($M = 3.47$), and to rank students according to individual performing levels ($M = 3.27$) were the least important purposes of student assessment (Table B-4).

Table B-4. Purposes of student assessment ($N = 45$)

Purpose	Rating mean
To provide feedback to students	4.49
To identify individual student needs	4.38
To determine future instructional direction	4.29
To identify general class needs`	4.20
To demonstrate student accountability for learning	4.18
To determine what concepts students are failing to understand	4.18
To determine whether instruction has been successful	4.16
To motivate students to practice their instruments	4.11
To set or maintain class standards	4.04
To determine the level of musical preparedness for public performance	4.00
To help students prepare for public performance	3.93
To provide feedback to parents	3.60
To establish or maintain credibility for the band program	3.47
To determine whether students are practicing at home	3.47
To rank students according to individual performance levels	3.27

Respondents were asked to provide an estimate of the weight that a set of 15 components had on their band grade calculations. For this question, the directors used a 5-point Likert-type scale with the following assignments: 1 = 0%, 2 = 1 to 25%, 3 = 26 to 50%, 4 = 51 to 75%, and 5 = 76 to 100%. Performances ($M = 3.09$), performance-based tests ($M = 2.95$), and participation ($M = 2.91$) ranked very high in the percentages assigned by the directors. Peer assessment ($M = 1.29$), student self-assessment ($M = 1.26$), and portfolios ($M = 1.25$) were among the lowest ranked components (Table B-5).

Table B-6 shows results of the final survey question, which asked directors to assign percentages of weight that overall components should have in a balanced assessment protocol for band. The directors assigned the following mean percentages to these components: (a) individual testing and evaluation - 34.72%, (b) performance attendance and contribution - 32.79%, and (c) rehearsal attendance and contribution - 31.79%. The mean results suggest that the directors believe an optimal assessment protocol should use a nearly equal percentage of the three components.

Table B-5. Percentage use of assessment components ($N = 45$)

Component	Rating mean
Performances	3.09
Performance-based tests	2.95
Participation	2.91
Attendance grades	2.56
Conduct/discipline	2.21
Written tests/worksheets	2.00
Attitude grades	1.97
Practice log/journals	1.68
Sight-reading tests	1.45
Smart Music™	1.34
Requirement checklists	1.31
Computer program grades	1.30
Peer assessment	1.29
Student self-assessment	1.26
Portfolios	1.25

Table B-6. Model assessment components' percentages ($N = 44$)

Assessment Component	Mean Percentage
Individual testing and evaluation	34.72
Performance attendance and contribution	32.79
Rehearsal attendance and contribution	31.79

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John P. LaCognata was appointed Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Bands at the University of North Carolina Wilmington in 2010. His responsibilities include supervising the band program, conducting the Wind Symphony, Chamber Winds, and Pep Band, and teaching Basic Conducting and Applied Trumpet. In addition, he will conduct the New Horizons Concert Band for the UNCW Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI).

Mr. LaCognata received his Bachelor of Science in Music Education from the University of Illinois (1986), Master of Music in Trumpet Performance from Auburn University (1989) and a PhD in Music Education with an emphasis in Wind Conducting at the University of Florida (2010) where he was awarded a Doctoral Teaching Fellowship. Prior to his appointment at UNCW, LaCognata held a variety of teaching positions throughout his twenty-four year career as a music educator. He served on the faculties of Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Louisiana State University, and Iowa State University and at the secondary level he held positions at Hillcrest High School (Country Club Hills, Illinois), Tavares High School (Tavares, Florida), Cypress Creek High School (Orlando, Florida), and Winter Park High School (Winter Park, Florida).

At Winter Park, the band program received recognition within the state of Florida and throughout the country under his leadership. The Sound of the Wildcats Marching Band made appearances at the 2005 Autozone Liberty Bowl in Memphis, Tennessee, the 2002 Blue Cross Blue Shield Fiesta Bowl National Band Championship in Phoenix, Arizona, and the 2000 Sylvania Alamo Bowl in San Antonio, Texas. The Wind Ensemble at Winter Park performed at the 2002 Bands of America National Concert

Band Festival in Indianapolis, Indiana, and was a featured ensemble at the "President's Concert" at the 2007 Florida Music Educators' Association Conference in Tampa, Florida. The highlight of Mr. LaCognata's tenure at Winter Park was the Wind Ensemble performance at the 60th Anniversary of the Midwest Clinic in Chicago, Illinois in 2006.

Mr. LaCognata is an active adjudicator, clinician and performer. He has served as a guest conductor and clinician for bands and honor bands throughout the United States. He is a former member of the Cathedral Brass and a freelance trumpet player. His professional affiliations include the College Band Directors National Association, the Music Educators National Conference, and the International Trumpet Guild.